



CANADIAN COUNCIL OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS
CONSEIL CANADIEN DES INGÉNIEURS

Sweeping recommendations aim to help International Engineering Graduates

A seminar on “Working in Canada”, a database of recognized engineering degrees and a comprehensive, single source website are just three of 17 recommendations announced in May by the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE) and its members. The recommendations are part of a collaborative effort to help international engineering graduates (IEGs) integrate into the Canadian engineering profession and workforce.

The recommendations are the result of a three-phase initiative entitled From Consideration to Integration (FC2I) that has been tackling a range of difficulties in licensing and employing IEGs. The recommendations address the issues without compromising public safety or lowering professional standards. FC2I is fully funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

“All Canadians benefit when new Canadians can gain employment in their profession,” says Human Resources and Skills Development Canada Minister Joe Volpe. “This initiative supports the Government of Canada’s approach to innovation and learning that addresses the national challenge of ensuring Canadians possess the skills and knowledge to fully participate in the knowledge-based economy.”

The Canadian Council of Professional Engineers leads the FC2I Steering Committee which has representatives from federal and provincial governments, the engineering regulatory bodies, employers, immigrant-serving organizations, educators, engineers and IEGs themselves. This diversity of representation, the level of consultation and the holistic approach with which the engineers tackled the project, set it apart from other similar initiatives.

“We know that many immigrants with a background in engineering want to work in the profession once they are here,” says Darrel J. Danyluk, P.Eng., Chair of the FC2I Steering Committee, “but we also know they face language and cultural barriers, employment difficulties and challenges in accessing clear information; we looked at each of these areas, in addition to the licensing process itself.”

Other recommendations include:

- Providing IEGs with a provisional licence once they have met all requirements for licensure except the one year of Canadian experience. In this way, employers can have full confidence in the IEG’s technical and communications abilities,
- Developing a mentoring program,
- Determining which elements of the engineering licensing process can be done overseas, to speed the process after they arrive in Canada.

“Canada has a reputation for engineering excellence,” says Saeed Ziaee, P.Eng., founder and product development manager of Intelligent Engineering Solutions Inc., a research and development firm in Toronto with a specialty in medical devices, and an IEG from Iran. “As immigrants with an engineering background, we want to help maintain that excellence and to contribute to the Canadian economy; these recommendations will help us do that faster and with fewer complications.

“We’re very pleased that our unique approach to this issue - extensive consultations and a widely representative Steering Committee - has resulted in such a substantive set of recommendations,” says Marie Lemay, Chief Executive Officer of CCPE. “We look forward to implementing these with our partners so we can make a positive difference for IEGs.”

An implementation plan is currently in development. As part of that plan, FC2I organizers are organizing a series of roundtable meetings with settlement groups, the engineering and technical community, and

with the provincial and territorial licensing bodies. The goal is to determine what role these stakeholders may see for themselves in implementing the recommendations. An implementation plan should be in place by late fall, 2004.

Launched in January 2003, FC2I is a three-phase project. In Phase I, work focused on understanding the IEG experience, examining provincial and territorial engineering licensing procedures, and learning from those who work with and employ IEGs. In Phase II, the Steering Committee analyzed the information, determined where the process of integration needs improvement and began to build consensus among stakeholders on possible solutions.

In Phase III, the Steering Committee will work with key stakeholders to implement the recommendations and to develop supporting information materials.

The Canadian Council of Professional Engineers is the national organization of the 12 provincial and territorial associations/ordre that regulate the practice of engineering in Canada and license the country’s more than 160,000 professional engineers.

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