CDA® Gold Standard℠ Specialist

MANUAL

COUNCIL for PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

COUNCIL *for* PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

The Council for Professional Recognition
2460 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009-3547

The CDA® Gold Standard℠ would not have been possible without the vision and unwavering support of Dr. Valora Washington, CEO. The Council for Professional Recognition also recognizes the collaboration and professional guidance of those who assisted in creating this Gold Standard Specialist Manual and for their dedication to the CDA® Gold Standard℠:

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Visit the Council's Website at www.cdacouncil.org

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The information contained in this manual is confidential for the individual use of a Gold Standard Specialists while training or under contract with the Council for Professional Recognition ("Council").

November 2018

Welcome

Dear Gold Standard Specialists,

Welcome to the CDA® Gold Standard℠! All of us at the Council are excited you are interested in becoming a Gold Standard Specialist (GSS) under this new symbol of trust and assurance for students preparing for their CDA® assessment.

As a CDA Gold Standard Specialist, you serve an important role in verifying that organizations seeking the Gold Standard seal meet the rigorous criteria the Council has established for this prestigious distinction.

The Gold Standard is a symbol of high-quality early childhood education training, strong business practices and effective student services. As a GSS, you will have the opportunity to work with top training organizations such as community colleges, universities and other training organizations, and Career Technical Education (CTE) programs.

This handbook will help you understand your role and responsibilities in the Gold Standard application and approval process, which includes a site visit review, the use of the Council's R.O.R. Model™, and submitting scores.

We look forward to supporting your journey through the Council's new CDA Gold Standard Specialist training.

Sincerely,

Valora Washington

Valora Washington, Ph.D., CAE, Credentialing Specialist
Chief Executive Officer
Council for Professional Recognition

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CDA® Gold Standard Specialist Manual

As a Gold Standard Specialist (GSS), you are trained, contracted and endorsed by the Council to utilize your expertise in education to facilitate the final stages of the CDA® Gold Standard℠ process for organizations in your community. This manual is a primary training resource for the GSS and designed to help prepare you to conduct Site Visit Reviews (SVR) of organizations seeking the CDA Gold Standard.

You are charged to use this manual conscientiously as a resource to perform your responsibilities as a GSS. It is critical that you always conduct Site Visit Reviews in a professional manner that preserves and builds the integrity of the CDA Gold Standard.

There are five (5) main sections: Training, Preparing, Conducting, Recording and Scoring, and Submission. Each section is designed to:

- Familiarize the GSS with the Council and the CDA Gold Standard process
- Provide guidelines that support the relationship between the GSS, the applicant organizations and the Council
- Serve as a reference guide that outlines procedures and practices required to properly conduct the Site Visit Review
- Outline the rules and responsibilities of the GSS throughout the Site Visit Review process

The Gold Standard Specialist Manual can be printed and placed in a loose-leaf binder. As changes occur to this manual, GSS's will be notified of important procedural changes via email. Included will be periodic revisions and updates. An electronic copy of the manual, along with any procedural changes, also will be available in the GSS Resource Library. It is the GSS's responsibility to maintain the most updated copy of the manual.

If there are any questions about the manual or these procedures, GSS's should contact the Council through email at GSS@cdacouncil.org or via telephone at (800) 424-4310.

Introduction

The Council is pleased to provide, via the CDA® Gold Standard℠, an avenue for training organizations and institutions of higher education to receive public recognition for their commitment to advancing professional development and training for CDA® students through the delivery of high-quality training programs and student services. Research on programs offering training for early childhood educators shows a wide variation in the quality of training experiences they provide. This creates a challenge for students seeking reliable sources of professional training. Training matters for early childhood educators who seek to meet the developmental, emotional and educational needs of young children. The CDA® Gold Standard℠ offers CDA® students and employers the guidance they need when selecting both online and in-person training and professional development services.

About the Council

OUR MISSION

The Council for Professional Recognition promotes improved performance and recognition of professionals in the early childhood education of children ages birth to 5 years old.

OUR VISION

The Council works to ensure that all professional early childhood educators and caregivers meet the developmental, emotional and educational needs of our nation's (the world's) youngest children.

For almost 35 years, the Council has set policies and procedures for assessment and credentialing, published the CDA® Essentials and Competency Standards books, and other materials used for CDA® credentialing, and administered the CDA® assessment.

About the CDA®

In keeping with our mission and to meet the needs for qualified early childhood educators, the Council administers several Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™ settings. The CDA® Credential is designed to assess both the training and competencies of early childhood education professionals and home visitors.

The Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™ is the most widely

recognized credential in early childhood education (ECE) in the United States. It is a key first step on the pathway toward career advancement in ECE. The CDA® Credential is based on a core set of educational and competency standards early childhood educators must meet to earn a CDA®. The Council works to ensure that the nationally accepted CDA® is recognized as a vital part of the early childhood education profession.

CDAs know how to put the Competency Standards into practice and understand why these standards help them successfully move children from one developmental stage to another. Simply put, CDAs know how to nurture the emotional, physical, intellectual and social development of children. Earning the Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™ has many advantages, including exposure to the larger community of early childhood educators. More than 420,000 educators have earned their CDA® to date!

About the CDA® Gold Standard℠

Now, for the first time, the Council is extending its expertise to assure CDA® students and their employers that the training they receive meets the Council's rigorous industry-leading subject matter and competency criteria. The Council is pleased to have initiated an avenue to recognize organizations who develop and offer high-quality training programs that are consistent with the Council's requirements and ideals about supporting the professional preparation and development of early childhood educators pursuing the CDA® Credential. Programs that meet the Council's expectations for training and supporting these students receive recognition in the form of the CDA® Gold Standard℠. All eligible programs that provide training to CDA® students can use the guidance and application process for CDA® Gold Standard℠ status as a means of self-reflection and program improvement to further support their students.

THE THREE PRINCIPLES

The CDA® Gold Standard℠ focuses on an organization's ability to meet the Three Principles of high-quality CDA training programs:

- Principle I: Business Policies and Practices - To demonstrate high-quality services and meet the needs of CDA® students, CDA® Gold Standard℠ organizations must be built upon sound business policies and practices. This means ensuring solid business practices, policies and an organizational commitment to best practices in preparing early childhood educators.

- Principle II: Quality Student Services - Quality student services are directly related to an organization's ability to offer students the early childhood education and CDA® training and professional development experiences that support their learning.
- Principle III: Alignment with the CDA® Subject Areas – Applicants must complete the CDA® Education Coursework Alignment (CECA), which demonstrates how CDA coursework aligns with required CDA Subject Areas. These areas comprise the core knowledge requirements early childhood professionals are expected to use daily in their work with young children.

The CDA® Gold Standard Specialist

A major component of the CDA® Gold Standard℠ process for organizations involves the use of a Gold Standard Specialist (GSS). As an independent contractor performing as a GSS, you will be utilized to conduct the Site Visit Review (SVR) that is part of the Gold Standard process. You should expect to conduct Site Visit Reviews for a variety of organizations and that the Council will provide:

- Training to conduct all aspects of the Site Visit Reviews (SVR)
- Pertinent information about the organization that will assist in scheduling and conducting the SVR
- Support in the form of a Council staff person/team available to provide instructions and address questions or concerns
- Instructions for how to proceed following completion of the Site Visit Review

As a GSS, you are responsible for conducting the Site Visit Review (SVR), to confirm information the organization submitted in the online application and to capture any new information that demonstrates whether the Three Principles are being met. The GSS is an independent contractor who is responsible for four (4) distinct tasks in the CDA® Gold Standard℠ process:

1. Receive Site Visit Review assignments from the Council
2. Confirm Site Visit Review logistics with the organization
3. Conduct the Site Visit Review to include the Instructor Interview(s), Course Observation(s) and Organizational Interview
4. Complete and submit the Site Visit Review Scoring Instrument to the Council

Eligible Gold Standard Specialist applicants receive a comprehensive training program that will include a detailed review of information in this manual and additional content as relevant and necessary. The training incorporates interactive learning, visual and oral presentation, resources, assessment, quality assurance and open opportunities for Q&A sessions.

Please note: Completing the training and passing the assessment is not the end of the approval process.

Your role as a GSS requires the following:

- Awareness of the Council, CDA Gold Standard and GSS practices and procedures as it relates to professional and ethical behavior outlined in your Independent Contractors Agreement and Professional Ethics and Standards guidelines
- Active participation and completion of all mandated training (current and future) related to the GSS role and review of all written CDA® Gold Standard℠ materials
- Knowledge of professional techniques required to successfully conduct interviews, make observations and work with adults
- Consistent connection with Council communication mediums such as the Council website, the CounciLINK newsletter, Council webinars and group chats

This manual is designed to help you meet the requirements stated above. More in-depth information and essential guidelines can be found in each of the following sections.

Organization of the Manual

The GSS process (Training, Preparation, Conducting, Recording and Scoring, and Submission) is described in the five sections listed below. They are meant to provide detailed information about the GSS experience from pre- to post-Site Visit Review.

1 Training

Part I: Training

CDA® GOLD STANDARD SPECIALIST (GSS) TRAINING

The Council offers either online or in-person GSS training:

1. Four (4) online, self-pace modules that offer instruction and assessment training.
2. Full day in-person group training, which also will provide an interactive and engaging environment that allows participants the opportunity to share ideas and strategies. In-person group training sessions will be offered periodically throughout the year and around the country by the Council. The list of training dates and locations can be located on the Council's website.

Eligible GSS applicants have the option to complete their training in either of the above formats within a timeframe set by the Council. In situations where the GSS fails the exam on the first attempt, the Council will provide 30 additional days for the GSS to retake the exam. If the GSS fails a second time, he or she must wait six (6) months to reapply.

The Council's comprehensive training program:

- Provides the knowledge and skills required to conduct a thorough and objective CDA® Gold Standard℠ Site Visit Review (interviews and observations)
- Increases GSS's understanding of CDA Gold Standard and CDA requirements and processes
- Prepares GSS's to:
  - Communicate effectively and engage in productive interviews
  - Recognize delivery of a high-quality training program
  - Accurately record and score results

- Details what the Council is looking for during the Site Visit Review (SVR):
  - Quality
  - Confirmation
  - Symmetry
- Explains what knowledge is required to conduct an SVR:
  - CDA® Subject Areas and settings
  - CDA Gold Standard
  - Adult-learning principles
  - The R.O.R. Model®
  - Interview techniques
  - GSS's role

CDA® GOLD STANDARD SPECIALIST (GSS) TRAINING MODULES

Module 1: Overview and content of the CDA® Gold Standard℠

- This module will increase the Gold Standard Specialist's (GSS's) understanding of the CDA® Credential and the CDA Gold Standard. It will cover topics such as:
  - History of the CDA Credential and Assessment process
  - CDA® Competency Standards
  - Types of CDA Gold Standard
  - Who Should Apply for the CDA Gold Standard
  - Eligibility requirements
  - What is required of an organization
  - CDA® Education Coursework Alignment (CECA)

Module 2: Roles and Responsibilities

- This module will discuss the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the Council, organizations and GSS's throughout the CDA Gold Standard process. It will cover topics such as:
  - Information shared with GSS
  - Professional Ethics and Standards
  - Conflicts of Interest

Module 3: Preparing for and Conducting a Site Visit Review (SVR)

- This module will offer the details of what the Council requires before and during the SVR. It will cover topics such as:
  - The Pre-Visit Worksheet
  - The R.O.R Model®
  - Conducting the Instructor and Organizational Interviews

- Conducting Course Observations
- Understanding interview and observation objectives

Module 4: Recording and Scoring a Site Visit Review (SVR) and After Site Visit Review

- This module will provide the process of how to record and score a Site Visit Review and the steps that follow the Site Visit Review. It will cover topics such as:
  - Scoring a Site Visit Review
  - Use of the Scoring Instrument
  - Recording and Scoring Evidence
  - Submitting scores
  - Submitting payment vouchers
  - Evaluation

The modules are sequential. There will be a comprehensive exam you must pass at the end of Module 4.

THE R.O.R. MODEL®

R.O.R. stands for Review, Observe and Reflect. The CDA® Gold Standard℠ Site Visit Review utilizes the Council's R.O.R. Model®, which is an evidence-based approach that supports the manner in which GSS's engage with the organization during the Site Visit Review process. The R.O.R. Model® provides the framework for the GSS to look beyond the submitted documentation to consider how the training program functions to support the CDA® Credential and the students completing it.

Review: The GSS interviews a CDA® course instructor or content developer identified to highlight their teaching approach, share the rationale behind the CDA® course content taught to students and explain how it relates to the appropriate CDA® Subject Areas.

Observe: The GSS completes an observation of the organization's on-site, online or hybrid course to confirm that:

- The content of the course corresponds with the course description, objectives and setting types
- Construction of the class lends itself to the appropriate application of required learning principles
- Provisions have been made to provide an opportunity to engage and support students in the educational process:

Reflect: The GSS conducts a reflective dialogue with the organization's representative. During this dialogue, the organization can expound upon content cited in the online application. The organization also will be able to discuss and reflect on what the GSS observed during the Instructor Interview and Course

Observation. The purpose of the Reflective Dialogue is to facilitate a thoughtful and reflective conversation about organizational information shared in written materials, information gathered from the Instructor Interview and Course Observation you conducted.

This dialogue should last no longer than 10 to 15 minutes and must be conducted towards the end of the organizational interview. You will be provided questions that can be used to initiate this conversation. You also may include other questions if you think additional information is required to complete the Site Visit Review Scoring Instrument.

ANNUAL GSS TRAINING

GSS's are required to participate annually in a minimum of one (1) Council training session related to the CDA® Gold Standard℠ process. The list of training dates and locations will be located on the Council's website at **www.cdacouncil.org**.

If you have not conducted a Site Visit Review (SVR), or have not been scheduled for a SVR within 12 months of your approval as a GSS, you will be required to complete a refresher training.

CDA® GOLD STANDARD SPECIALIST (GSS) INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR AGREEMENT

It is important to carefully review the GSS Independent Contractor agreement. It clearly defines your contractor relationship with the Council and contains guidelines.

In recognition of your service, the Council offers a GSS honorarium for each successfully completed Site Visit Review (SVR) and timely submission of the required SVR Scoring Instrument. Information about how to submit a request for your honorarium is in your GSS Independent Contractor Agreement.

Signing of the agreement and submittal of a W-9 IRS form are the final steps required as part of your approval process. SVR assignments are not available until both documents have been properly completed, signed, submitted and accepted by the Council. If, for any reason, you need to end your relationship as an Independent Contractor, you are required to inform the Council in writing at **GSS@cdacouncil.org**.

2 Preparation

Part II: Preparing and Scheduling the Site Visit Review

The applicant organization is responsible for completing the scheduling section of the online application by providing three (3) available dates and times for the Site Visit Review (SVR). After entering availability, the Council selects a Gold Standard Specialist (GSS) to complete the SVR and also coordinates the availability of the interviews and observation of the selected training events.

ACCEPTING OR DECLINING A SITE VISIT REVIEW

The Council will reach out to you to complete the SVR after the applicant organization:

- Completes all of the required sections of the online application
- Provides dates of availability for the SVR

Please Note: As a GSS, you are limited to scheduling and conducting no more than one (1) SVR per day or three (3) visits per week.

When you receive notification of a potential SVR assignment, consider the following, first, before accepting or declining:

- Does the organization or an individual connected with it (i.e., organizational representative or instructor) pose a conflict of interest?
- Is there a scheduling conflict?

DETERMINING CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

During scheduling, or at the start of the SVR, you could become aware of a potential conflict of interest, which might result in you being unable to conduct the SVR. Upon discovery, you are required to immediately notify the Council that such a conflict exists and you will receive instructions about how to proceed. Outlined below are the kinds of relationships that disqualify you from serving as a GSS for a specific organization:

You may NOT serve as an organization's GSS if you are:

- Related to the organization's instructor, content developer or representative involved in the SVR
- A representative of an organization that has financial/contractual considerations related to the organization or might benefit in any way from the organization's CDA® Gold Standard℠ outcome
- A former employee of the organization

- Related to someone who is currently enrolled in the organization's CDA® course
- Conducting a GSS SVR for a different branch under the same organization
- Serving as a PD Specialist (PDS) for the application organization
- A former GSS of that organization and the organization is reapplying for the CDA® Gold Standard℠
- Biased personally or professionally (written or verbal) against the organization, or any group of which the organization is a part

If any of these apply, it will be considered a conflict of interest and you are not permitted to accept the assignment.

STARTING THE SITE VISIT REVIEW PROCESS

In preparation for the Site Visit Review (SVR), the Council will provide you with information concerning the applicant organization, including documents and forms necessary to successfully conduct and complete the visit.

1. The Council provides you with the following information about the organization:
   - Dates of availability
   - Site Visit Review location (if on-site)
   - Login details (if online)
   - Course-related information is included in the scheduling form (course name, setting type, etc.)
   - Participant information for each component of the SVR
2. The Council also provides the documents and forms to complete the SVR, including:
   - Pre-Visit Worksheet – to reconfirm Site Visit Review logistics with the organization
   - Scheduling form with the organization's availability information – including details regarding the interviews and observation
   - Access to the online SVR Scoring Instrument – online scoring instrument to input SVR scores and notes
   - Information to submit a payment voucher for your honorarium

Please note: All documents are required to be reviewed and completed as needed before initiating the SVR.

The SVR process begins after the Council confirms that the organization's submitted documents have met the criteria for Principles I, II and III. After confirmation the Council contacts:

- The applicant organization to obtain dates of availability
- Potential GSS to obtain dates of availability

Once the date is agreed upon, the Council will notify you and the organization via email of the scheduled date and times.

The organization is aware that the SVR will include three (3) major components (Instructor Interview(s), Course Observation(s), and Organizational Interview), which a GSS is assigned to conduct.

To begin the Site Visit Review, bring the following documentation:

- Organization's information including the completed Pre-Visit Checklist
- Appropriate tools
- Council's contact information (800-424-4310 or GSS@cdacouncil.org)

On Site to Conduct the SVR:

- Wear professional (but comfortable) clothing, bring spare writing instruments, limit the number of personal items you carry and use the restroom before you begin
- Prepare a brief introductory statement
- Arrive 30 minutes before the start of your first appointment
- Present yourself/alert staff on your arrival
- Acclimate yourself to your surroundings

Logging into an Online Course

- Ensure access to reliable and secure Internet connection (direct access or Wi-Fi)
- Locate a private room with minimal background noise
- Prepare with course login information
- Log in 15 minutes early

USING THE PRE-VISIT WORKSHEET

Prior to the CDA® Gold Standard℠ Site Visit Review, you are required to use the Pre-Visit Worksheet (Appendix Three) when contacting the applicant organization to verify and record documentation.

As the selected Gold Standard Specialist (GSS) for the applicant organization's Site Visit Review, you must contact the organization at least two (2) business days prior to the scheduled SVR. You are to conduct the required call to the primary contact at the applicant organization to introduce yourself and confirm Site Visit Review logistics.

Use the Pre-Visit Worksheet to record the information discussed during the conversation and to guide you in the process of:

- Ensuring all Pre-Visit action items are completed during the initial call
- Preparing for the Site Visit Review
- Conducting the Site Visit Review

CONFIRMING SITE VISIT REVIEW LOGISTICS

Use the Pre-Visit Worksheet for Gold Standard Specialists (Appendix Three) to ensure all Pre-Visit action items are completed during the call and behind the scenes prior to the SVR.

Emphasize the following points during your required Pre-Visit call to avoid miscommunication between you and the applicant organization:

- Dates and times are double-checked to ensure everyone is operating on the same schedule
- Instructor and Organizational Interviews require at least 45 minutes each and are separately conducted
- A quiet, private room is required for the Instructor and Organizational Interviews
- Detailed location information (address, building, room number, on-site contact) for each component of the Site Visit Review (SVR) is important, especially when the applicant organization operates in multiple training locations
- Establish procedures and the schedule for the day of your arrival or login time, if online

IF THE GOLD STANDARD SPECIALIST (GSS) NEEDS TO CANCEL A SITE VISIT REVIEW

The Council has an obligation to ensure the Site Visit Review takes place on the scheduled date. It is imperative that the Council is notified far in advance if the GSS has to cancel.

Cancelation for a non-emergency: The Council requires at least two weeks' advance notice to locate a replacement GSS.

Please note: We recognize emergencies might occur. However, in those instances, the Council should be immediately contacted at (202) 265-9090 or email at **goldstandard@cdcouncil.org**. The Council will follow up with the organization to determine additional SVR scheduling availability and to assign a new GSS if necessary.

IF THE ORGANIZATION NEEDS TO POSTPONE THE SITE VISIT REVIEW

A GSS might be the first to hear from an organization that they need to postpone the SVR. If this should occur, the GSS should:

- Cancel each component of the scheduled visit
- Notify the Council via e-mail at GoldStandard@cdacouncil.org about the cancellation and provide a brief description of the circumstances
- The Council will forward the organization the SVR Postponement Form via email for completion
- Instruct the organization to officially request a postponement by submitting the form to the Council and to await further instructions from the Council regarding next steps

3 Site Visit Review

Part III: Conducting a Successful SVR

SITE VISIT REVIEW (SVR)

A Site Visit Review is scheduled by the Council ***after*** confirmation that an organization's submitted documents have met the criteria for Principles I, II and III, and the organization has been approved to proceed to this step.

Your role in this process is critical! The SVR is the final step in the CDA® Gold Standard℠ process and is the last opportunity in the process for an organization to demonstrate and affirm the high-quality requirements and indicators provided during the application process.

Well-designed Site Visit Reviews allow the representatives ample opportunity to provide comments or evidence that the organization meets the required criteria, as well as potential best practices that can be documented and shared with other organizations. During SVRs, participants can be asked to delve deeply into submitted materials through analysis, reflection and responses to follow-up questions. Through this process, organizations can provide depth of intentionality to the materials. This allows the Site Visit Reviews to serve as a systematic means for the oversight body to build knowledge of best practices that can be shared with others.

The total time for the CDA® Gold Standard℠ Site Visit Review is estimated at 3-5 hours, depending on setting type and training modality. This includes three major components: the Instructor Interview(s), Course Observation(s) and the Organizational Interview.

When conducting the Site Visit Review, you should use the R.O.R. Model® (refer to page 13 in this manual) as your guide in directing the manner of the visit.

- Instructor Interview - The Instructor Interview is a 45-minute meeting during which you and one CDA® instructor discuss the instructor's perspective of the organization's CDA® training program and how the organization addresses his or her professional needs.

  It is expected that you will apply the Review process from the R.O.R. Model® to this component: The interview with the CDA® course instructor or content developer is designed to provide them an opportunity to highlight their teaching approaches, share the rationale behind the CDA® course content taught to students and explain how it relates to the appropriate CDA® Subject Areas.

- Course Observation - The Course Observation is a 60-minute assessment (for each observation) during which you observe and assess the CDA® learning environment, CDA® teaching practices and professional-development activities to determine if the course aligns with the CDA® Subject Areas and best practices in adult-learning principles.

  It is expected that you will apply the Observe process from the R.O.R. Model® to this component: Your observation of the organization's on-site, online or hybrid course should assist you in determining if:

  - The content of the course corresponds with the course description, objectives and setting types
  - Construction of the class lends itself to the appropriate application of required learning principles
  - Provisions have been made to provide an opportunity to engage and support students in the educational process

- Organizational Interview - The Organizational Interview is a 45-minute meeting between you and an organization's representative to discuss the organization's mission, history and context of the CDA® training program as represented in the application. The Organizational Interview also reflects upon what you experienced during the Instructor Interview and Course Observation.

  It is expected that you will apply the Reflect process from the R.O.R. Model® to this component in which you will engage in a reflective dialogue with the organization's representative. During this dialogue the organization can expound upon aspects of the online course cited in the online application, discuss, and reflect upon what the GSS observed during the Instructor Interview and Course Observation.

CONDUCTING THE OBSERVATION

The purpose of the applicant organization observation, within the context of the R.O.R. Model®, is to record evidence of the organization's consistent training. Organization observations are critical for the Council because they help paint an accurate picture of the organization's strengths and any areas for improvement. Understand that being observed in the classroom might be unsettling for even the most experienced organization. As the GSS, you should make every effort to support the organization and reduce stress.

- Observation should be conducted during the organization's regular operating hours
- Ensure the course is the one for observation and matches description of the CECA
- Remember, you are there to observe and not participate (include this statement as part of your introduction)

- Ensure you have all of the appropriate note-taking tools available to conduct the observation, including the Site Visit Review Scoring Instrument
- If on-site, find a comfortable spot in the room to begin your observation, out of the way of activities, from which you can easily see and hear the organization in action
- As an observer, you are encouraged to remain silent and to be "invisible." Refrain from interacting with the students
- Your two (2) hour focus on the organization should never be interrupted. Do not use your cell phone during this time (best practice is to put your cell phone on do not disturb)

During the Observation, focus on the following:

- Instructor's knowledge and understanding of the coursework as it applies to CDA Subject Area and setting type (indicated on the CDA® Education Coursework Alignment (CECA)
- Instructor's application of adult-learning principles
- Instructor/student interactions
- Accommodations for students from varied and diverse backgrounds, and learning styles (if applicable)

THE SITE VISIT REVIEW APPROACH

The structure of the Site Visit Review includes three (3) major components: Instructor Interview(s), Course Observation(s) and the Organizational Interview.

The SVR may be conducted virtually (online), depending on the organization's method of instructional delivery. Interviews can be conducted in person or by phone or video chat (e.g., Skype). The Course Observation may be conducted as an in-person observation of a live CDA® course; as a virtual observation of a live or synchronous training (e.g. conference call or live online chat room); or a survey of an asynchronous learning environment in which CDA® students can access training content on their own schedule (e.g., online, on-demand courses). For additional information regarding synchronous and asynchronous learning environments, refer to the Glossary.

You should expect to spend between **3-5 hours** conducting the Site Visit Review. All components of the SVR must be conducted on the same day. Please plan accordingly.

Instructor Interview(s)

The Instructor Interview is a **45-minute** meeting during which the GSS and one CDA® instructor discuss the instructor's perspective of the organization's CDA® training program and how the organization addresses his or her professional needs.

The Instructor Interview gives the student the opportunity to learn about the CDA training program from the instructor's perspective and better understand how their professional needs are met. Since the CDA Instructor works directly with CDA students, their perspective can illustrate whether policy is appropriately translated into high-quality practice.

The Instructor Interview is a one-on-one conversation with the CDA instructor, who is primarily responsible for the instructional design and delivery of the CDA course. If more than one Instructor Interview is required, a different CDA instructor can be selected to represent a separate course in a separate interview. The interview lasts **45 minutes** and must be conducted in a quiet, private room.

Use the following Site Visit Review Objectives as a guide to help you focus the Instructor Interview on information that relates to criteria within The Three Principles. The Site Visit Review Objectives are focused on what you, the Gold Standard Specialist, need to learn from the conversation. Meeting these objectives are imperative to your success in completing the Site Visit Review Summary Report.

When conducting the Site Visit Review, use the following objectives to guide the discussion between you and the Instructor/content developer.

- Obtain information about the instructor's understanding of CDA requirements and the assessment process
- Understand how the CDA coursework supports candidates in obtaining the knowledge of the Subject Areas required to earn the CDA credential
- Understand how the CDA instructor(s) supports candidates in obtaining the knowledge of the Subject Areas in relationship to practice to earn the CDA credential
- Learn how the instructor meets the diverse needs and learning styles of the student population
- Obtain information about the instructor's understanding of the impact of the CDA in the ECE community

Course Observation

The Course Observation is a **60-minute** assessment (for each observation) during which the GSS observes and assesses the CDA® learning environment, CDA® teaching practices and professional development activities to determine if the course aligns with the CDA® Subject Areas and best practices in adult-learning principles.

The Course Observation gives you an opportunity to experience a CDA course from the student's perspective. It also allows you to verify that the applicant organization's coursework is appropriately aligned to the CDA subject areas.

The Course Observation can be conducted virtually or on-site. The method you use to collect information during the Course Observation must accommodate the method of instructional delivery. However, because the expected outcomes of a CDA course do not change based on the method of course delivery, virtual courses are held to the same standards as on-site courses. Just as an on-site course that only utilizes lecture does not facilitate active learning, neither does a virtual course that fails to provide students with opportunities to interact with their peers and the instructor.

The following objectives will be used to guide the Course Observation component of the Site Visit Review:

- The content of the course aligns with the Subject Area(s) being taught as stated on the Course Observation Cover Sheet
- The instruction applies to the setting(s) indicated on the Course Observation Cover Sheet
- The instructor adequately covers the CDA class objective(s) as stated on the Course Observation Cover Sheet
- The instructor demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the CDA Subject Areas covered
- The instructor demonstrates best practices in and familiarity with adult-learning principles

Each Course Observation covers the review of on-site, online and hybrid courses. The observation(s) will be based on the Setting Type of the Course Observation. See the breakdown of each course type below:

Setting Types and the CDA® Course Observation:

- *Virtual Course Observations (Only)*
  - Virtual courses offering one (1) setting, one (1) observation is required
  - Virtual courses offering two (2) or more settings must complete two (2) observations - one (1) for each setting

Please note: If Home Visitor training is offered, one of the two (2) observations must be completed in the Home Visitor setting.

- *On-site Course Observations (Only)*
  - On-site courses offering one (1) setting, one (1) observation is required
  - On-Site courses offering two or more settings must complete two observations (for two settings). (Note: If Home Visitor training is offered, one of the two observations must be completed in the Home Visitor setting.)

- *Hybrid Course Observations (Virtual and On-Site)*
  - Organizations offering hybrid courses are required to complete two (2) observations one (1) virtual and one (1) on-site.
  - Hybrid courses offering two (2) or more settings must complete two (2) observations for two (2) settings.

Note: If Home Visitor is offered, one (1) of the two (2) observations must be completed in the Home Visitor setting.

Organizational Interview

The Organizational Interview is a **45-minute** meeting between the GSS and an organization representative to discuss the organization's mission, history and context of the CDA® training program as represented in the application.

The Organizational Interview gives you the opportunity to learn about the overarching leadership and management of the applicant organization. You will lead a discussion with the organization's representatives to discuss topics that impact quality, including the organization's mission and vision, history and the context in which it operates.

The Organizational Interview also provides an opportunity for the organization to reflect on what the GSS experienced in the Instructor Interview and Course Observation. At the end of the Organizational Interview, you should engage in a reflective dialogue (using suggested reflective questions provided by the Council). Reflective questions are designed to help the organization reflect on the impact of its practices and course offerings and potentially identify quality-improvement goals. Be sure to emphasize to the organization that these questions do not impact its ability to earn the CDA® Gold Standard℠ but are part of the R.O.R. Model® that is designed to support continuous quality improvement.

The applicant organization can identify one or more organization representatives to participate in the Organizational Interview. The interview must be conducted in a quiet, private room.

Use the following Site Visit Review Objectives as a guide to help you focus the Organizational Interview on information that relates to criteria within the Three Principles. The Site Visit Review Objectives are focused on what you, the Gold Standard Specialist, need to learn from the conversation. Meeting these objectives are imperative to your success in completing the Site Visit Review Summary Report after the review.

Objectives for the Organizational Interview are as follows:

- Obtain information about the organization's understanding of CDA® requirements and the assessment process

- Document information on how the organization supports candidates in obtaining the knowledge of the Subject Areas required to earn the CDA Credential
- Document information on how the organization supports candidates in obtaining the knowledge of the Subject Areas in relationship to practice to earn the CDA Credential
- Collect information on how the organization meets the diverse needs and learning styles of the student population
- Obtain information about the organization's understanding of the impact of the CDA in the ECE community

Part IV: Recording and Scoring of the Site Visit Review

As a GSS, you must remain objective throughout the entire process and not develop or bring preconceived impressions of instructors or look for evidence confirming those impressions. Over the course of a Site Visit Review, you must guard against injecting external explanations for what you see taking place within the course. While observing and collecting documentation, remember that words, phrases and sentences can be communicated and understood in a variety of ways. Your direct observation of an instructor is the primary method used to inform your ratings.

RECORDING EVIDENCE

Notes:

- You must maintain confidential information concerning an organization and ensure it is shared only with appropriate Council staff
- Your notes in the Site Visit Scoring Instrument are critical in the scoring process and will be considered in the approval process
- Supporting evidence must be included in the interview notes section of each category
- Include very specific notes to document and justify scores, explain rationale or provide examples that led you to choose that score

Scores:

When scoring both the Instructor and Organizational Interview, you are required to provide a 1, 2 or 3:

- "3:" The answer included basic detail and additional relevant information
- "2:" The answer included basic detail but did not elaborate
- "1:" The answer was vague and lacked detail

The scoring structure of the Course Observation requires a 3 or 1.

- "3:" Yes, the item was met or observed
- "1:" No, the item was not met or observed

Examples of each are found in the GSS Training module, "Recording and Scoring the Site Visit Review."

Part V: Submission

Once the Site Visit Review is complete, you are responsible for completing the Site Visit Review Scoring Instrument and submitting it online to the Council within two (2) business days

SUBMITTING SCORES

The Site Visit Review Scoring Instrument is a detailed, written summary of your reflections and observations associated with each component of the Site Visit Review (SVR) and the overall experience. The specific sections of the report are listed below:

- Instructor Interview(s)
- Course Observation(s)
- Organizational Interview
- Interview comments (Required)
- Observation notes (Required)

The SVR scores must be kept confidential. Once the recommended scores have been submitted to the Council online, the information will remain in the Council's database.

PAYMENT VOUCHER SUBMISSION

Upon completion of the Site Visit Review Scoring Instrument, you then will need to access the "GSS Payment" section of the online application. To activate your honorarium process through the Council's Finance department, you must complete the following:

Payment Instructions:

1. Download the required payment voucher
2. Complete all necessary information
3. Email the completed form to **GSSvoucher@cdacouncil.org**

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

The Council is committed to quality assurance and continuous quality improvement using a process that evaluates the effectiveness of all our programs, policies and practices. The CDA® Gold Standard℠ is evaluated under this system. Your participation as a GSS in this review process is required. The CDA® Gold Standard℠ Quality Assurance review process will involve:

- Monitoring effectiveness of established Gold Standard and GSS procedures and policies
- Monitoring clarity and effectiveness of GSS training and written instructions
- Assessing the validity of the Site Visit Review scoring process as related to the CDA® Education Coursework Alignment review and the course documentation submitted by the organization
- Ensuring GSS compliance with the Council's CDA® Gold Standard℠ requirements and ability to evaluate and assess effective high-quality practices
- Evaluating the effectiveness of metrics and rubrics used

Through the CDA Gold Standard quality-assurance process, the Council strives to ensure that organizations awarded the CDA® Gold Standard℠ also continually assess their business practices, evaluate the training they provide and demonstrate acceptable levels of organizational and student success.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this manual, we have summarized important details concerning your role and responsibilities as a Gold Standard Specialist in the Site Visit Review process and the relationship between you, applicant organizations and the Council. In addition, we have provided a brief history of the CDA® experience, the Council and the CDA® Gold Standard process. We hope you have found this material informative and easy to use as it is expected to be an important reference tool throughout your tenure as a GSS. Using this manual in conjunction with training and any updated materials provided throughout the year by the Council will enhance your ability to successfully perform in your role as a GSS.

To stay current on the GSS process, be sure to check the Council's website at **www.cdacouncil.org**. There, you will be able to access resources, updates and addendums. Also:

- For additional information, contact the Council at (800) 424-4310.
- For general inquiries, email the Gold Standard Team at GSS@cdacouncil.org.
- Submit all completed payment vouchers to GSSVoucher@cdacouncil.org following completion of the Site Visit Review.

4 Appendices

The following resources provide additional support to organizations that are either ready to apply or are considering applying for the Gold Standard.

In this section, you will find six (6) helpful resources:

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Appendix One

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND STANDARDS

Since the CDA® Gold Standard℠ is awarded by the Council, the early childhood education community holds Gold Standard Specialists in high esteem. Therefore, the Council expects you as Gold Standard Specialists (GSS) to perform with a conscientious effort that exemplifies the highest ethical standards.

Area I: Practice and Performance

You will assume personal responsibility and be accountable for your performance and conduct as a Gold Standard Specialist. You agree to enhance your professional growth in these areas by receiving and actively participating in relevant training and educational opportunities when they arise.

You will endeavor to maintain the dignity of the position by respecting and abiding by Council policies, by showing personal integrity and exhibiting ethically competent behavior. The following list of practices should guide your conduct at all times:

- Ensure that prior to conducting your review you thoroughly understand your role and responsibilities
- Understand that your role is not to evaluate but to assess the program or agency during the SVR
- Present yourself in a professional manner at all times
- Exhibit a respectful attitude to the individuals and organizations you are engaging
- Conduct your review in a manner that is tolerant and considerate of the diverse, multicultural, multilingual backgrounds of the students, colleagues and organizations you engage
- Be truthful in providing your professional qualifications and avoid misrepresentations
- Comply with all applicable local, state and federal law, and regulations that are not in conflict with the Council's ethical expectations
- Refrain from using the Site Visit Review process as an opportunity to steer organizations to endeavors for your financial gain

Area II: Working with Organizations

As a GSS, you have a personal responsibility to demonstrate characteristics as a professional and early childhood educator that will allow you to lead by example in the following ways:

- Treat each organization considerately and justly when clarifying issues
- Avoid intentionally exposing an organization to disparagement
- Manifest a positive role during an organization's SVR
- Maintain confidential information concerning an organization, which is shared only with appropriate Council staff
- Upon completion of the review, submit facts without distortion, bias or personal prejudice
- Identify yourself and explain your role and the GS review process clearly at the beginning of each of the interviews scheduled during the Site Visit Review.
- Pass no judgment and present no perspective on the reasons behind an organization's efforts to obtain the CDA® Gold Standard℠.

Area III: Working with Your Peers and Colleagues

In exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, you agree to treat all training organizations with fairness. The Council relies on the Gold Standard Specialist's (GSS) judgment and capability to bring an independent perspective. As a Gold Standard Specialist and professional early childhood educator, you will:

- Agree to and accept organization Site Visit Reviews (SVR) without bias and consistent with your availability
- Respect agreed upon schedules and conduct your review in a timely and efficient manner
- Maintain confidential information concerning colleagues, students and organizations
- Refrain from willfully making (verbally or in writing) false statements or disparaging comments about colleagues, students and organizations

Area IV: Upholding Community Standards

As a GSS and professional early childhood educator, you will:

- Report accurately and timely any information heard or actions observed that you believe places a student in danger
- Make concerted efforts to communicate to the organization all information needed to support the organizations completion of the SVR
- Immediately identify any and all known conflicts of interests you might have prior to a site review as well as those that you might become aware of during the review
- Adhere to the official practices and procedures outlined in this manual

Appendix Two

THE EIGHT (8) CDA® SUBJECT AREAS

SUBJECT 1	**Preschool, Infant and Toddler and Family Child Care** Planning a safe and healthy learning environment	**Examples** Safety, first aid, health, nutrition, planning the learning environment, materials and equipment
	Home Visitor Promoting health and safety in the home environment	**Examples** Safety, first aid, health and wellness promotion, nutrition
SUBJECT 2	**Preschool, Infant and Toddler and Family Child Care** Advancing children's physical and intellectual development	**Examples** Large and small muscle, language and literacy, discovery, art, music, mathematics, social studies, science, technology, and dual language learning
	Home Visitor Enhancing parents' skills to advance children's physical and intellectual development	**Examples** Large and small muscle development, discovery, creative arts, literacy
SUBJECT 3	**Preschool, Infant and Toddler and Family Child Care** Supporting children's social and emotional development	**Examples** Adult modeling, self-esteem, self-regulation, socialization, cultural identity,conflict resolution
	Home Visitor Promoting parents' use of positive ways to support children's social and emotional development	**Examples** Self-regulation, self-esteem, interdependence, helping parents to respond to distressful events
SUBJECT 4	**Preschool, Infant and Toddler and Family Child Care** Building productive relationships with families	**Examples** Parent involvement, home visits, conferences, referrals, communication strategies
	Home Visitor Understanding family systems and development	**Examples** Family service and support, goal setting, supporting families of children with special needs; working with diverse families; identifying and responding to crisis; early parenting; parent skill development

SUBJECT 5	**Preschool, Infant and Toddler and Family Child Care** Managing an effective program	**Examples** Planning, record keeping; reporting; community services/ resources
	Home Visitor Managing an effective home visitor program operation	**Examples** Home visitation; time management; documenting the home visitor work with the family; weekly planning; assessing individual family/child interests and needs; facilitating resources and activities; record keeping; developing action plans
SUBJECT 6	**Preschool, Infant and Toddler and Family Child Care** Maintaining a commitment to professionalism	**Examples** Advocacy, ethical practices, workforce issues, professional development, goal setting, networking
	Home Visitor Maintaining a commitment to professionalism	**Examples** Advocacy, the rights of children and families; professional ethics; workforce issues; legislation; professional organizations
SUBJECT 7	**Preschool, Infant and Toddler and Family Child Care** Observing and recording children's behavior	**Examples** Tools and strategies for objective observation and assessment of children's behavior and learning to plan curriculum and individualize teaching, developmental delays, intervention strategies, individual education plans
	Home Visitor Working across the child welfare continuum	**Examples** Cultural competence in all aspects of child/family welfare; comprehensive family assessment; assessing resource families; community assessment; housing; respite care; statistics on child and family well-being; child welfare and foster care; adoption and related issues; prevention and assessment of substance abuse; treatment services for young parents and adults; cross system collaboration; casework practice with families affected by substance abuse; the role of the courts
SUBJECT 8	**Preschool, Infant and Toddler and Family Child Care** Understanding principles of child development and learning	**Examples** Typical developmental expectations of children from birth through age 5; individual variation including children with special needs; cultural influences on development, understanding brain development, theories in early childhood education
	Home Visitor Understanding principles of child development and learning	**Examples** Typical developmental expectations of children from birth through age 5; individual variation including children with special needs; cultural influences on development, understanding brain development, theories in early childhood education

Appendix Three

PRE-VISIT WORKSHEET (EXAMPLE)

Gold Standard Specialist Pre-Visit Worksheet

Prior to the CDA Gold Standard Site Visit Review, the CDA Gold Standard Specialist (GSS) must use this pre-visit worksheet when contacting the CDA Gold Standard℠ applicant organization to screen and record required documentation.

At least two business days prior to the scheduled Site Visit Review the GSS must conduct a courtesy call to the primary contact at the applicant organization to introduce yourself and confirm Site Visit Review logistics.

Use this form to record the information discussed during the conversation and to guide you in the process of:

- Ensuring all pre-visit action items are completed during the initial call
- Preparing for the Site Visit Review
- Conducting the Site Visit Review

Forward the completed form to the Council, along with your Payment Voucher, via email to GSSvoucher@cdacouncil.org.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Review all information before attempting initial phone call to primary contact. Be sure to confirm that all contact and organization information is correct.

ORGANIZATION NAME

Primary Contact Information:

LAST NAME | FIRST NAME | JOB TITLE

( ) - | ( ) - |

PRIMARY PHONE NUMBER | SECONDARY PHONE NUMBER | EMAIL ADDRESS

Organization Address:

STREET ADDRESS | SUITE/DEPARTMENT/FLOOR

CITY | STATE | ZIP CODE

CONTACT ATTEMPTS

List each attempt made to contact the organization's primary contact.

	DATE	PRIMARY #	SECONDARY #	EMAIL	PROCESS
ATTEMPT #1		▫	▫	N/A	Leave messages at both #s.
ATTEMPT #2		▫	▫	▫	Leave messages at both #s and send follow-up email to primary and cc secondary contact.
ATTEMPT #3		▫	▫	▫	Leave messages at both #s and send/re-send scheduling calendar email.

If no communication from the organization's primary contact has been achieved by the time the scheduling calendar is due, notify the Gold Standard Team, via email, at goldstandard@cdacouncil.org.

INITIAL CALL WITH PRIMARY CONTACT

Confirm Site Visit Review information and notify primary contact of the purpose of the initial call and ensure the following:

- Scheduled dates and times are correct to guarantee everyone is operating on the same schedule
- Organizational and Instructor Interviews will be conducted separately.
- A quiet, private room will be provided to conduct Organizational and Instructor Interviews.
- Detailed location information (address, building, room number) for each component of the Site Visit Review is important, especially when the applicant organization operates in multiple training locations.

Site Visit Review Details

SITE VISIT REVIEW DATE: | COURSE TYPE: ▫ ON-SITE ▫ ONLINE ▫ HYBRID ▫ SYNCHRONOUS ▫ ASYNCHRONOUS

Instructor Interview *(Remind the representative the interview will require 45 minutes of time.)* TIME: _____

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:			
NAME(S)	JOB TITLE(S)	E-MAIL ADDRESS(ES)	PHONE NUMBER
1.			
2.			
3.			

Is there a Conflict of Interest with the organization?: ▫ YES ▫ NO If conflict discovered, please list with whom and why: _____

Appendix Four

SITE VISIT REVIEW ONLINE SCORING INSTRUMENT

Gold Standard Site Visit Review Online Scoring Instrument

ORGANIZATION NAME

INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEW

Input Instructor Interview details here.

DESCRIPTION	LIST DETAILS
INTERVIEW DATE:	
INTERVIEW TIME:	
SITE VISIT LOCATION:	
INSTRUCTOR NAME:	
JOB TITLE:	
PHONE:	
EMAIL ADDRESS:	

Interview Objectives and Questions:

Interview Notes and rationale must be provided for each score.

Objective 1 - Obtain information about the instructor's understanding of CDA requirements and the assessment process.

1. Share with me all you know about the eligibility requirements for a candidate applying for CDA.

- 1 - Unsure or vague
- 2 - Mentions steps: does not elaborate: Education Requirements, Documentation Requirements, Experience
- 3 - Explains each step in detail: Education Requirements, Documentation Requirements, Experience, Requirements are specific to credential type

Interview Notes

2. Tell me what you know about the CDA assessment process and what it entails.

- 1 - Unsure or vague
- 2 - Mentions steps: does not elaborate: Prepare, Apply, Demonstrate
- 3 - Explains each step in detail: Prepare, Apply, Demonstrate

Interview Notes

Objective 2 - Understand how the CDA coursework presented supports candidates in obtaining the knowledge of the Subject Areas required to earn the CDA credential.

1. Provide examples of a topic that is taught to students and its relevance to, at least two, Subject Areas.

- 1 - Unsure or vague
- 2 - Mentions course topic, Covers one Subject Area
- 3 - Mentions course topic and elaborates, Covers two or more

Interview Notes

Objective 3 - Understand how the CDA instructor(s) supports candidates in obtaining the knowledge of the Subject Areas in relationship to practice to earn the CDA credential.

1. Provide an example of how you help students connect the theory into practice in your class.

- 1 - Unsure or vague
- 2 - Mentions, does not elaborate: Theory, Practice
- 3 - Gives an explanation of how the course helps the student apply information into daily practice: Theory, Practice, Connection between the two

Interview Notes

2. What Council publications do you use in your CDA course and how do you integrate them?

- 1 - No publications used; Does not know the proper name of the publications; Copies are made for students
- 2 - Lists publications and name; Does not explain, in detail, what the publication is used for
- 3 - Lists publications and name; Detailed how and when to use the publications; Explains how it helps the Candidates in preparation for the CDA assessment

Interview Notes

Objective 4 - Learn how the instructor meets the diverse needs and learning styles of the student population.

1. How do you accommodate different learning styles in your CDA® courses?

- 1 - Does not accommodate different learning styles
- 2 - Accommodates any learning style; Does not elaborate
- 3 - Accommodates multiples learning styles; Elaborates on each

Interview Notes

2. Tell me about the adult learning principles you apply in your course instruction?

- 1 - Does not apply learning principles
- 2 - Lists, at least 4, learning principles
- 3 - Lists, at least 4, learning principles and how they are applied to the course instruction

Interview Notes

Objective 5 - Obtain information about the instructors understanding of the impact of the CDA® in the ECE community.

1. Provide examples of how the community benefits or would benefit from your CDA program.

- 1 - Does not provide examples
- 2 - Provides examples and does not elaborate
- 3 - Provides examples and elaborates, shares how the education of children will improve by having teachers that are competent and skillful

Interview Notes

Total Points

Calculate all scores and enter total amount.

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COURSE OBSERVATION

Input Course Observation details here.

DESCRIPTION	LIST DETAILS
OBSERVATION DATE:	
OBSERVATION TIME:	
OBSERVATION LOCATION:	
INSTRUCTOR NAME (IF APPLICABLE):	
COURSE NAME:	

Interview Objectives and Questions:

Applicable Subject Area(s)

- Subject Area 1: Planning a safe and healthy learning environment
- Subject Area 2: Advancing children's physical and intellectual development
- Subject Area 3: Supporting children's social and emotional development
- Subject Area 4: Building productive relationships with families
- Subject Area 5: Managing an effective program
- Subject Area 6: Maintaining a commitment to professionalism
- Subject Area 7: Observing and recording children's behavior
- Subject Area 8: Understanding principles of child development and learning

Course Type

- On Site
- Online
  - Synchronous
  - Asynchronous
- Hybrid
  - Synchronous
  - Asynchronous

Observation Questions

Notes and rationale must be provided for each score.

1. The content of the course aligns with the Subject Area(s) being taught as stated on the Course Observation Cover Sheet.

- Yes - 3
- No - 1

If yes, check all that apply

- Subject Area 1
- Subject Area 2
- Subject Area 3
- Subject Area 4
- Subject Area 5
- Subject Area 6
- Subject Area 7
- Subject Area 8

3. The instructor adequately covers the CDA class objective(s) as stated on the Course Observation Cover Sheet.

- Yes - 3
- No - 1

Observation Notes

4. The instructor demonstrates any of the following adult learning principles?

Enter: 3 for "Yes" OR 1 for "No".

DESCRIPTION	YES	NO
a. Various learning styles		
b. Shared vocabulary		
c. Opportunities for students to interact and express their perspectives		
d. Assistive technology for special populations available		
e. Provision of examples to students that helped demonstrate the relevancy of coursework theory to everyday practice		
f. Differentiated content to teach diverse learners from multicultural and multi-ability backgrounds		

Observation Notes

Total Points

Calculate all scores and enter total amount.

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ORGANIZATIONAL INTERVIEW

Input Instructor Interview details here.

DESCRIPTION	LIST DETAILS
ORGANIZATION NAME:	
ORGANIZATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE NAME:	
INTERVIEW DATE:	
INTERVIEW TIME:	
SITE VISIT LOCATION:	
JOB TITLE:	
PHONE:	
EMAIL ADDRESS:	

Interview Objectives and Questions:

Interview notes and rationale must be provided for each score.

Objective 1 - Obtain information about the organization's understanding of CDA requirements and the assessment process.

1. Share with me all you know about the eligibility requirements for a Candidate applying for CDA.

- 1 - Unsure or vague
- 2 - Mentions steps, does not elaborate: Education Requirements, Documentation Requirements, Experience
- 3 - Explains each step in detail: Education Requirements, Documentation Requirements Experience, Requirements are specific to credential type

Interview Notes

2. Tell me what you know about the CDA assessment process and what it entails.

- 1 - Unsure of vague
- 2 - Mentions steps, does not elaborate: Prepare, Apply, Demonstrate
- 3 - Explains each step in detail: Prepare, Apply, Demonstrate

Interview Notes

Objective 2 - Understand how the organization supports candidates in obtaining the knowledge of the Subject Areas required to earn the CDA credential.

1. Provide examples of how the instruction provided by your organization is taught to students and its relevance to, at least two, Subject Areas.

- 1 - Unsure of vague
- 2 - Mentions course topic and covers one Subject Area
- 3 - Mentions course topic and elaborates; covers two or more Subject Areas

Interview Notes

2. What Council publications does your organization use in your CDA courses and how are they integrated?

- No publications used, does not know the proper name of the publications
- Lists publications and name
- Publications: Lists publications and name

Interview Notes

Reflective Question for Organizational Representative(s)

What do you hope the Council learns from the information provided in the instructor interview and course observation?

Notes

Total Points

Calculate all scores and enter total amount.

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Payment Voucher Submission

To receive payment for this completed Site Visit Review, please follow the instructions listed below:

1. Download the required CDA Gold Standard Specialist Payment Voucher from http://www.cdacouncil.org/goldstandard/forms.
2. Complete all of the necessary information.
3. Email the completed form to GSS@cdacouncil.org
4. Wait for payment voucher to be received and payment processed by the Council's Finance Team.

If you have any questions regarding your payment status, be sure to send an email to GSS@cdacouncil.org.

Council for Professional Recognition
2460 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009-3547

P 202-265-9090
E goldstandard@cdacouncil.org
W www.cdacouncil.org/goldstandard

Appendix Five

PAYMENT VOUCHER

CDA Gold Standard℠ Site Visit Review Payment Voucher

Complete this form after the Site Visit Review is completed. Scan and email to GSSvoucher@CDACouncil.org.

GOLD STANDARD SPECIALIST

Note: Please print.

LAST NAME | FIRST NAME | JOB TITLE

Address and Contact Information:

STREET ADDRESS | CITY | STATE | ZIP CODE

( ) - ( ) -

PRIMARY PHONE NUMBER | SECONDARY PHONE NUMBER | EMAIL ADDRESS

SITE VISIT

NAME OF ORGANIZATION	SITE VISIT REVIEW DATE	ORGANIZATION ID NUMBER	SITE VISIT REVIEW CITY/STATE

NUMBER OF VISITS COMPLETED	TOTAL AMOUNT
	$

I certify that all payments requested are for appropriate purposes and in accordance with the agreements set forth in my contract. Specialist performing work under this contract by an organization by Federal funds, shall, concurrent with the filing of this voucher, certify as follows: **The work portion thereof for which payment is requested was performed while on authorized annual or compensatory leave from an agency or organization supported with Federal funds and was performed with the knowledge of the agency or organization.**

SIGNATURE | DATE

ALL VOUCHERS MUST BE SIGNED. ALL UNSIGNED VOUCHERS WILL BE RETURNED.

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - FOR COUNCIL'S USE ONLY

GS Team Approval Signature: _____ Approved by: _____

Verified by: _____ Date: _____

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2460 16th Street, NW
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Appendix Six

GLOSSARY

CDA Student: A student of early childhood education who is pursuing the Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™.

CDA Competency Standards: Criteria that define the skills that a competent early care and education professional should demonstrate in working with young children. There are six Competency Standards:

1. To establish and maintain a safe, healthy learning environment
2. To advance physical and intellectual competence
3. To support social and emotional development and to provide positive guidance
4. To establish positive and productive relationships with families
5. To ensure a well-run, purposeful program responsive to participant needs
6. To maintain a commitment to professionalism

CDA Gold Standard℠: The CDA Gold Standard℠ provides public recognition to early childhood education-related organizations that demonstrate to the Council their commitment to advancing professional development and training for CDA® students.

CDA® Credential Type: Describes the setting and age group of the credential type a CDA Student is applying for.

Center-Based:

- **Infant/Toddler (I/T):** Center-Based/children (ages birth-36 months old)
- **Preschool (PS):** Center-Based/children (ages 3-5 years old)

Home-Based:

- **Family Child Care (FCC):** Home-Based/children (ages birth-5 years old)

Home Visiting Program:

- **Home Visitor (HV):** Home-Based/children (ages birth-5 years old)

CDA® Subject Areas: The Eight (8) CDA® Subject Areas refer to the course work and the body of knowledge Students must possess at the time of CDA application and demonstration:

1. **CDA Subject Area 1** - Planning a safe and healthy learning environment
2. **CDA Subject Area 2** - Advancing children's physical and intellectual development
3. **CDA Subject Area 3** - Supporting children's social and emotional development
4. **CDA Subject Area 4** - Building productive relationships with families
5. **CDA Subject Area 5** - Managing an effective program operation
6. **CDA Subject Area 6** - Maintaining a commitment to professionalism
7. **CDA Subject Area 7** - Observing and recording children's behavior
8. **CDA Subject Area 8** - Understanding principles of child development and learning

Conflict of Interest: A situation in which a person or organization is involved in multiple interests, financial or otherwise, that could possibly corrupt the objective purview or decision-making of an individual or organization. Also considered a conflict is a relationship that might interfere with a Gold Standard Specialist's ability to be objective in assessing an organization.

Relationships with students that are unacceptable for serving in the GSS role include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Member of the organization
- Past employer
- Financial interest

Council for Professional Recognition (The Council): A nonprofit organization that promotes improved performance and recognition for professionals in early childhood education of children age birth to 5 years old. The Council administers the CDA Gold Standard℠.

Course Instructor: An individual employed by a training organization to deliver instruction, in person or virtually, to students working toward the CDA.

Course Developer: An individual employed by a training organization to develop CDA curriculum.

Gold Standard Site Visit Review: This is the organizational review process utilized by the Council to satisfy Principal III and to discuss the information submitted as well as assess the quality of the coursework delivered. It is composed of three parts:

1. **Gold Standard Instructor Interview:** The instructor interview is a **45-minute** meeting during which the GSS and the designated course instructor (developer or other) discuss the instructor's perspective of the CDA® coursework they are providing and how the organization addresses his or her professional needs.
2. **Gold Standard Course Observation:** The GS course observation is a 1- to 2-hour process that provides the opportunity for a Gold Standard Specialist (GSS) to observe the CDA® learning environment, the teaching and professional development activities and to confirm the training organization's coursework alignment information.
3. **Gold Standard Organization Interview:** The organizational interview is a **45-minute** meeting during which the GSS and the organization's representative reflect upon the information shared in the organization's application as well as the two other components of the Site Visit Review process.

Gold Standard Site Visit Review Scoring Instrument: The tool used by the GSS to collect, record and score feedback obtained during the Site Visit Review.

Gold Standard Specialist (GSS): The GSS is an independent consultant with experience and expertise in Early Childhood Education and adult-learning principles who conducts the Gold Standard Site Visit Review (a required step in the CDA Gold Standard℠ process).

Gold Standard Specialist Pre-Visit Worksheet: A list of action items to be completed by the Gold Standard Specialist prior to the Site Visit.

Hybrid Course: A course presented by an organization utilizing multiple (ex. online, on-site) delivery modalities.

Online Course: A course presented by an organization that utilizes an online platform for delivery.

On-Site Course: A course presented by an organization in real-time, face to face.

Principles: The Council's standards for the Gold Standard are based upon three primary principles and related activities that every organization must meet. Each of the two CDA Gold Standard℠ types (Comprehensive and Select) are built upon the three principles.

Principle I: Business Policies and Practices

Principle II: Quality Student Services

Principle III: CDA® Alignment

R.O.R. (Review, Observe, and Reflect): R.O.R. stands for Review, Observe and Reflect. The CDA Gold Standard℠ Site Visit Review utilizes the Council's R.O.R. Model®, which is an evidence-based approach that supports the manner in which GSS's engage with the organization during the Site Visit Review process. The R.O.R. Model® provides the framework for the GSS to look beyond the submitted documentation to consider how the training program functions to support the CDA® credential and the students completing it.

Synchronous: Online classes that occur on set schedules and time frames. Students and instructors are online at the same time in synchronous classes since lectures, discussions and presentations take place at specific hours. All students must be online at that exact time in order to participate in the class.

Questions about the CDA® Gold Standard Specialist?
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