

## 10.0 Final Recommendations

The recommendations developed by the FC2I Steering Committee are in response to issues identified by IEGs, settlement agencies, engineering regulatory bodies and employers, and are intended to achieve the overall goal of helping IEGs integrate into the engineering workforce, and to obtain their P.Eng./ing. in a timely fashion.

In this section of the report, the recommendations have been grouped according to their general focus. Additional explanatory notes have been added, to clarify the intent of each recommendation.

### Research

The profession acknowledges the need to better understand IEGs and the employment market into which they are immigrating. To that end, there are three recommendations focussing on research:

**i. Track all applicants, including IEGs, throughout the licensing system.** Understanding how effectively the licensing system is being navigated will permit the profession to determine where candidates are having difficulty, and where problems seem to be specific to IEGs.

**ii. Conduct research to determine the factors leading to low licensure uptake.** In most regions of Canada, very few IEGs apply for licensure, relative to the number who immigrate. Understanding the rationale behind not applying for licensure could have implications for the profession and help explain the perceived and real value of the P.Eng./ing. It is important to study both IEGs and CEAB graduates so that issues common to both groups can be identified, as well as those unique to IEGs.

**iii. Undertake an engineering labour market study that also develops models to provide current and ongoing labour market information, including maintenance and dissemination.** Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC, the former HRDC) has financed labour market studies for other sectors, and defines them as “forward-looking analyses of current and future human resources development needs, issues and challenges facing a particular industry or occupation, such as the

supply and demand of skilled labour, the impact of changing technology, the need for skills upgrading and the adequacy of existing training.” It is this type of study that the Steering Committee is recommending. The Steering Committee also sees that the labour market study will involve developing the tools that will allow the profession to have accurate, up-to-date Labour Market Information over time after the study is completed.

### Information, Culture and Language

Having access to clear, accurate information, understanding cultural issues and being able to communicate effectively are all key issues for IEGs. This set of recommendations addresses these issues:

**iv. Provide accurate and consistent information about the engineering profession, licensing process, employment situation and IEG support agencies, prior to and after arrival in Canada.** Such information could be on the web or in print where practical and necessary. It is also important that the content for any information piece is supplied by the agency most appropriate to do so. Licensing information, for example, should come from the regulatory bodies while information on employment or language would come from other agencies. Providing accurate information would also entail being upfront with candidates who are clearly not going to be able to practice as engineers in Canada, and referring them to the associations representing, for example, technicians, technologists or architects. Finally, information – both its content and delivery – must be culturally sensitive, respecting the backgrounds of the IEGs coming to Canada.

**v. Provide a single source of engineering information on the Internet for IEGs; do this through the Going to Canada portal which would link to regulatory bodies’ sites.** Many IEGs turn to the Internet for information about the licensing process. Being able to direct them to a single, credible portal would make the information search process much easier and help demystify the licensing process.

**vi. Determine and implement effective relationships between settlement agencies and regulatory bodies to enhance communication and information exchange.** In some regions, the relationship between settlement agencies and the regulatory bodies is well-established and effective, while in others there is simply no relationship at all. Given the influential role that these agencies play in the lives of IEGs, it is crucial that IEGs be able to rely on the information provided to them by the agencies. That information is much more likely to be accurate if the agency obtains it from the regulatory body. It would be up to each regulatory body in conjunction with the agency, to determine the nature of the relationship.

**vii. Make information available at the regulatory body to IEGs in a simple, timely, personal, easy-to-access manner.** Throughout the Phase II process, IEGs referred to the difficulty they had in understanding the role of the regulatory bodies, and in their inability to “just talk” to someone. While the original recommendation had been for the regulatory bodies to provide a single point of contact for IEGs to help them navigate the licensing process, it is recognized that this may not be practical in all jurisdictions. This revised recommendation places an emphasis on taking a customer service approach, so that IEGs feel well-served by the regulatory body, rather than seeing the body as an impediment to their being able to find work or achieve licensure in Canada.

## Licensing

The licensing process is seen as unnecessarily difficult and lengthy by many IEGs. This set of recommendations addresses those concerns, while maintaining rigorous standards so as to protect public safety:

**viii. Develop and set a language standard to ensure IEGs have the appropriate level of English or French proficiency to navigate through the licensing process.** This recommendation recognizes that the regulatory bodies are not responsible for language testing. Instead, a Phase III project would involve determining what the language requirement

should be to work one’s way through the licensing process. Once this has been determined – and it may differ for oral, written, and reading skills – it should be clearly communicated to IEGs so that they can then present the regulatory bodies with proof of their having met the standard.

**ix. Permit IEGs to prepare for and write the PPE at any time during the licensing process.** Allowing IEGs to write the PPE at any time inserts more flexibility into the licensing process, and by preparing for the PPE before immigration, IEGs may become more aware of the Canadian manner of conducting business and working on teams.

**x. Establish an accurate, current database of recognized non-CEAB degrees and institutions that will be used in a consistent manner in the licensing system.** The form that this database will take is a key Phase III project. Working with the regulatory bodies, criteria for inclusion on the list would be determined, and various levels of degrees would also likely be determined (so as to differentiate CEAB and Washington Accord degrees from others). It is also key that the database, once established, remain current and be used consistently by all regulatory bodies.

**xi. Study the feasibility of alternative systems of evaluating an applicant’s professional competency for licensure in comparison with the current Canadian system.** While there has been discussion about moving towards a competency-based system, there may also be other systems to which the profession should look to determine if the current licensing process can be streamlined without putting public safety at risk.

**xii. Determine and implement the elements of the licensing process that can be done pre-immigration.** While some regulatory bodies already provide this flexibility, it is not consistently offered. Being able to work through much of the licensing process pre-immigration will certainly streamline the system, permit IEGs to recognize what is involved in the process before they immigrate and save time for IEGs once they arrive in Canada.

**xiii. Implement an interim approval mechanism at the regulatory bodies that will indicate to employers that the applicant has met all requirements for licensure except the one year of Canadian experience (e.g. provisional licensure).**

IEGs have consistently said that obtaining an engineering job is the most challenging aspect of being a new immigrant. Given that many employers view the P.Eng./ing. as a stamp of approval, this recommendation proposes an interim step, that would allow IEGs to demonstrate their readiness for employment while still adhering to the licensing process.

### **Employment**

Obtaining a job once in Canada is the number one challenge for IEGs and their area of greatest concern. These recommendations address that concern.

**xiv. Create a “Working in Canada” seminar for IEGs.** Many IEGs who have successfully found engineering work or obtained their P.Eng./ing. have noted that among their key challenges was learning to negotiate the Canadian workplace – its culture and norms. A "Working in Canada" seminar, developed in partnership with settlement agencies and likely delivered by them, could help bridge that cultural gap.

**xv. Promote the concept that cross-cultural training be taken by licensing body volunteers and staff, CCPE, IEGs, and employers.** It is important to note that cross-cultural understanding is not a one-way street. It is likely that regulatory body staff and volunteers – and others who work with IEGs – would benefit from cross-cultural training so that they can better appreciate the IEG’s perspective. The issue of who would develop and deliver this training, and the level of regulatory body involvement, would be determined in Phase III.

**xvi. Undertake a study to determine best practices in the employment area for integrating IEGs into the workplace (e.g. internship, job matching, job fairs, job boards).** While regulatory bodies are not in a position to create jobs for IEGs, they can facilitate a meeting of IEGs and employers. What form that facilitation should take would be the topic of a study, to be undertaken in Phase III.

**xvii. Develop a mentoring program for IEGs.** Mentoring often came up during Phase II as a valuable tool for IEGs – someone to help them understand the Canadian engineering licensing process and the employment culture.