



NEWS RELEASE

Pilot Project recommendations aim to help internationally trained engineering graduates in BC

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For Immediate Release

BURNABY, BC – The Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services (MCAWS), in partnership with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC (APEGBC), announce the completion of a Pilot Project for Internationally Trained Engineering Graduates. The purpose of the Pilot Project was to investigate the problems faced by qualified internationally trained engineers in securing employment within their field in BC, and to provide recommendations for solutions to those problems.

Launched in 2001 and completed in early 2004, the Pilot Project studied three main areas: 1) A Policies and Procedures Review assessed the barriers faced by newcomers within the professional engineering association registration process; 2) An Information Services Study sought to improve the quality of information and resources available to both immigrants and employers with respect to international qualification issues; and 3) A Professional Work Experience & Training Model worked with a small group of unemployed internationally trained engineering graduates to assist them in acquiring the training and work experience necessary for professional registration and employment in BC.

Important lessons were learned from every aspect of the Pilot Project, and in some cases the results were startling. The problem was not as simple as initially defined, and expectations shifted as the realities of cultural differences, communication barriers and limited knowledge of the Canadian engineering environment and labour market became apparent.

APEGBC has already implemented many of the report’s recommendations including the incorporation of plain language writing into its registration communications materials and website, the design of an on-line self-assessment tool for prospective applicants and a new provisional member category that provides assurance to employers that applicants have completed all the registration requirements with the exception of Canadian work experience.

“We are working in partnerships with organizations like APEGBC to help alleviate future labour shortages and to build a strong economy for many years to come,” said Murray Coell, Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services. “When internationally trained engineering graduates’ qualifications and experience aren’t recognized, it can result in unemployment or underemployment. The information gained from this report will help get these engineers into the workforce.”

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“The difficulties internationally trained engineering graduates face in obtaining their professional designation and finding employment is one the engineering profession takes very seriously,” said Anne Garrett, P.Eng., Executive Director of APEGBC, the regulatory body for professional engineers and geoscientists in BC. “Recent immigrants with engineering skills who lack certain requirements for registration with APEGBC need assistance to help them become important contributors to BC’s knowledge-based economy. Employers must also play a pivotal role in planning for our future needs, as solutions developed for the integration of internationally trained engineering graduates directly affect their increasingly diverse human resource requirements.”

APEGBC and the engineering profession across Canada have become role models for professional regulatory bodies as they work with government to bring key players together to address the entire realm of immigrants’ needs, starting before their arrival through to when they are hired in British Columbia. Both APEGBC and the province will continue to work on new strategies to improve services for skilled immigrants and address other barriers including transferability of skills between the various engineering fields. The improved service models developed by this Pilot Project to better integrate qualified engineers into their profession can also be applied to other professions in the future.

For the complete report and more information about APEGBC Provisional Membership, MCAWS International Qualifications Program, and the Canadian Council of Professional Engineer’s “From Consideration to Integration” initiative, please visit the following sites:

<http://www.apeg.bc.ca/intreng/pilot-int-train-eng.html>
<http://www.apeg.bc.ca/reg/ProvisionalMembership.htm>
http://www.mcaaws.gov.bc.ca/amip/IOP/summary_pilots_intivs.htm
http://ccpe.ca/e/imm_consideration_1.cfm

The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of B.C. is the authority responsible for licensing over 20,000 members throughout British Columbia, and ensures the health, safety and welfare of B.C. citizens through the promotion and enforcement of the highest standards of practice. Only licensed professional engineers and professional geoscientists are permitted to practice engineering and geoscience in B.C. under the provisions of the Engineers and Geoscientists Act.

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