



Foreign Qualification Recognition in Alberta

Engineers Canada
Open Forum, Calgary, May 21, 2015

Kathleen Morrow
Director, Domestic and International Labour Mobility
Alberta Government



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

A Foreign Qualification Recognition Plan for Alberta

Government of Alberta

Alberta

Alberta 3

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 4

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

Alberta⁵

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

Alberta⁶

Expand PRO capacity to streamline pathways to licensure

7

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

The logo for the province of Alberta, featuring the word "Alberta" in a stylized script font followed by a small square icon containing the number 8.

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

Alberta⁹

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

Alberta¹⁰

Bridging the Gap

11

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

The logo for the province of Alberta, featuring the word "Alberta" in a stylized script font with a small blue square containing a white number "12" to its right.

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**



Alberta¹³

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



Alberta¹⁴

Monitoring FQR Outcomes

15

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

The logo for the province of Alberta, featuring the word "Alberta" in a stylized script font with a small blue square containing the number "16" to its right.

Strengthen communication and linkages among stakeholders

17

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



Alberta¹⁸

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 work place culture and norms
- Lack of alignment between immigration system and provincial regulatory process can create false expectations and frustration for ITWs

Alberta¹⁹

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

Alberta²⁰

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

Alberta²¹

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!

Alberta²²