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## Areas for Discussion in Phase II

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### **IMMIGRATION**

- Several mechanisms exist for entry into Canada, both temporary and permanent. A discussion on how to make information on the job market and regulated professions available throughout the process is essential.
- Phase II of this project will confirm the most widely used sources of information by immigrants in order to better determine how to ensure IEGs have the information they need prior to making the decision to immigrate.
- Phase II will also consider the value of having an engineering pre-assessment involved in the immigration process.
- Examine the Provincial Nominee system to determine its successes and lessons learned.

### **IEGs IN PROFILE**

- Determine how to consistently gather information on IEGs within every regulatory body, to assess how they move through the licensing process.
- Constructing a demographic profile of IEGs would allow the profession to better meet the needs of international engineering graduates and improve IEGs' chances of becoming licensed.
- It would be useful to better understand the determinants of success for IEGs — for example, what impact does language proficiency have? What impact does settling within one's own minority group have?
- Identifying IEGs as they immigrate and tracking them through their first five years of settlement could reveal much about how the process of integration could be improved.

## **IEGs BEFORE IMMIGRATION**

- Information on the Canadian licensing system and on the job market for engineers is not widely available and even IEGs who access the CCPE's or its members' websites prior to immigrating may not fully appreciate the licensing system since few countries share Canada's approach. A discussion of how to make this information more widely available and easier to understand, would be valuable. An examination of the practices of provincial jurisdictions currently working through these issues would contribute to this discussion.
- Foreign credentials may be assessed differently by different groups and for different reasons. A discussion around how best to clarify which assessments are for licensing purposes and which are for immigration purposes would be valuable.
- It would be worthwhile to discuss what can be communicated to an IEG about licensure steps that can be taken before they leave their home countries. (Following the lead of some provincial jurisdictions.)
- The project team should investigate the possibility of linking CCPE's EIEAP website with the licensing process in each jurisdiction as well as to job information.
- Assess how frequently IEGs conduct research prior to coming to Canada and if that research assists them in settling in Canada and obtaining meaningful engineering employment.

## **ARRIVAL IN CANADA**

- IEGs, like all other immigrants, come in contact with a number of organizations when they arrive to Canada. Some groups play a central role in ensuring IEGs are properly supported in their employment and licensure quest but could this be improved and could more groups be involved?
- The extent to which immigrants make use of government-funded services in smaller centres, can be studied in Phase II.
- Greater coordination is required between settlement groups and regulatory bodies. Partnerships — such as the one formed between the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of the Province of Manitoba and the Citizenship Council (International Centre) — are valuable.
- Should there be a consolidation of settlement resource and licensure information available to IEGs?

## **SETTLEMENT SUPPORT**

- A web scan of general settlement resources reveals that a significant amount of information is available to immigrants. Further research is required to determine how immigrants use this information and whether they have difficulty in accessing the information they seek.
- Settlement agencies, as newcomers' first points of contact, are often newcomers' first sources of information on the labour market. A discussion on how to leverage this in disseminating information about licensure to IEGs would be valuable.

## **LICENSING**

- It would be useful to determine if the differences among the licensing processes of the regulatory bodies have an impact on an IEG's ability to successfully navigate that process.
- Should there be a process to facilitate the licensing of IEGs in multiple jurisdictions?

- Given the differences in nomenclature across the country, it could be helpful to examine whether or not a common language would be useful.
- In as much as the regulatory bodies have developed processes in the context of their own jurisdictions, a discussion around best practices could be helpful.
- Do IEGs obtain their licenses faster if they begin the process overseas? Do a higher percentage succeed? Could distance learning play a role?
- What role can employers play in encouraging licensure among IEGs, and indeed, facilitating that process?
- The profession must consider a single registration form for multiple jurisdictions to facilitate interprovincial/territorial mobility.
- Are there repetitive activities that can be standardized in the licensing process i.e. is there a need to continue to assess degrees from specific universities?

### **IEG PERSPECTIVES**

- There is a need for better information prior to coming to Canada (e.g., a detailed outline of the processes required to become an engineer, the importance of the license in Canada, the job market, etc.)
- Determine methods of encouraging employers to hire IEGs before they are licensed (perhaps involve the government in this process such as establishing programs that might compensate employers for hiring international engineering graduates.)
- Shorten processing time (perhaps have paid staff on evaluation committees.)
- Create different methods of evaluating experience (e.g., only by interview or the ability to waive the one-year Canadian experience).
- Create organizations that could provide contacts and network opportunities for those in similar situations.
- Consider allowing the writing of confirmatory examinations abroad; it is understood that PEO, for example, already allows for the writing of professional practice examinations in more than 40 countries.

### **SETTLEMENT WORKERS' PERSPECTIVES**

- Programs for IEGs should begin pre-arrival. They should take the form of information sessions, and should facilitate a matching program in Canada, where the main objective would be to get the applicant into the engineering profession, not merely into the labour market.
- Another major challenge is that mandates, which are dictated largely by those who provide their funding (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage), direct that their main focus be to getting a client off of social assistance and into the workforce, not into their profession. While this is understandable, getting a client working and getting a client working in their profession are two different processes. This highlights the need to address the issue of dedicated resources required as an investment so that IEGs are encouraged to make the transition into their profession, not merely into the labour market.
- If provisions could be made to enable settlement and support services to focus on getting the client placed within their profession, then the numbers entering the profession would better reflect the numbers of IEGs.

- One service provider interviewed indicated that the highly specialized technology that engineers use (e.g. AutoCad) should be offered through a program specifically linked to the profession.
- Networking for IEGs is a critical component of their settlement process, and could be set up through the employment community and the settlement and support service sector.

## **OTHER PROFESSIONS**

- Pharmacists and nurses, both professions concerned with public safety, have high ratios of foreign-trained professionals.<sup>43</sup> While the licensing processes of other professions cannot be judged outside of the context in which those processes are situated, there may be practices and policies of interest to the engineering profession. A discussion around the following could be of interest:
  - A number of professions rely on national competency examinations to establish technical competence. (This is also the effective practice of most of the state boards in the United States that are responsible for licensing professional engineers; see Section 11.) Sub-national examinations focus on regulations specific to the jurisdiction and professional ethics.
  - Some professions have adopted a North American competency examination.
  - The evaluation of non-Canadian practical experience (or clinical experience in the medical professions) is a major challenge for all Canadian professions and for engineering professions outside Canada (see Section 11.)
  - Many foreign-trained professionals have limited ability, after immigrating, to document and prove their experience in terms of the paradigm used by a profession to specify the requisite practical experience. This problem becomes more acute when the standards for practical experience are set out with a high degree of rigour and structure.
  - In Canada, the professions differ only moderately in their English language proficiency requirement. All professions rely on standardized proficiency tests.
  - There are dramatic differences across professions in the costs associated with becoming licensed in Canada.

Other, specific observations:

- Manitoba's special course in communications for foreign trained physicians may be an example worth exploring for the engineering profession.
- Ontario's special course for foreign trained nurses offers a potentially useful example, especially in regard to its inclusion of non-technical preparation.
- For actuaries, there is a planned "affiliate" status that is expected to assist foreign trained actuaries who cannot be readily qualified in Canada to obtain relevant employment and thereby open the door to qualification in Canada.
- The clear statement of requirements for qualification as an actuary is thought to be responsible for deterring unqualified applicants and avoiding the frustration that arises from time-consuming and ultimately unsuccessful application attempts.
- There are some themes which the registrars may have been reluctant to pursue over the phone with a consultant. The Steering Committee might consider hosting a round-table with a few of the more relevant professions.

43 50 per cent of Ontario pharmacists are foreign-trained.

## LABOUR FORCE INFORMATION

- Given that many organizations — settlement agencies, governments and immigrants themselves — have often asked for information on job prospects, and yet it is not readily available, it may be the type of study the Committee could consider conducting in Phase II.
- Labour market information that is regionally-specific would be of the most use.

## OTHER JURISDICTIONS

- Among the engineering professions studied, the Australian profession publishes the most rigorous and structured standards for post-graduation experience. By contrast, the published standards of the U.S. state boards — where certain functions are statutorily reserved to licensed engineers — are significantly less structured and rigorous than those of Australia.

## EMPLOYERS' PERSPECTIVES

- The term “international engineering graduates” covers a broad spectrum of individuals. At one end of the spectrum are engineers who were trained in an English-speaking jurisdiction, such as the US, the UK or Australia. These individuals are viewed by employers as having technical qualifications that are equivalent to those of Canadian-trained engineers. Mid-way in the spectrum are engineers who trained in non-English speaking jurisdictions and who hold post-graduate qualifications. These individuals often lack language skills and knowledge of North American business practices. Nevertheless, they are valued by employers for their technical specialization and will often be hired into engineering positions. Further along the spectrum are similar individuals who lack post-graduate training, but who had significant practical experience prior to immigrating to Canada. These individuals may be hired either into engineering positions or into technologist positions, depending on how an employer assesses an individual's suitability. At the far of the spectrum are recent graduates of universities in non-English-speaking countries whose undergraduate programs are not judged commensurate with Canadian (and *Washington Accord*) standards and who have little or no practical engineering experience. Employers will typically likely hire these individuals into technologist positions, rather than engineering positions.
- Although none of the employers interviewed made reference to the *Washington Accord*, they nevertheless appear to treat engineers trained in jurisdictions that are party to the *Washington Accord* as equivalent in technical skills to Canadian-trained engineers.
- None of the employers interviewed found international engineering graduates lacking in technical proficiency. This applied equally to engineers trained in jurisdictions that are not party to the *Washington Accord*.
- Proficiency in English (or French) is the key factor in determining an employer's assessment of an international engineering graduate's suitability for employment.
- Though secondary to language proficiency, knowledge of North American business practices is also an important consideration for employers. However, this factor is more likely to affect the level of employment into which an international engineering graduate is hired whereas language proficiency tends to determine whether an individual is hired.
- Most engineering-intensive employers have experience recruiting and managing international engineering graduates. In many of these companies, individuals who obtained their engineering

education outside Canada now occupy managerial positions. Companies that judge a foreign-trained individual suitable for engineering employment are unlikely to allow the absence of professional registration to deter them from recruiting or promoting such a person, if a license is not legally required. This is especially the case where the international engineering graduate holds post-graduate qualifications. The significant increase in the number of international engineering graduates seeking employment may be leading some companies to reconsider the importance they previously attached to professional licensure.

- To maintain the credibility and standing of professional licensure among employers in sectors where registration is not legally required, it is in the strategic interests of the regulatory bodies to have policies and programmes that demonstrate an understanding of the distinctive circumstances and career challenges of international engineering graduates. The regulatory bodies need to avoid a situation in which there is a loss of support for professional licensure among both international engineering graduates and the companies that employ them. This will be particularly important as a growing number of international engineering graduates advance into managerial positions.
- Upon review of this information, it was noted that lack of Canadian cultural and technical knowledge may hinder IEGs in obtaining work. Even a person with more than ten years of overseas experience would be unfamiliar with such things as Canadian codes, products, construction costs, specifications, tendering processes and construction law.
- The regulatory bodies should consider partnering with post-secondary institutions to offer programmes in *English (or French) as a Second Language for Professionals*. These programmes would assume a strong level of proficiency in basic English (or French) language skills. The purpose of this advanced training would be to assist international engineering graduates to polish their English (or French) language proficiency to a level that is suitable for professional employment. This training would cover the gap between proficiency scores commonly achieved by graduates of basic ESL or FSL programmes and the proficiency scores required by the regulatory bodies for professional registration.
- The regulatory bodies should consider partnering with professional development centres, where they exist, to offer programmes in *Technical English (or French) as a Second Language for Engineers*. This training would focus on the oral and written presentation of technical matters.
- The regulatory bodies should consider facilitating or offering training in essential North American business practices. Among the topics covered by this training would be:
  - tendering, bidding and administering contracts,
  - basic regulatory compliance under health and safety and environmental statutes,
  - organizational practices (especially team methods of organizing engineering work),
  - business development and client relationships.
- The regulatory bodies should consider developing a special internship program for international engineering graduates that would take account of their distinctive circumstances and accelerate their progress towards professional registration.
- Employers will be involved in the Steering Committee of Phase II.