



From the office of the Chief Executive Officer / Du cabinet du chef de la direction

30 September 2024

Hon. Randy Boissonnault
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages

Via E-mail and Online Consultation Form (randy.boissonnault@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca)

Re: Consultation on Building a Modern 21st Century Workforce

Dear Minister:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our views in response to the ongoing consultation on “Building a Modern 21st Century Workforce.” Engineers Canada represents the 12 provincial and territorial engineering regulators in Canada, which collectively license the more than 300,000 members of the engineering profession. As the only national voice for the engineering profession, we have a history of collaborating with the federal government to inform and develop legislation, regulations, and policies.

Engineers are critical to Canada’s future. Whether it is addressing the challenges of climate change, dealing with complex energy systems, ensuring safety and security in the deployment of new software tools and other technologies, or creating a resilient built environment, Canada cannot grow in a healthy and sustainable way without the professional contribution of engineers. That is why the engineering profession has taken a proactive role in building an inclusive, productive and mobile workforce while ensuring public safety.

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Equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility

Engineers Canada is actively collaborating with provincial and territorial regulators, post-secondary institutions, and employers to address a culture of systemic discrimination in engineering. Women and gender-diverse engineers, Indigenous peoples, Black individuals, people of colour, 2SLGBTQ+ persons, and individuals with disabilities continue to face systemic obstacles and toxic work environments. Despite the progress made by engineering regulators in promoting equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in engineering, there is still more work to do.

The federal government has a crucial role to play in driving this change. The federal government should continue to recognize that diverse and inclusive workplaces are more creative, flexible, collaborative, supportive, and productive. By investing in equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives, the engineering profession can effectively address the challenges faced by society and promote Canada's innovative capacity. Maintenance of the economy and Canadian society requires recognition of the talents of individuals from all segments of society.

To start, we recommend that the federal government:

- **Strengthen the *Employment Equity Act*** to hold more employers accountable in hiring, retention, and promotion in their workplaces, and to combat cultures of exclusion.
- **Invest in employer training programs.** The federal government should allocate funds to support ongoing training programs for employers that focus on inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) in the engineering profession. These programs should provide guidance on learning about creating inclusive workplaces, mentorship opportunities for all equity-deserving engineers, systems of oppression, and work-integrated learning initiatives that encourage individuals from equity-seeking identities to pursue engineering education and careers.
- **Support outreach and access initiatives** to cultivate a diverse talent pool in engineering. The federal government should provide financial support for outreach programs, access initiatives, bursaries, mentorship programs, and work-integrated learning opportunities. These initiatives should specifically target equity-deserving groups, including women and Indigenous peoples, encouraging them to pursue engineering education and remain engaged in engineering careers. It is crucial to allocate funding to support Indigenous people's access programs to post-secondary engineering education across Canada.
- **Provide resources for IDEA in underserved areas** to ensure that small and medium-sized enterprises and remote workplaces in industries such as mining and natural resources have access to IDEA resources.

Strength of Canada’s approach to professional self-regulation

In Canada, the provinces and territories each have legislation governing the regulation of professions, including engineering. Self-regulation of the engineering profession protects and enhances public health, safety, welfare, the economy, and the environment. Canada’s 12 provincial and territorial engineering regulators are world leaders in regulatory excellence and labour mobility while protecting the paramount public interest.

To ensure public safety and welfare, as well as to protect the environment and prevent serious economic harm, international and Canadian engineering graduates must meet the same high standards to practice in and across Canada. It is through becoming licensed with a provincial or territorial engineering regulatory body that there is assurance that all engineers meet this standard, regardless of the country where they obtained their degree. It is also through the provincial and territorial regulatory bodies that international and Canadian engineers can be held accountable for their practice in Canada, thereby addressing the public interest in such matters.

In May 2024, the 12 provincial and territorial engineering regulators signed a historic [National Statement of Collaboration](#) which reflects engineering regulators' renewed commitment to proactively work together to address national and international barriers to mobility for engineers and engineering entities, further advancing public safety and increasing regulatory efficiency. This agreement will serve as a basis for collective efforts to improve labour mobility for engineers in Canada. To improve labour mobility and strengthen regulatory excellence, we recommend that the federal government:

- **Consult provincial and territorial regulatory bodies** when making national and international policy and legislative decisions that could affect the regulators’ ability to protect the public interest and ensure public safety.
- Work with regulators and provincial and territorial governments to identify ways to **strengthen the Canadian Free Trade Agreement**.
- **Support the maintenance of high standards** already in place while enhancing inter-provincial and inter-territorial mobility.
- **Facilitate the development of appropriate agreements** towards the mobility of qualified engineering professionals between jurisdictions nationally and internationally.
- **Ensure that those international engineers who come to Canada to practice engineering in or for the federal government or in federally regulated industries meet Canadian standards** through becoming licensed with a provincial or territorial engineering regulatory authority.

- **Consult with Engineers Canada when considering new free trade agreements** that impact the mobility of engineers.

We thank the government for the opportunity to engage on this important issue. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your team to discuss this and other key topics. To schedule a meeting, please contact Nathan Durham, Manager, Public Affairs at 613.232.2474 x265 or nathan.durham@engineerscanada.ca.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip Rizcallah". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Philip" being more prominent than the last name "Rizcallah".

Philip Rizcallah, P.Eng.
Chief Executive Officer, Engineers Canada

CC: Jeanette M. Southwood, FCAE, FEC, LL.D. (honoris causa), P.Eng., IntPE, Vice-President,
Corporate Affairs and Strategic Partnerships
Nathan Durham, Manager, Public Affairs