



A COMMITMENT TO FOREIGN CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA PROGRESS REPORT 2009



FOREIGN CREDENTIALS REFERRAL OFFICE
Helping foreign trained workers succeed in Canada



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER CITIZENSHIP, IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURALISM



It is with pleasure that I present *A Commitment to Foreign Credential Recognition*, Government of Canada Progress Report 2009 by the Foreign Credentials Referral Office.

Canada has a long and proud history of attracting newcomers through our immigration programs.

Thousands of immigrants each year are choosing to call Canada home, and contribute their talents to shaping a vibrant, thriving and prosperous future that benefits all Canadians.

Too many immigrants, however, have great challenges integrating into the labour market because of foreign credential recognition issues. We need to make sure that they have an opportunity to transition into jobs for which they were properly trained and qualified as quickly as possible.

The Government of Canada has taken action, in collaboration with our partners, to support the process of assessing and recognizing foreign credentials.

- In December 2008, the Prime Minister provided clear leadership by placing foreign credential recognition on the agenda of the First Ministers' Meeting.
- On January 16, 2009, First Ministers directed the Forum of Labour Market Ministers to develop a framework to guide the collective efforts of governments in foreign credential assessment and recognition.
- Through Canada's Economic Action Plan, announced on January 27, 2009, this government committed \$50 million over two years to work with provinces and territories to address barriers to foreign credential recognition. The *Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications*,

announced on November 30, 2009, will help ensure that foreign credentials are recognized more quickly and in a more consistent way.

- The Government of Canada is also working with Canadian institutions to improve their assessment and recognition practices.
- We are providing support for employers to develop the tools and resources they need to hire, train and retain qualified talent.
- We are also informing immigrants about Canada's foreign credential recognition processes and our labour market as early as possible, preferably while prospective immigrants are still overseas, so that upon arrival in Canada, they can work as quickly as possible in their fields of expertise.

To this end, my department, through the Foreign Credentials Referral Office, will also be expanding and enhancing overseas services to provide orientation sessions to more immigrants, in more source countries.

Immigration has been essential to Canada's development, and this government remains committed to it. We are maintaining the most ambitious immigration intake in the developed world. We want to help immigrants succeed in this country economically, as well as integrate culturally and socially.

Our ability to attract and integrate skilled and dedicated newcomers is essential to our future prosperity and success; it is also part of Canada's competitive advantage. We want newcomers to fully participate in the labour market, and we can do so by helping to open up doors of opportunity to a brighter future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason Kenney'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

The Honourable Jason Kenney, PC, MP
Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER HUMAN RESOURCES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



Newcomers to Canada have an important role to play in our economic recovery. Our country needs their skills.

Many Canadian employers have an urgent need for skilled and experienced workers. Newcomers, for their part, want jobs in their profession or trade.

We all win when newcomers can work to their full potential.

The Forum of Labour Market Ministers, of which I am the Co-Chair, has developed the *Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications*. The Framework will guide the efforts of the federal, provincial and territorial governments to ensure that foreign qualification recognition is timely, fair, transparent and consistent across Canada.

The goal is to speed up the process so that newcomers will know, within one year, whether their qualifications will be recognized. If their credentials are not accepted, they will be informed of additional

requirements for registration, or be directed toward related occupations appropriate to their skills and experience.

The Framework complements the recent implementation of the amended labour mobility chapter of the *Agreement on Internal Trade*. The new provisions enable freer movement for certified workers between the provinces and territories and apply to internationally trained workers. The Government of Canada is committed to helping Canadians work anywhere in the country without any additional training, examinations or assessments.

Canada's Economic Action Plan is designed to help Canadians weather the economic downturn and to give workers access to new opportunities as the economy recovers. Under the Plan, the Government of Canada is investing \$50 million over two years to help put the Framework into effect. In collaboration with our provincial, territorial and industry partners, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada will continue to support the Framework's use and evolution.

When skilled immigrants can make the most of their talents, the result is a more expansive, efficient and responsive labour market. We want to maximize the talents of newcomers to strengthen the economy and improve the standard of living of all Canadians.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Diane Finley". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

The Honourable Diane Finley, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOREIGN CREDENTIALS REFERRAL OFFICE



Since our last report, historic advances have been made in foreign credential recognition (FCR)—a great achievement involving partners and stakeholders across Canada.

In Canada, concerted efforts by all levels of government and our key stakeholders have provided services that immigrants need to realize their potential in the labour force. Initiatives here at home have reduced barriers and closed gaps, making the FCR process easier to navigate. An important innovation in FCR has been the provision of more pre-arrival information and services to prospective immigrants and internationally trained workers. By offering support prior to landing, newcomers are better prepared to integrate into the Canadian labour market.

This commitment to strengthen FCR processes and services that help internationally trained workers is ongoing, but it is a shared responsibility. At the federal level, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada,

Health Canada and Service Canada work together in close collaboration with provinces and territories, regulatory bodies, non-governmental organizations and employers to provide clear and even pathways to credential assessment and recognition.

I am proud of the work that the Foreign Credentials Referral Office (FCRO) has accomplished in support of the government's priorities. The FCRO has played a leadership role in the overseas component of the *Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications*. Through Budget 2009, we are working to expand and enhance overseas services in China, India, the Philippines and U.K. (London). We want to ensure a robust overseas platform to facilitate a comprehensive pre-arrival service for newcomers to Canada.

Over the coming months, we will work with our federal colleagues, provincial and territorial partners and other stakeholders to continue to deliver on commitments made both in Canada and abroad. Our efforts mark the beginning of a long-term strategy to ensure a coordinated approach to FCR—one that will not only benefit newcomers to Canada and internationally trained workers, but also ultimately contribute to this country's success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Corinne Prince-St-Amand". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Corinne Prince-St-Amand
Executive Director,
Foreign Credentials Referral Office

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout our history, newcomers have played an important role in the development of Canada. Today, immigration takes on even more prominence as a primary driver of future population and employment growth. The economy of the 21st century requires high levels of education, training and adaptability in the work force to meet the challenges of a globalized economy. A worldwide demand for knowledgeable and experienced employees has created a competitive market for internationally trained workers.

This second progress report, published by the Foreign Credentials Referral Office (FCRO), highlights federal accomplishments made in foreign credential recognition through the collaboration of many key partners. Our year in review demonstrates a solid commitment by the Government of Canada to attracting immigrants and ensuring that processes are in place that enable internationally trained workers to fully utilize their skills and knowledge in the Canadian labour market.



THE CANADIAN CONTEXT

CANADA IS ONE OF SEVERAL DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FACING A SHORTAGE OF SKILLED LABOUR AND COMPETING FOR INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED AND EDUCATED WORKERS. AS THE COUNTRY OF CHOICE FOR MANY IMMIGRANTS, CANADA ATTRACTS NEWCOMERS FROM EVERY REGION OF THE WORLD.

With an aging population and a declining birth rate, immigration has become the major source of population growth and a critical source of skilled labour for Canada. The proportion of Canada's population that is foreign-born has increased to nearly one out of five—the highest level in 75 years.¹ While the majority of people entering the labour force will still come from within Canada, research suggests that by 2016, all of Canada's net labour force growth will come from immigration.

DID YOU KNOW?

In all classes of immigrants, nearly 57% are conversant in English, 5% speak French, and 10% speak both official languages.²

The skills that immigrants possess are an important source of innovation, productivity and connection to the global marketplace. Canada selects immigrants from its Skilled Workers and Professionals category on a point-based system in which education, language skills and work experience are indicative of their ability to integrate into Canadian society and the labour market. Immigrants come to Canada

with high levels of education and skills, yet internationally trained workers have not been able to consistently transfer these talents to the Canadian context. Studies show that overall, immigrants found work within their field in only four out of 10 cases.³

In addition to the challenges of finding appropriate work, many internationally trained workers experience lower economic returns for their skills and education. Immigrants are also more likely to be underemployed, in that they work in jobs that require less education, have lower entry earnings, experience slower earnings growth over time, and are less likely to recoup those income losses in later years.

Although Canada has successfully recruited internationally trained workers, there is work yet to be done to achieve the same level of success for immigrant integration into the labour market. Significant progress has been made, but there are still immigrant workers whose labour market potential continues to be underutilized. Despite the challenges of the

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2008, 62% of all immigrants had a post-secondary education.⁴

economic downturn, there is an ongoing need to address the social and economic integration of Canada's newcomers in order to fully benefit from the talents they bring.

As Canada moves toward a knowledge-based economy, there will be a continued demand for a highly skilled, well-educated work force. It is estimated that in 2006-2015 65% of net new job growth will require post-secondary education, up slightly from 63% during the period from 1996-2005, as high-skill occupations are increasing faster than low-skill jobs.⁵ Preparing for the emerging labour market is a key strategic priority to ensure that Canada is competitive in the post-recession period.

The successful integration of internationally trained workers will provide Canada with a skilled labour force needed for future prosperity.

DID YOU KNOW?

The economic costs due to underutilization of skills and learning as a result of challenges with the foreign credential recognition process is estimated at \$2.6 billion.⁶



FOREIGN CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION IN CANADA

FOREIGN CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION (FCR) IS THE PROCESS OF VERIFYING THAT THE EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE OBTAINED IN ANOTHER COUNTRY ARE EQUIVALENT TO THE STANDARDS ESTABLISHED FOR CANADIAN PROFESSIONS AND TRADES.

The FCR process is complex due to the various jurisdictional roles, boundaries and responsibilities inherent in the Canadian system of governance. Credential recognition for regulated occupations is mainly a provincial and territorial responsibility. Provinces and territories have delegated, through legislation, the authority to govern certain occupations to regulatory bodies. The regulatory bodies are responsible for the administration of provincial and territorial laws that pertain to these occupations, for the establishment and maintenance of standards of competency and practice, and for the assessment of the credentials of applicants. Currently, there are more than 440 regulatory bodies across Canada, governing approximately 55 professions.

Regulated occupations, such as engineering, require specialized education and experience to practice and these requirements may vary from province to province. In addition, regulatory bodies have developed their own procedures and processes for certification, registration and licensing prior to practice.

The vast majority of jobs in Canada are in non-regulated occupations. Credential recognition for non-regulated occupations does not require licensing with a regulatory body. Generally, it is the prospective employer's responsibility to determine whether an applicant has the appropriate credentials, training and experience for the position. However, some occupations, such as human resources, have professional associations with voluntary registration or certification. An employer can require that a prospective employee be a registered or certified member of these professional associations as a condition of employment.

In Canada, there are more than 200 accredited post-secondary institutions that assess educational credentials for academic placement, and that may also provide prior learning and recognition assessments of skills and knowledge obtained through work and life experience. Five provincially mandated assessment agencies evaluate educational credentials for both academic placement and work force entry. These assessment agencies play an important role as intermediaries between newcomers and employers regarding international credentials. Furthermore, they all adhere to the practice guidelines and recommendations of the 1997

DID YOU KNOW?

Approximately 25% of the immigrants who arrived in Canada between 2001 and 2006 with a university degree had graduated in Engineering.⁷

*Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Convention).*⁸

DID YOU KNOW?

Over 48,000 foreign credential evaluations are completed each year by the five provincially mandated credential assessment agencies.⁹

Governments, regulatory bodies and other stakeholders have worked to ensure that the information, processes, tools and resources are in place to support foreign credential assessment. However, there are immigrants who have not been able to put their education, skills and experience to use in the Canadian

labour market. Internationally trained workers have reported that FCR processes are confusing, time-consuming and in some instances, costly.

While some employers are aware of the benefits that hiring immigrants brings to a Canadian workplace, there is still a clear need to build awareness among small and medium-sized businesses. Employers have experienced challenges in evaluating the skills and educational credentials of internationally trained workers.

Although the Government of Canada does not assess credentials, it does play a facilitative role with provinces and territories, and provides strategic leadership in supporting the development of consistent and coherent approaches to FCR. Such coordinated approaches to foreign credential assessment and recognition sustain the efforts of provinces and territories to fully integrate internationally trained workers into the labour force.



THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA COMMITMENT TO FOREIGN CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IS COMMITTED TO ATTRACTING IMMIGRANTS AND ENSURING THAT THEY ARE ABLE TO FULLY UTILIZE THEIR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE CANADIAN LABOUR MARKET.

FCR is an ongoing priority of the Government of Canada and has grown in significance over the last decade.

- In 2003, the Foreign Credential Recognition Program (FCRP) at Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) was launched as a systemic labour market intervention. The FCRP was designed to support the development of systems, processes and tools that foster sustainable, structural changes in the way that institutions and sectors evaluate and recognize foreign credentials.
- The Internationally Trained Workers Initiative was introduced in 2005 as a first step in providing a coordinated strategy to facilitate the integration of internationally trained workers into Canada's labour force through partnerships with provinces, territories and other stakeholders.
- The Internationally Educated Health Professionals Initiative (IEHPI) was launched by Health Canada in 2005 to address the shortage of health professionals. By facilitating changes to the assessment, training and recognition processes, the IEHPI aims to increase the number of internationally trained health professionals who are licensed and practising in Canada.
- In 2007, the Government of Canada established the FCRO within Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to help internationally trained workers find the information and access the services they need to put their skills to work

in Canada. The FCRO guides, analyses and facilitates the individual immigrant's navigation of the FCR process through service delivery channels, both in Canada and overseas.

Moreover, one of the key amendments to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, enacted in 2008, provided the authority to issue ministerial instructions for priority processing based on the Government of Canada's goals for immigration. The *Action Plan for Faster Immigration* identifies eligibility criteria for new federal skilled worker applications in response to labour market pressures. Efficient systems for the selection, credential assessment and recognition, and integration of internationally trained workers will continue to be a key determinant of Canada's ability to compete for global talent.

Subsequent measures have also been initiated by federal, provincial and territorial governments that complement a more coherent approach to FCR. On April 1, 2009, all governments approved amendments to Chapter 7 of the Agreement on Internal Trade in order to begin the implementation of full labour mobility between provinces and territories in regulated occupations. Once a worker in a regulated profession receives a licence to practise in one province or territory, he or she is eligible for licensure in all provinces and territories. These advances help to promote the mobility of internationally trained workers through a FCR process that is consistent, coordinated and free of barriers.

THE PAN-CANADIAN FRAMEWORK FOR THE ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

JANUARY 16, 2009, MARKED A HISTORIC PUBLIC COMMITMENT BY FIRST MINISTERS TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO ENVISION POSITIVE CHANGE FOR INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED WORKERS.

In order to fully benefit from the talents of immigrants, federal, provincial and territorial governments have committed to taking coordinated action to advance the integration of internationally trained workers into the Canadian labour market. The Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) was tasked by First Ministers with the development of a pan-Canadian framework and implementation plan. On November 30, 2009, governments announced the release of the *Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications* (Framework).

The Framework represents a joint commitment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to work together to improve the foreign credential assessment and recognition systems in Canada. It complements the efforts of stakeholders and partners, and serves as a reference point for individual federal, provincial and territorial strategies. Through the Framework, governments agree on the ideal steps and processes that will address the current gaps in immigrants' successful labour market integration.

The Framework is guided by the principles of fairness, transparency, timeliness and consistency. Accordingly, immigrants wanting to enter regulated occupations in Canada will receive clear information as early as possible in the immigration process, fair treatment during the assessment process and prompt communication of recognition decisions, which will be mutually accepted in each province and territory.

A key feature of the Framework is a clear commitment to timely service. The intent is that within one year of submitting a complete assessment application for licensure, an individual will know whether his or her credentials have been recognized, and if not, the individual will be informed of specific additional requirements for licensure or directed toward related occupations commensurate with their skills and experience.¹⁰

The Framework will contribute to the improvement of the labour market outcomes of internationally trained workers by removing barriers in regulated occupations. These improvements will assist in providing Canada with the talent it needs to address

PAN-CANADIAN VISION

A fair and competitive labour market environment where immigrants and internationally trained workers have the opportunity to fully use their education, skills and work experience for their benefit and for Canada's collective prosperity.

labour market challenges such as demographic shifts, growth of the knowledge economy, globalization and skill shortages.

While the principles of the Framework apply to all regulated occupations, its implementation will be phased in with an initial list of target regulated occupations. By December 31, 2010, it is expected that the necessary processes and supports will be in place to ensure the application of the Framework's principles for the following occupations: architects, engineers, financial auditors and accountants, medical laboratory technologists, occupational therapists, pharmacists, physiotherapists and registered nurses.



FEDERAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE FRAMEWORK

Through Canada's *Economic Action Plan 2009*, the Government of Canada committed \$50 million over two years to support a common approach to FCR that will overcome barriers and better integrate immigrants into the Canadian labour market.

To meet First Ministers' commitment to the development of a framework, the province of Alberta and HRSDC were designated as co-chairs on the Ad Hoc Federal/ Provincial/ Territorial Working Group on Foreign Qualification Assessment and Recognition. As the lead federal department, HRSDC's FCRP has provided direction and expertise on initiatives to support the development of the Framework.

As part of the implementation of the Framework, CIC's FCRO is the federal lead on overseas FCR initiatives, and has been working with stakeholders to begin the FCR process prior to immigration where feasible. Early intervention facilitates the efficient and long-term integration of internationally trained workers into the Canadian labour market. By expanding the scope and targeting the focus of Canada's overseas orientation, the objective is to better meet the needs of prospective immigrants by encouraging access to overseas interventions; working to move portions of the occupational licensing process overseas; and connecting immigrants still overseas to service providers located in Canada.

THE FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP IN REVIEW

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT THE RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN CREDENTIALS DO NOT RESIDE SOLELY IN ONE DEPARTMENT. HORIZONTAL AND COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS ACROSS VARIOUS FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS HAVE RESULTED IN SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS TO DATE WITH FCR ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO COMPLEMENT AND BUILD ON PAST AND EXISTING WORK.

CIC, HRSDC, Health Canada and Service Canada each play distinct and mutually reinforcing roles in supporting FCR processes and initiatives across the country.

THE FOREIGN CREDENTIALS REFERRAL OFFICE

The FCRO was established in May 2007 to provide internationally trained and educated individuals with the information, path-finding and referral services they need. Thus far, \$21.2 million has been allocated to the FCRO since its launch.¹¹ FCRO services, offered both overseas and in Canada, support internationally trained workers to fully realize their potential through authoritative and accurate information on the Canadian labour market and credential assessment, and recognition processes.

The mandate of the FCRO is to actively guide, monitor and facilitate the implementation of the foreign credential recognition process. The FCRO works with federal partners, as well as with provinces

and territories, regulatory bodies, credential assessment agencies, industry associations, and employers to ensure that efforts are complementary, that they avoid duplication and service overlap, and that they build on existing services, initiatives and programs on credential recognition for internationally trained workers.

Within Canada, FCRO services are delivered in collaboration with Service Canada. As an early point of contact for newcomers, Service Canada provides relevant information on FCR and referral resources soon after arrival.

HIGHLIGHTS

In the last year, work on domestic initiatives by FCRO has prepared the way for future endeavours in its overseas mandate.

In April 2008, the FCRO and the Conference Board of Canada jointly hosted the successful *Conference on Foreign Credentials Recognition*, which was designed to stimulate dialogue among participants

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS ON FCRO CONFERENCE

“It’s good to discuss solutions rather than (yet again) be examining or diagnosing the problem.”

“Collaboration and engagement is critical. This is a positive step forward.”

“Wonderful to meet employers and other partners to hear solutions and recommendations.”

on how governments and stakeholders can enhance the coordination of FCR processes. Over 100 organizations sent 136 delegates from across Canada to participate in the conference. The delegates, including experts in FCR and immigrant integration, rated this conference as one of the most highly effective discussions on FCR.

In 2009, the FCRO launched two new Web-based products for employers and immigrants. *The Employer's Roadmap: Hiring and Retaining Internationally Trained Workers*, developed with the Alliance of Sector Councils and key business groups, such as the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, is an online guide for employers in small to medium enterprises who are interested in hiring internationally trained workers. *The Employer's Roadmap* provides information, tools and resources for the successful recruitment, assessment of foreign qualifications, integration and retention of internationally trained workers.

The FCRO also developed and designed the *Planning to work in Canada? An essential workbook for newcomers* that provides step-by-step information on housing, accessing settlement services, official languages, finding a job and the credential recognition process. Used in conjunction with the HRSDC's Working in Canada (WiC) tool, these products support prospective and new immigrants to Canada in making informed choices on employment and settlement options.

In support of the Government of Canada priorities on FCR, the FCRO has started the development of a website (Pan-Canadian Information Centre) to catalogue successful practices on foreign credential recognition for both regulated and non-regulated occupations. The Pan-Canadian Information Centre will provide a comprehensive source for past and present foreign credential recognition activities, programs, projects and tools. This information base will help partners and stakeholders avoid costly duplication and strengthen their own foreign credential recognition initiatives. As a first step in the development of this initiative, the FCRO hosted over 75 stakeholders on June 23, 2009, to obtain views and input on the scope, objectives and deliverables. It is anticipated that the Information Centre will be available to stakeholders in December 2010.

As part of the expansion of the overseas platform, the FCRO solicited a call for proposals in July 2009 for a service-providing organization to deliver its overseas orientation project. Building on the HRSDC-funded Canadian Immigration Integration Project (CIIP) which offers in-person overseas orientation sessions to Federal Skilled Workers and their spouses and working-age dependants in three key source countries (China, India and the Philippines), the FCRO will be expanding these sessions to include Provincial Nominees, as well as to a fourth location in London, United Kingdom, to serve the Gulf, Scandinavia and the British Isles. Starting in October 2010, the expanded overseas orientation services will provide information, path-finding and referral services on FCR and the Canadian labour market while prospective immigrants are still in their country of origin.

Further, the FCRO will continue to strengthen newcomer and employer awareness through a targeted advertising campaign and outreach, as well as work to develop an integrated FCR strategy with HRSDC, Health Canada and Service Canada that will include a common storyline in order to better report on the Government of Canada's foreign credential recognition initiatives.

DID YOU KNOW?

Since their launch, the FCRO websites (www.credentials.gc.ca and www.competences.gc.ca) have received close to one million visits, the majority originating from overseas.

FOREIGN CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Since its inception in 2003, the FCRP has been working with Canadian institutions to improve the integration of internationally trained workers into Canada's labour market. By supporting the development of fair, transparent, consistent and rigorous pan-Canadian tools and processes, the FCRP is working to strengthen FCR through systemic labour market interventions.

The FCRP received \$84.16 million over seven years (2003-2004 to 2009-2010). The FCRP provides financial support for the development of FCR processes in specific regulated and non-regulated occupations and sectors. Through contribution agreements, the FCRP makes strategic investments in horizontal leadership by working with a variety of stakeholders on FCR and related issues. The FCRP works with regulatory authorities to improve assessment processes and increase the capacity of regulated occupations to evaluate and recognize the credentials of immigrants. For non-regulated occupations, the FCRP works with industry sectors and institutions to minimize barriers to full labour market integration.

HIGHLIGHTS

To date, the FCRP has provided support to 123 projects in 27 different occupations. These projects have focused on innovations; research, analysis and planning; design and development of tools; and the development and dissemination of information on FCR. These contribution agreements allow organizations to develop the FCR capacity that increases the supply of internationally trained skilled workers in the labour market. This in turn allows employers access to a larger pool of skilled workers, thereby improving current and future labour market efficiency.

In 2009, the FCRP provided funding for key projects, such as the following:

- The Medical Council of Canada (MCC) has developed a central website that provides comprehensive information regarding Canadian licensure for internationally trained physicians. In addition, the MCC has also developed an examination in which internationally trained physicians demonstrate their medical knowledge to qualify for a residency position. With support from FCRP contributions, the examination is now accessed more frequently in 20 locations, 12 of which are outside Canada. The MCC has also established the Physician Credentials Registry of Canada that gathers, verifies and permanently stores credentials in a centralized repository. International medical graduates can establish electronic portfolios of their credentials, allowing them to have their qualifications verified while still in their country of origin. The registry provides a single source credential verification and repository service that is effective, efficient and nationally acceptable.

Engineers Canada has been working toward establishing a coherent FCR system that will improve the licensure process for internationally trained engineers. A shared database of foreign degree programs can be accessed by regulators to evaluate international graduates for licensure.

- The College of Nurses of Ontario is working with nursing regulators across Canada on the harmonization of registration, qualification and evidence requirements for internationally educated nurses. In addition, they are laying the groundwork for national assessment services for nurses.

- To address credential recognition in non-regulated occupations, which represent between 80% to 85% of jobs in the Canadian economy, the FCRP has worked with employers, primarily through 11 national sector councils such as BioTalent Canada. Through its *Skills at Work* project, BioTalent Canada is promoting an integrated approach to address the human resources priorities within the biotechnology sector. The goal of this project is to implement an assessment model that will recognize the skills and competencies of internationally educated professionals and connect them with employers in the Canadian bio-economy.
- In partnership with the Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, the *Pan-Canadian Quality Standards in International Credential Evaluation* project is bringing together provincial assessment agencies to harmonize assessment tools and processes.

With HRSDC's WiC tool (www.workingincanada.gc.ca) immigrants can produce a customized report containing credential recognition information, job descriptions, skill and education requirements, wages and job opportunities in specific regions that allows immigrants to make informed decisions about where to work in Canada. The WiC tool aggregates information from six Government of Canada labour

DID YOU KNOW?

In August 2009, the WiC tool received 69,659 visitors who produced over 53,000 individualized reports. The WiC tool was also accessed through social networking sites: 279 visitors through Facebook and 71 visitors through YouTube.

market databases. The tool can produce approximately 40,000 unique reports and has produced over one million of them for clients all over the world since May 2007. The WiC tool has been included in the immigration websites of the governments of Manitoba and Ontario, CIC, CanLearn and S.U.C.C.E.S.S. in British Columbia.

Through its continued funding, the FCRP provided \$8.3 million over three years to fund the CIIP until October 2010, delivered by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges. CIIP offers services in China, India and the Philippines to prospective Federal Skilled Worker immigrants to Canada. Orientation sessions provide information about foreign credential assessment and recognition processes in Canada and the Canadian labour market. Participants also prepare personal settlement action

SUCCESS STORY

In 2008, Myrla Amper arrived from the Philippines, where she was an architect. Although she did not have Canadian experience, she was able to demonstrate equivalent skills and experience to secure a job with the City of Vancouver as a Project Coordinator. Myrla will be taking classes to prepare for the Building Official Association of B.C. examination for certification.

"All immigrants should attend the CIIP pre-departure seminar because it is a really big help, especially in job hunting. CIIP drafts a career map for each immigrant that serves as a guide toward professional goals." Myrla Amper

FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

plans to assist in their integration into the Canadian work force. Agencies that serve immigrants have reported that, as a result of the CIIP orientation, immigrants are better informed and prepared for the challenges of the Canadian labour market. Since the inception of the CIIP project, over 6,000 immigrants have participated in the orientation sessions.

INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS INITIATIVE

The IEHPI works with provinces and territories, the health regulatory authorities, post-secondary institutions and professional associations to increase access to assessment and training programs, and facilitate the integration of internationally educated health professionals into the Canadian health work force. Based on recommendations from key stakeholders, the IEHPI has focused on physicians, nurses, physiotherapists, pharmacists, occupational therapists, medical radiation technologists and medical laboratory technologists. However, the benefits derived from these projects have been applicable to other health-care professions. A five-year funding profile of \$75 million was allocated for IEHPI in 2005 and the initiative currently receives ongoing funding at \$18 million a year.

HIGHLIGHTS

Since its launch in 2005, there has been significant progress across Canada in the key strategic areas of the Initiative. The IEHPI provides contributions that are utilized for information dissemination, pathways to qualification assessment and recognition, skill building, and coordination that aims to

increase the number of internationally educated health professionals qualified to practise in Canada.

To foster preparedness for the Canadian labour market and provide access to clear, timely information, the IEHPI has to reach widely dispersed audiences. Web portals, designed to provide authoritative information on licensure processes, have been developed specifically for nursing in Nova Scotia and for several health professionals in Saskatchewan. A promotional DVD was developed for prospective nurses who might work in the Yukon, describing working and living conditions. Alberta's Mount Royal College piloted a project offering competency assessments for nurses in London, U.K., to increase the number of internationally educated nurses arriving in Canada who are ready for employment.

The IEHPI has made the establishment of fair and transparent mechanisms for assessing credentials, knowledge and clinical skills a high priority. Progress has continued in the development of a national assessment process for international medical graduates, beginning with entry into postgraduate training, which will be piloted in Fall 2009 in three assessment centres. An online self-assessment tool for midwives has been developed, as well as competency assessment tools for occupational therapists in Ontario.

Programs for faculty, preceptors and clinical educators have been developed to enhance the learning experiences of internationally educated health professionals. A national training program for mentors and preceptors of international pharmacy graduates has started, and a development program for nursing educators will optimize their capacity to support the training and integration of internationally educated nurses.

New remediation programs have been created to provide additional pathways to licensure. For example, British Columbia offers bridging programs for physiotherapists and medical laboratory technologists. As well, a program in Manitoba was

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2007, 22% of Canada's doctors, 15% of physiotherapists and 8% of both occupational therapists and registered nurses were educated outside the country.¹²

designed to upgrade the skills of internationally educated medical laboratory technologists.

The IEHPI is collaborating with Canadian institutions and stakeholders to provide orientation and workplace integration programs. In 2008, the HealthForceOntario Access Centre for Internationally Educated Health Professionals (IEHPs) provided over 80 information workshops to assist IEHPs on the path to practice in Ontario. Over 3,600 IEHPs became new clients in 2008, an increase of 65% over 2007. By March of 2009, over 6,200 clients had registered for services, with physicians comprising the largest segment at 74%.

DID YOU KNOW?

A comprehensive, interprofessional orientation program on the Canadian health system is now available in sites across the country and in an interactive Web-based format. Since its launch in January 2008, the highly subscribed program has had 171 participants in classroom sessions and 115 online participants. An online version is currently under development for use by health professionals in other countries, prior to immigration.

To maximize the effectiveness of existing resources and avoid duplication, the IEHPI is building on regional collaboration. The Western and Northern Health Human Resources Planning Forum, consisting of members from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, has developed a multi-jurisdictional assessment and bridging program for midwives. The Atlantic Advisory Committee on Health Human Resources, comprised of members from Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and

Nova Scotia, established a language curriculum, assessment methods, materials and supports for internationally educated nurses.

The IEHPI is increasing access to assessment, training, skill building and integration programs to promote a consistent approach in expanding opportunities for internationally educated health professionals to practise in Canada.

SERVICE CANADA

Service Canada improves the delivery of federal government programs by helping Canadians access a growing range of government services and benefits. They work in collaboration with other federal departments and other levels of government to explore innovative and efficient ways to serve Canadians. With the establishment of the FCRO, Service Canada received \$18.5 million over five years (2007-2012) and \$3.6 million in on-going funding for in-Canada service delivery.

As part of its services for newcomers, Service Canada provides the FCRO's toll-free telephone and in-person services to immigrants and Canadian citizens in Canada who have earned their professional credentials abroad. FCR services offered are supported by a website, which provides a variety of information and resources related to credential assessment and recognition for skilled immigrants, employers and other stakeholders.

Information and resources are available on the Service Canada website which provides useful tools to assist immigrants. The Service Canada Web content includes links to the FCRO websites, the WiC tool, the Going to Canada Immigration Portal, the *Planning to work in Canada? An essential workbook for newcomers and the Employer's Roadmap* tool.

Clients who want information on FCR can receive services through a dedicated toll-free telephone service (1-888-854-1805) in Canada or through in-person services at 329 Service Canada centres.

Service Canada agents draw on the same comprehensive information provided through the Internet. In addition, Service Canada agents guide clients to information on specific occupations and jurisdictions and refer them to the appropriate regulatory body for their occupation or to credential assessment agencies.

Service Canada ensures that FCR information is integrated with other related services, such as when an immigrant applies for a Social Insurance Number, orientation to the Job Bank or other information about the labour market, offering a tailored, client-friendly service.

HIGHLIGHTS

From April 2008 to September 2009, Call Centre agents provided FCR services to 3,629 clients through their telephone service. In the same period, Service Canada provided in-person services to 48,728 clients with FCR information, path finding and referrals.

Service Canada regions are now identifying success stories, outreach opportunities and more comprehensive ways of delivering services to immigrants that promote FCR specifically to newcomers to Canada. Promotional products developed by the FCRO have been distributed by Service Canada in Service Canada centres and at public events, such as the South Asian Festival, the Calgary Stampede and Tall Ships Nova Scotia 2009.

In consultation with the FCRO, Service Canada has been upgrading its data collection methodology to provide enhanced statistical information. The data collection upgrade will allow the FCRO to collect

more targeted information on the telephone and in-person service channels. Website content and hyperlinks have been reviewed and updated to allow end users to find FCR information more easily and to find related information more quickly.

OTHER SUPPORTING FEDERAL INITIATIVES

The immigrant experience is a fundamental characteristic of Canada's heritage and identity. The Government of Canada places a high priority on the effective settlement and integration of newcomers to ensure the ongoing prosperity and well-being of Canada.

CIC's Settlement Program contributes to the integration of immigrants into Canadian society. The goal of the Settlement Program is to provide appropriate support and services to newcomers to assist in their settlement and long-term integration in Canada; help them contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of Canada; and encourage their participation in settlement services.

CIC has traditionally supported the settlement of newcomers across Canada through three distinct programs—Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada, the Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program and the HOST program. In 2008, CIC's settlement programming underwent a process of modernization in response to emerging trends that affect settlement and the increasingly diverse profile of the immigrant population. These trends call for more flexible and holistic approaches to settlement programming that respond to the evolving needs of newcomers.

SUCCESS STORY

A recent immigrant visited a Service Canada Centre in Calgary, Alberta, to apply for his family's social insurance numbers. While being interviewed, he explained that he was a welder and produced five skilled trade certificates that needed translating and credentials recognized in Canada. As a result, the client was provided with a referral to FCR services.

The programs and services offered through the Settlement Program assist immigrants with pre-employment preparation; English and French language training, including occupation-specific training; bridge-to-work programs and direct workplace experience; and workplace diversity training. In addition, a number of predeparture initiatives, such as the Going to Canada Immigration Portal or in-person orientation sessions offered through *Canadian Orientation Abroad*, provide newcomers with information and orientation required to make informed decisions about their settlement and employment needs.

In addition, CIC's Multiculturalism Program provides financial support through grants and contributions to Canadian not-for-profit organizations and individuals to address issues related to Canada's diversity. In particular, in 2008, new priorities

were established for the Multiculturalism Program, including a focus on promoting the socio-economic integration of immigrants and visible minorities. The program promotes the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in all aspects of Canadian society, and helps them to eliminate any barrier to that participation.

Currently, the Multiculturalism Program is funding a project that, in part, addresses FCR issues. A community engagement initiative led by the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) was designed to increase the ability of second-tier cities to attract and retain immigrants. As part of this project, CASSA will develop a research paper on the identification and removal of barriers to employment through a review of credential recognition processes in the skilled trades.



WORKING WITH OUR PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

MANY PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO ENSURING THAT THE INTERNATIONAL CREDENTIAL ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION CAPACITY IN CANADA IS BEING STRENGTHENED THROUGH IMPROVED PROCESS, THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TOOLS AND INFORMATION SHARING.

Provinces are developing complementary recognition systems that ensure that credentialing processes are fair, objective and transparent. Fair Practice Legislation in Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Ontario has been enacted to improve foreign credential assessment and licensing practices in regulated occupations. Alberta has developed a comprehensive systems approach to integrating immigrants in the labour force by providing specialized information, ensuring that credential assessment processes are fair and transparent, and bridging any skill or knowledge gaps that act as barriers to full participation in the labour market.

The Government of Canada has entered into bilateral labour market agreements with provinces and territories. These agreements invest in locally developed labour market programs and services that provide skill development for targeted groups, including immigrants.

Professional associations provide a central point of contact between industries and sectors and the Government of Canada. Progress has been made by some professions in developing processes that allow for early interventions in FCR while prospective immigrants are still in their country of origin.

By providing pathways to FCR and preliminary certification processes while still overseas, internationally trained workers will be able to more readily pursue employment in their field of training.

Immigrant-Serving Organizations (ISOs) are an important component in the collaborative work of integrating immigrants into Canada. Immigrants rely on ISOs for information and support, including employment services, local labour market information and foreign credential recognition. ISOs currently distribute FCR materials to newcomers at Toronto Pearson International Airport and Vancouver International Airport.

DID YOU KNOW?

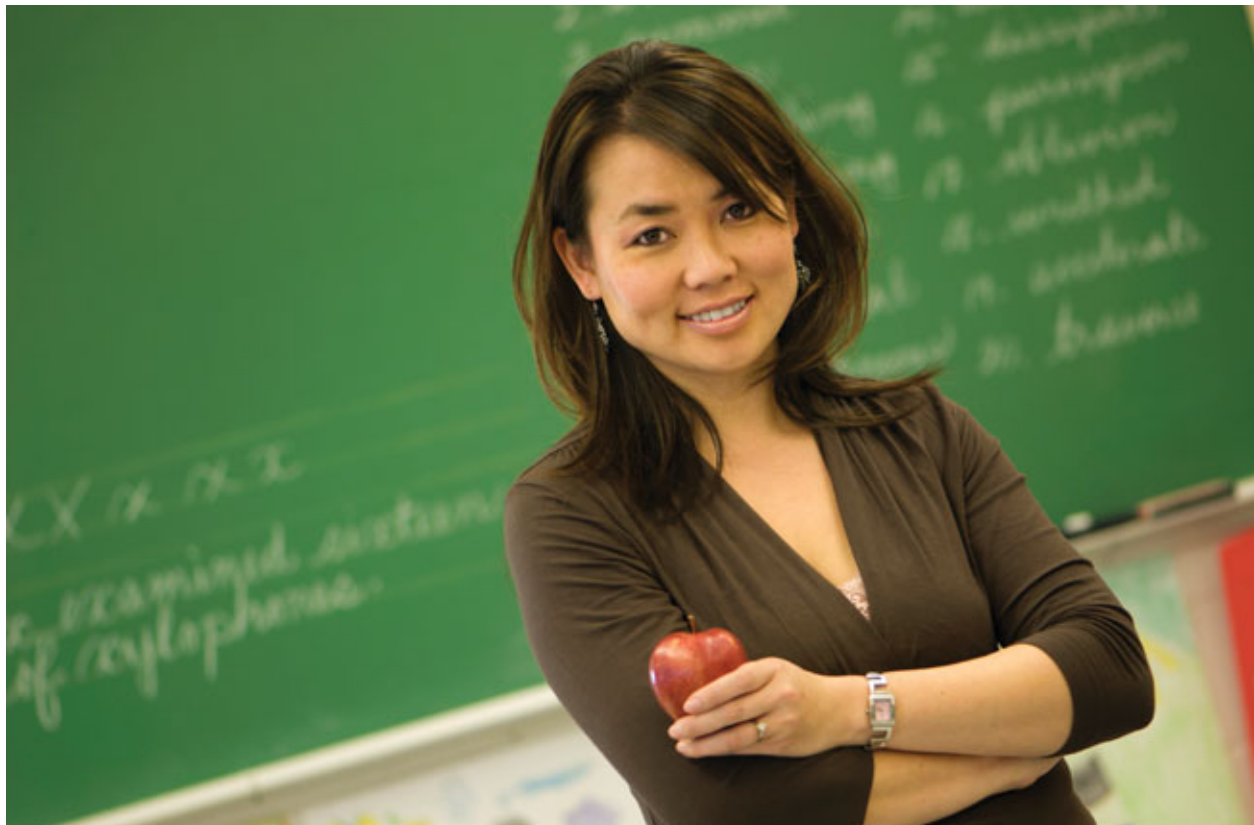
For the first time, in 2008, all regulatory bodies in Ontario were required to file a Fair Registration Practice Report.

THE PATH FORWARD

The recent global economic recession has placed a premium on ensuring that labour market preparedness and flexibility positions Canada to meet current and future labour market demands. The commitments made at the First Ministers' meeting and in the *Economic Action Plan 2009* have built the necessary momentum for partners to work toward achieving fairness, transparency, timeliness and consistency in FCR across all jurisdictions.

Canada's effort toward pan-Canadian assessment and recognition of foreign credentials through its FCR initiatives and, more recently, the Framework,

marks an important step toward the successful integration of internationally trained workers, but much work still lies ahead. Measures of success can only be fully appreciated and results realized in the coming years. Many of the highlighted FCR activities in this progress report will continue to advance and new initiatives will become established that complement and leverage existing work, not just by the Government of Canada, but by all governments, partners and stakeholders involved.



FIND OUT MORE

Information, path-finding and referral services on foreign credential recognition are available as follows:

On Internet:

www.credentials.gc.ca

By telephone through Service Canada:

FCR Hotline 1-888-854-1805 or
TTY 1-800-926-9105

In person through Service Canada:

Visit www.servicecanada.gc.ca to find the nearest Service Canada Centre offering in person services

To obtain more information about the Foreign Credentials Referral Office, please e-mail us at credentials@cic.gc.ca or write to us at:

Foreign Credentials Referral Office

150 Metcalfe Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1L1
Canada

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- ¹ Statistics Canada, *Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-Born Population, 2006 Census*, p. 5 (Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2007).
 - ² Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Facts and Figures 2008: Immigration Overview: Permanent and Temporary Residents*, p. 42 (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2009).
 - ³ Statistics Canada, *Progress and Challenges of New Immigrants in the Workforce*, p. 9 (Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2005).
 - ⁴ Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Facts and Figures 2008: Immigration Overview: Permanent and Temporary Residents*, p. 38 (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2009).
 - ⁵ Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, *Looking Ahead: A 10-Year Outlook for the Canadian Labour Market (2006-2015)*.
 - ⁶ Jeffrey Reitz, "Immigrant skill utilization in the Canadian labour market: implications of human capital research", *Journal of International Migration and Integration 2 (2001)*: 347-78.
 - ⁷ Statistics Canada, *Educational Portrait of Canada, 2006 Census* (Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2008).
 - ⁸ The Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada (ACESC): <http://www.canalliance.org/assurance.en.stm>. The Lisbon Convention was designed to foster improved mobility and labour market efficiency through closer collaboration in the area of credential recognition across levels of government both domestically and internationally.
 - ⁹ Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, *Pan-Canadian Quality Standards in International Credential Evaluations*, p. 12: <http://www.cicic.ca/docs/2009-report-standards-evaluations.en.pdf>. These credential assessment agencies include the five provincially mandated agencies: Academic Credentials Assessment Service (ACAS), Centre d'expertise sur les formations acquises hors du Québec (CEFAHQ), International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES), International Qualifications Assessment Services (IQAS) and World Education Services (WES); as well as Comparative Education Service (CES) and International Credentials Assessment Service (ICAS) of Canada.
 - ¹⁰ There may be cases where it is not appropriate or practical to come to a recognition decision within one year. Exceptions to the one-year commitment will exist, such as where occupations require an extended practice-based or workplace-based component to their registration process.
 - ¹¹ This includes funding received from the initial budget in 2006 (\$13.7M 2007-2012) plus one year of funding of the *Economic Action Plan* (\$7.5M for 2009-2010).
 - ¹² Canadian Institute for Health Information, *Supply, Distribution and Migration of Canadian Physicians, 2007* (Ottawa: CIHI, 2008).