

## *Changing perspectives, developing critical skills*

Crystal Jefferson is an Administrative Assistant with the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board. The Board plays an important role in the province serving as a regulator for public utilities and certain industries, and as an adjudicative body under a number of other acts. Transparency and accountability are critical.

“Almost everything we produce is accessible to the public,” says Crystal. “Making sure our materials are clear, complete and correct is essential. It’s a matter of professionalism and credibility.”



To help ensure her own high standards of professionalism, Crystal completed the [Certificate in Business Communication](#). Her focus was on written communication since her job requires extensive correspondence with clients and helping to ready orders handed down by the Board for public access.

“I wanted to tweak my skills,” says Crystal. “Language changes; there are new trends in the field. I wanted a refresher.”

Crystal achieved her goal and much more. “I learned how to work smarter,” she says. “I discovered I needed to give my brain a break so my writing would be even sharper, crisper and more concise.”

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The examples provided by her instructor were very helpful, says Crystal, because they were real-world examples. Equally helpful was the group work that is an inherent part of this certificate program. “It opens your mind,” says Crystal of working with participants from various industries and different parts of the country. “People are reading things differently and writing things differently. Your perspective changes as a result.”

For Crystal, the opportunity to continue refreshing her skills and her insight continued after her program came to an end. Her courses provided reference materials and sometimes books that participants could use on their own to answer questions, apply what they learned, and further hone their communications skills. “I’m still immersing myself in the material we were given,” says Crystal. “Best of all, I’m applying what I learned to my work. My ability to communicate has improved as a result.”