Foreign Qualification Recognition in Alberta

Engineers Canada
Open Forum, Calgary, May 21, 2015

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Presentation Overview

• FQR Plan for Alberta
  – Guiding Principles
• Key strategic FQR focus areas with Professional Regulatory Organizations (PROs)
  – Streamlining Pathways
  – Bridging the Gap
  – Monitoring FQR Outcomes
  – System Communication and Coordination
• FQR Challenges and Opportunities
A Foreign Qualification Recognition Plan for Alberta (FQR Plan)

- Launched November 2008
- **FQR Plan Objective** - to ensure immigrants will have the opportunity to fully use their education, skills and work experience for the benefit of themselves and the Alberta economy

Key Principles of the Alberta FQR Plan

- Facilitate the labour market integration of immigrants while maintaining Alberta’s occupational standards
- Focus is on successful licensure and employment outcomes
- Promoting accurate, fair and transparent recognition of foreign qualifications
- Collaborative and supportive approach that recognizes many stakeholders have an important role
- Support continuous improvement: ensure accountabilities and measures for success are clear
Alberta Government’s Role: Building Capacity for Improvement

- **Foreign Qualifications Innovation Fund** provides funding to our stakeholders to support the development of the tools and resources they need to improve FQR
- From 2009 to date, the FQR Innovation Fund has made strategic investments of $5.6 million in 59 projects to:
  - improve the timeliness, consistency and transparency of the assessment of international qualifications by PROs and improve licensure success rates
  - develop resources to help employers better recruit, integrate and retain internationally educated talent

Alberta Government Role: Facilitating Linkages and Dialogue

- Sharing best practices
- Exploring opportunities for collaboration
- Leveraging and building upon existing tools and resources
- Improving dialogue across stakeholders to improve system coordination
- Sharing criteria and setting the stage for the strategic focus of upcoming FQR Innovation Funding calls for proposals
Expand PRO capacity to streamline pathways to licensure

Professional Licensure Pathways

The Alberta FQR Innovation Fund provides targeted support to PROs to further increase the level of innovation, efficiency and flexibility in the assessment processes including:

• On-line information and pre-arrival assistive tools (e.g., self-assessment tools)
• Tools and supports to improve licensure success (e.g., exam preparation, peer supports)
• Build capacity of PROs to fairly and consistently assess and recognize foreign qualifications
Improving the assessment process- some examples

- The College of Physical Therapists of Alberta (CPTA) developed a **web-based credential assessment tool** that streamlined and expedited assessment processes.
- The College of Opticians of Alberta (COA) developed an **online gap analysis tool** to help internationally trained professionals determine what they need to become certified.
- Certified Management Accountants (CMA) developed an **online evaluation tool** where applicants were provided with an immediate evaluation of whether their courses met the requirements to write a National Certified Management Accountants (CMA) entrance exam.

Examples from APEGA

Completed projects to:

- Review and identify how cultural differences may affect the registration process.
- Provide staff training on cultural issues.
- Improve information resources for ITWs.
- Facilitate successful integration of ITWs into the labour market through a diversity advisor to provide job search training and coaching.
Bridging the Gap

Bridging for licensure success

- Support the development of resources and programs that bridge ITWs to professional standards and improve licensing outcomes
- Bridging programs include:
  - Content specific to the occupation in the Canadian context
  - Profession specific language training
  - Examination preparation resources and mentoring
Some Bridging Examples

- The College of Dietitians of Alberta collaborated with the University of Alberta to create **4 web-based interactive, online, modularized bridging courses** that provide a pathway for applicants to enter the profession without having to repeat their education.
- Alberta College of Pharmacists developed **online ethics and jurisprudence course**.

Other bridging examples

- Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professions of Alberta provided **technical report writing** training and professional **practice exam** preparation.
- Society of Management Accountants of Alberta conducted focus groups to identify challenges with the accreditation process, provided **diversity training to instructors**, and implemented automated statistical reporting.
Purpose of Data Collection

- Annual data collected directly from PROs using formalized template
- Metrics on application outcomes of internationally trained workers applying for licensure/registration
- Data collection on reasons why applicant was or was not successful by source country:
  - Educational credential, English language, work experience, examinations, etc.
- Data supports evidence-based FQR investments to ensure continuous improvement of outcomes for ITWs
Strengthen communication and linkages among stakeholders

FQR Forums

- November 25 2014 ‘Building Bridges’
  – Employers, PROs, Post-secondary Institutions, Immigrant Serving Organizations
- March 24 2015 ‘Designing Bridges’
  – PROs and Post-secondary Institutions
- June 17 2015 ‘Diving into the Talent Pool’
  – Employers
- Landing Page has forum information, speaker PowerPoints and videos:
  www.AlbertaCanada.com/FQRforum
What we heard from PROs - challenges

- Many ITWs do not meet standards and require bridging: how can we sustain bridging for ITWs over the long term?
- Smaller scale projects: how can we improve FQR for smaller regulatory bodies that have limited resources?
- Language capability - particularly in relation to technical/workplace language
- Lack of opportunity for ITWs to become familiar with Canadian workplace culture and norms
- Lack of alignment between immigration system and provincial regulatory process can create false expectations and frustration for ITWs

What we heard from PROs - opportunities for improvement

- Mentorship both pre and post licensure
- Move to more competency based assessments
- Navigational support for ITWs (e.g., diversity officers, one-stop information support centres)
- Funding for bridging programs - keeping costs down through collaboration, sharing of platforms and materials
- Structure of bridging programs - use technology to create more flexible program designs
Next Steps

• Continued investments to support improvements in FQR –our stakeholders continue to be our leaders for change!
• Using data to inform strategic investments - what key areas will have the greatest impact on successful licensure outcomes
• Building system-wide dialogue to support improvements through sharing of best practices, collaboration and partnerships

For further information, please visit: work.alberta.ca/fqr

You can contact me directly at: Kathleen.Morrow@gov.ab.ca

I would be pleased to answer any questions!! Thank you!