
AN INVENTORY OF ASSESSMENT TOOLS
FOR SKILLED IMMIGRANTS

Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project undertook an inventory and analysis of the existing assessment tools used within the Lower Mainland to assess skilled immigrants in the areas identified under Career Assessment and Planning Services (CAPS). CAPS is a component of the multilateral strategy developed by the Ministry of Community and Women's Services.

The assessment tools are:

- English Language Assessment
- Essential Skills Assessment
- Academic Qualifications Assessment
- Competency/Technical Skills Based Assessment
- Employability Skills Assessment.

1.1.1 Project Objectives

- To identify those public colleges, regulatory bodies and other agencies that provide assessment services for skilled immigrants.
- To identify the characteristics of assessment options such as target users, cost of assessment, type of assessment, and assessment process, etc.
- To determine whether these assessment tools are recognized as valid indicators of language proficiency and technical competence by public colleges and regulatory bodies.
- To identify perceived gaps and challenges related to existing assessment services for skilled immigrants.
- To determine whether, based on the efficiency of the current delivery of assessment tools, there is a need for a centralized assessment service for skilled immigrants.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

1.2.1 Development of Tools

In consultation with MOSAIC, the consultant drafted an introductory letter that described the rationale, the objectives, and the funding agency for the project, and developed interview questions which were piloted with a public college and a regulatory organization.

1.2.2 Identification of Organizations

In order to identify public colleges, regulatory bodies, and other agencies that provide assessment services for skilled immigrants, a list of regulators, a list of universities, university colleges, and colleges in the Lower Mainland, and a list of fee-for-service assessment services was generated. The Web sites of all these organizations were reviewed to gather information on assessment and registration requirements and procedures, and the organizations identified were entered into a purpose-built database.

1.2.3 Literature Review

A literature review was completed to explore research and the promising practices of current assessment services; excerpts from the literature have been cited throughout the report.

1.2.4 Distribution

The introductory letter was distributed to forty (40) regulators, ten (10) public colleges, university colleges, and universities, and two (2) fee-for-service assessment service providers. Telephone calls were made to organizations to identify appropriate contacts and to clarify contact information when e-mails could not be delivered. Because in some cases assessment is done at the national level, a small sample of national organizations was contacted.

Twenty-eight (28) BC medical regulators, three (3) national bodies, and twelve (12) non-medical regulatory bodies were contacted by telephone and e-mail for specific details of assessment tools. A total of forty-three (43) interviews were conducted on site or by telephone. Basic information was gathered from the organizations' Web sites.

Information from ten (10) colleges, universities, and university colleges, including University of British Columbia (UBC) undergraduate and graduate programs and Simon Fraser University (SFU) undergraduate and graduate programs, was obtained from Web sites and through telephone and e-mail contact. Information was also obtained about some specific graduate and undergraduate programs at UBC and SFU. Five (5) additional telephone contacts and one on-site visit were made to obtain further information about English language assessments specific to certain institutions, such as Langara College, British Columbia Open University (BCOU), the University of the Fraser Valley (UCFV), Vancouver Community College (VCC), and SFU. One of the biggest challenges was finding people who could answer questions.

Information was gathered, through on-site and telephone interviews and from Web sites, about fee-for-service English language assessment providers, academic credential assessment providers, and an employment readiness assessment program.

1.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS

1.3.1 English Language Assessment Tools

Of the ten (10) universities, university colleges, and colleges, six (6) used two English language assessment tools, and five (5) used three or more assessment tools. Of the colleges, university colleges, and universities and some specific programs, seventeen (17) used the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) as one of their acceptable English language assessment tool, with minimum scores ranging from 175 to 250 for the computer test, and 500 to 600 for the paper-based test. Eight (8) identified the Test of Written English (TWE), with minimum scores ranging from 4.0 to 5.0, two (2) identified the Test of Spoken English (TSE), with minimum scores of 5.0, and four (4) identified TOEFL with essay with minimum scores ranging from 40 to 45. Ten (10) identified (the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), with minimum scores ranging from 5.5 to 7.5 (the majority identified a minimum score of 6.5 with no band below 6.0). Six (6) used the Language Proficiency Index (LPI), with a minimum range from 3 to 5. Three (3) institutions and programs identified the Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB) as an indicator, with minimum scores ranging from 88 to 85, and three (3) institutions used the Vancouver Community College English Language Assessment (VCC ELA), with minimum scores of 145 to 160. Other tests, such as the Graduate Record Exam (GRE, SFU Graduate studies), the Langara English Test (LET, (Langara College), the Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (CELPIP), the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE), and UBC Canadian English Language tests (CEL) were used by only one of the institutions contacted.

Of the twenty-eight (28) medical regulators, sixteen (16) had no English language assessment that they recognized. Five (5) regulators recognized three or more instruments, four (4) recognized two instruments, and three (3) recognized one instrument. Eleven (11) used TOEFL as one of their English language assessment tools, with minimum scores ranging from 500 to 580 for the paper-based test, 173 to 239 for the computer test, and 40 to 50+ for TSE. Seven (7) used IELTS with minimum scores ranging from 6.5 to 7.0, four (4) used MELAB with minimum scores ranging from 83 to 85, three (3) used Can Test with minimum scores ranging from 3 to 4.5, and two (2) used VCC ELA

with minimum scores ranging from 145 to 160. One (1) organization used the Cambridge Certificate of English Proficiency (CCPE) with a C minimum score, Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (CCAЕ) with a B minimum score, and their own profession-specific test with a pass. One (1) other regulator used the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) with a 730 minimum score, and one (1) is developing the Canadian English Language Benchmarks Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN).

Of the twelve (12) non-medical regulators, only two (2) used English language assessments: the BC College of Teachers uses three instruments, and the Society of Notaries Public uses one. The College of Teachers uses TOEFL (minimum 580 paper, 237 computer, 50 TSE), IELTS (minimum score of 6.5 and 7 for speaking and writing), and VCC ELA (minimum 160 with 27 for listening and speaking). The Society of Notaries Public uses the LPI (minimum 6 on reading, English usage, and essay). The other ten (10) regulators do not use any English language assessments.

Some regulators determined English language levels by in-depth study of comparisons with other regulatory bodies, colleges, and university programs; others inherited language levels and were no longer aware of their basis.

Some didn't use any language assessment because they believed the best test of a sufficient command of the English language was the ability to pass an oral interview, to write a paper, to pass a competency exam, or to successfully complete a supervised practicum/articling/work experience.

1.3.2 Essential Skills Assessment

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) has defined essential skills as the fundamental skills that make it possible to learn all others. They are the non-technical, "soft skills" Canadians use in their jobs, skills that are common to and transferable across industry and geographic sectors. The nine essential skills identified by HRSDC are reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, thinking skills, computer use, and continuous learning. HRSDC notes "Essential skills play a role in all jobs and occupational areas, although their specific form and complexity level may vary."

The research has indicated that many of the regulators do not recognize the importance of essential skills; however, the majority of regulators who do recognize their importance have integrated the assessment of essential skills into their competency-based assessment processes: the competency exam and the clinical practice component.

1.3.3 Academic Assessment

The goal of academic credential assessment is to facilitate the recognition of academic qualifications for educational or employment purposes. This involves the comparison of academic credentials gained elsewhere to those of Canadian or provincial academic institutions. Generally, assessment is done by comparing the institutions, courses, curriculum, clinical components, and hours of course work. This assessment involves gathering information about the education system, the specific institution, authenticity of the documents, language of instruction, specific courses/programs, and comparable Canadian credentials.

The research indicates that regulators use a variety of approaches, including in-house assessment, external academic credential assessment agencies, and a combination of both.

Of the medical regulators, six (6) do no assessment of credentials, three (3) provincial regulators do their own assessment, two (2) provincial regulators have external organizations do their assessments, five (5) provincial regulators do assessments in combination with an external organization, five (5) national regulators do the assessments, six (6) national and external organizations do assessments, and one (1) uses a combination of these methods.

Of the non-medical regulators, six (6) use external organizations to assess academic credentials: five (5) of these use the International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES), and one (1) uses the International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS). Two (2) provincial regulators do their own assessments, and one of these uses ICES when they are having difficulty.

Three (3) use organizations that are a part of their national regulators: CACB (Architects), NCA (Law Society), and IQAB (Chartered Accountants), and one (1) does not accept credentials from outside of Canada.

All of the universities, university colleges, and colleges do their own academic assessments with the exception of BCOU, which uses ICES. UBC, SFU, and Capilano have useful information on their Web sites about academic equivalences for persons who have received education elsewhere. The information includes secondary school equivalences (UBC, SFU, Capilano), requisite secondary school courses for admission to specific programs (UBC), and general graduate school admission requisites (UBC, SFU).

An academic assessment includes an application form and evaluation of documents such as degree certificates, transcripts, letters of licensure, and reference letters. If these documents are not in English, they must be translated. The requirements around translation also vary.

1.3.4 Competency-based Assessment – Technical Assessment

Competency-based assessment attempts to establish what an individual knows and can do. Many professions have registration exams to test skills and knowledge that are essentially competency based. The purpose of the exams is to establish that the individual has the core competencies to practice in the field. Many of these exams have been based on national and/or provincial competency standards. Competencies represent learning outcomes: the specific skills, knowledge, and abilities the individual should be able to demonstrate. Regulatory bodies currently use a variety of approaches to competency-based assessment.

There is a range of competency-based tools currently being used. They include prior learning assessment, written exams, practical exams, oral interviews, clinical assessments, and written submissions.

1.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.4.1 Regulators

- There is a need for information sheets describing each regulatory organization's assessment process and registration requirement.
- A centralized service should be established to help internationally trained professionals understand and meet the registration requirements of their profession. The service could help applicants understand what is involved in meeting the English language requirements and in preparing for the academic and credential assessment process. It could also help applicants identify gaps in their training and experience, and could assist them in finding courses and supervised practice opportunities.
- Regulators should explore the issue of English language testing, the advantages and disadvantages of having English language tests as a requirement, and whether the existing tests really measure the applicant's ability to use English at the level necessary to function in the job.
- Given the lack of resources for the development of profession-specific language assessment tools, funding should be made available for cross-sector collaboration.
- Set up a working group of interested health regulators to explore collaboration on the development of an English language assessment tool for health professions, a prior learning assessment tool, and orientation to the culture of professional practice in Canada.
- Set up a forum in which all regulators can share information about the assessment and registration of internationally educated professionals, discuss challenges, share assessment tools, and review the findings of this report. The work of the Ontario Regulators for Access would provide a framework for the process.
- Regulators who currently do in-house assessments should explore the possibility of working with an external credential evaluator, such as ICES, that could take on the task of authenticating documents.
- Regulators should post on their Web sites a self-assessment tool that would help internationally trained professionals determine if they can meet competency criteria of the profession.

- Colleges, university colleges, and universities and regulators should explore ways of collaborating on the development of prior learning assessment tools.

1.4.2 Colleges, University Colleges, and Universities

- Colleges, university colleges, and universities should ensure that internationally educated applicants who are Canadian residents have easy access to a person who can provide information about language assessments and credential assessment requirements. There is this access for international students.
- All college, university college, and university English language tests and courses should be assigned a Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) level. This would make it easier for students to transfer between institutions and would eliminate the need for them to retake tests.
- The Ministry of Advanced Education should set up a working group of representatives from colleges, university colleges, and universities to explore the possibility of collaborating on English language and academic assessment.

THE REPORT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 Project Description

The project undertook an inventory and analysis of the tools used within the Lower Mainland to assess skilled immigrants in the areas identified under Career Assessment and Planning Services (CAPS).

2.1.2 Project Objectives

- To identify those public colleges, regulatory bodies and other agencies that provide assessment services for skilled immigrants.
- To identify the characteristics of assessment options such as target users, cost of assessment, type of assessment, and assessment process, etc.
- To determine whether these assessment tools are recognized as valid indicators of language proficiency and technical competence by public colleges and regulatory bodies.
- To identify perceived gaps and challenges related to existing assessment services for skilled immigrants.
- To determine whether, based on the efficiency of the current delivery of assessment tools, there is a need for a centralized assessment service for skilled immigrants.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

2.2.1 Project Process

The initial plan was to follow up through e-mail or telephone contact to set up telephone or on-site interviews. Given the short time frame, it was decided to do only telephone follow-up. This allowed the consultant to answer questions and provide more information about the project. In some cases, those contacted had not received the e-mail or had discarded it unopened because of the fear of computer viruses.

2.2.2 Literature Review

Much of the current literature was reviewed to explore research and the promising practices of current assessment services. It should be noted that the review was representative, not exhaustive. The literature reviewed is cited throughout the report. A complete list of all works referenced is in Appendix F.

2.2.3 Development of Tools

In consultation with the MOSAIC, the consultant utilized the following methods for gathering information:

- An introductory letter was drafted that described the rationale, the objectives, and the funding agency for the project (see Appendix A). The letter stated that the consultant would make contact within a week to set up a telephone or on-site interview. A sample of the research questions was also provided.
- Interview questions were developed and piloted with a public college and a regulatory organization (see Appendix A).

2.2.4 Identification of Organizations

In order to identify public colleges, regulatory bodies, and other agencies who provide assessment services for skilled immigrants, the consultant:

- Generated a list of regulators.
- Generated a list of colleges in the Lower Mainland.
- Generated a list of fee-for-service assessment services. This list was expanded as a result of contact suggestions from the initial interviews.
- Reviewed the Web sites of all the above organizations to gather information on assessment and registration requirements and procedures.

All of the organizations identified were entered into a purpose-built database.

2.2.5 Distribution

The introductory letter was distributed to forty (40) regulators, ten (10) public colleges, university colleges, and universities, and two (2) fee-for-service assessment service providers. Telephone calls were made to organizations to identify appropriate contacts and to clarify contact information when e-mails could not be delivered. Because in some cases assessment is done at the national level, a small sample of national organizations was contacted.

2.2.6 Interviews and Information Gathering

a) *Regulators*

Twenty-eight (28) BC medical regulators, three (3) national bodies and twelve (12) non-medical regulatory bodies were contacted by telephone and e-mail for specific details of assessment tools. A total of forty-three (43) interviews were conducted on site or by telephone. Basic information was gathered from the organizations' Web sites.

b) *Academic Institutions*

Information from ten (10) colleges, universities, and university colleges, including university of British Columbia (UBC) undergraduate and graduate programs and Simon Fraser University (SFU) undergraduate and graduate programs, was obtained from Web sites and through telephone and e-mail contact. Information was also obtained about some specific graduate and undergraduate programs at UBC and SFU. Five (5) additional telephone contacts and one on-site interview were made to obtain further information about English language assessments specific to certain institutions, such as Langara College, British Columbia Open University (BCOU), the University of the Fraser Valley (UCFV), and SFU. One of the biggest challenges was finding people who could answer questions.

c) *Fee-for-Service Assessment Providers*

English Language Competency

Information was gathered, through on-site and telephone interviews and from Web sites, about two (2) fee-for-service English language assessment providers: the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the English Language Assessment (ELA)

Academic Credentials

A representative of one academic credential assessor—International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES)—was interviewed, and additional information gathered from their Web site. Information was also gathered from the Web sites of five (5) other academic credential assessors cited in the report: International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS), Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC), the Chartered Accountants International Qualifications Appraisal Board (IQAB), the Canadian Architectural Certification Board (CACB), and the Law Society's National Committee on Accreditation (NCA).

Employment Readiness

Interviews were conducted with the designer of the Employment Readiness Scale (ERS), and with an organization that uses their program.

d) *Challenges in Information Gathering*

The consultants found varying degrees of difficulty reaching people who could provide the relevant information. In many cases, the e-mail describing the project had been deleted unread because of formal or informal policy on computer communications and viruses. In others, the communication simply did not reach the appropriate person.

Regulators

Because many provincial professional organizations require applicants to complete some or all of the process at national level, a representative sample of national organizations was also contacted.

Six (6) organizations preferred to provide the information by e-mail rather than participate in an interview by telephone or in person.

Many of the identified contact people were extremely busy, so it was often necessary to make several calls to gather the information. Some were unable or unwilling to return calls before the research phase completion date.

In a few cases, representatives had no relevant information: some had never dealt with a request from an internationally trained professional. Either such requests were dealt with at the national level, or although the need was known, resources were not available to put in place a process to respond to it.

Two people were unwilling to be interviewed for the project.

Academic Institutions

Many respondents noted that they were processing registrations for fall courses and were, therefore, unable to spend much time providing information.

e) *Observations*

There was great difficulty in finding someone to talk to in colleges, university colleges, and universities because staff were busy assessing fall admissions during April and May, when the research took place. It was also difficult to find the right person to speak to; sometimes information could be obtained only by e-mail.

Responses varied widely. Some regulators were aware of the barriers facing internationally trained professionals and were keen to participate, expressing interest in having dialogue with other regulators about these issues.

Others were apprehensive, sometimes even defensive, when first contacted. They had encountered criticism on this issue, and were wary of the questions. Once they understood that the intention was gather information, not to censure, they were generally willing to participate.

Many of these respondents felt overwhelmed. Putting systems in place to assess and integrate internationally trained professionals takes resources—money, time, staff—that simply are not available to many organizations. Some are struggling to put in place inter-provincial systems to allow Canadian-trained professionals to move from one province to another. A few respondents said this process might create an opening to consider a similar process for internationally trained professionals.

Most respondents did not see themselves as advocates: even those aware of the problems internationally trained professionals face in trying to re-enter their professions, saw no way of addressing those problems while meeting the legal mandates of their organizations. Many made comments that summed up the way they see their situation.

“We’re not bad people. We’re not trying to keep people out. We’re just trying to meet our legal obligations.”

2.3 RESULTS

2.3.1 Background

This report provides an overview of the current situation in BC. Although it includes some detailed information, it is not intended to provide a detailed review of each regulatory organization, nor is it intended to provide detailed information about the tools used in assessment. Further research in these areas is strongly recommended. Fact sheets on each of the regulatory bodies, describing the process and the tools they use, would be invaluable. The consultants will provide all the Web data collected for this project to assist in the process.

2.3.2 Regulators

a) *Rights and Responsibilities of Regulators*

Professional regulatory bodies have been delegated the authority to govern the professional practice of their members in the public interest. Catherine Laurier,¹ points out the powers given to regulators are attached to a duty to “operate in the public interest.” This duty includes two key factors. The first is the duty to protect the public by making sure people have the skills, knowledge, and judgment to practice safely, competently, and ethically. The second is to make sure they recognize people’s skills fairly and consistently.²

Individuals seeking licensure must meet the provincial requirements in order to become licensed within a given province. In many cases, they must also meet national requirements.

Regulators have raised concerns about the need to maintain their mandate of protecting the public by making sure that all members of their profession meet the necessary standards, while addressing the challenges faced by internationally trained professionals trying to access the profession. It is difficult for regulators to take on an advocacy function.

¹ Catherine Laurier is a Senior Policy Consultant with the Access to Professions & Trades Unit, Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities of Ontario

² Competency Based Assessment Programs for Internationally Trained Professionals Session Proceedings (Dec. 1, 2000) Catherine Laurier p.8

The regulatory bodies vary in size and in their approach to the assessment of internationally trained professionals. Some do academic assessment internally, some use external credential evaluation services, some conduct other assessments, such as Prior Learning Assessment, and others do not assess applicants, as this is the responsibility of their national body. In this case, the provincial body licenses individuals who have been pre-qualified by the national organization.³ Some are also facing critical shortages within the profession. These variables affect the ability of regulators to initiate or build on their assessment practices. Key for many is the lack of financial or personnel resources.

Some professions are not currently regulated in BC. For example, the BC Society of Laboratory Science, the BC Society of Respiratory Therapists, the BC Association of Medical Radiation Technologists, together with the BC Society of Clinical Perfusion, the Cardiology Technologists Association of BC, and the BC Ultrasonographers Society are exploring the possibility of forming an “umbrella college” to regulate several health-technology-related professions under a single regulatory body.

As these professions are not currently regulated in BC, this report cites the national regulatory body's assessment process for the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science, the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists, and the Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists.

The Certified Dental Assistants of BC has also applied to the provincial government requesting designation for self-regulation. Once approved, they will assume the responsibilities currently managed for them by the College of Dental Surgeons of BC.

The BC Board of Examiners in Optometry does not currently assess internationally trained professionals. An individual who has graduated from an accredited school can apply to take the national examination, or in the case of Ontario, when applicable can apply for an assessment of equivalency. Similarly, the BC College of Chiropractors has not received

³ Access to Ontario's Regulated Professions by International Candidates: Research Report and Compendium of Promising Practices, 2003

an application from a candidate who has not attended a school accredited by the Council of Chiropractic Education of Canada. The council has developed strict criteria that each college must meet in order to gain accreditation. As yet, neither organization sees the need for English language proficiency testing. The BC Association of Podiatrists will register only applicants who have graduated from one of seven US colleges. Although institutions in other countries issue diplomas and degrees in podiatry, the courses are so different from the program accepted in BC that the Association does not consider their graduates. They therefore have no system for assessing either credentials or language skills. Similarly, the College of Naturopathic Physicians of BC considers applications only from graduates of four colleges (one in Canada, three in the US). All assessment of professional training and language skills is done by the colleges.

The College of Dental Hygienists of BC cannot register internationally trained hygienists under their current bylaws. The Board and Registration Committee have approved the changes to registration requirements and they are currently waiting for approval from Cabinet to change their bylaws. Twelve or thirteen internationally trained individuals who have passed the national certification examinations are waiting for the bylaws to change so they can be registered.

Generally, regulators will review applications only from Canadian citizens or people entitled to reside and work in Canada, either as landed immigrants or on work visas.

As is apparent from the examples above, organizations take many different approaches to the assessment of internationally trained professionals. Often, the national body is responsible for at least part of the process. In several cases, the process is in development or undergoing change. All these variations make it difficult to present the information in tables.

b) *English Language Proficiency Assessment*

Language assessment is used to determine eligibility for employment, licensing, and registration with regulators, and for entry into college and university programs.

Gail Stewart⁴ points to cost efficiency, time efficiency, and convenience as key administrative factors for institutions in selecting tests. She also draws attention to the ethical considerations related to the need to protect the public and the desire to provide fair access. She highlights three different mechanisms for deciding on a specific assessment tool.

Setting a Standard on an Existing Tool

There are benefits with regard to cost as the registration cost is assumed by the examinee, and administration, development, and ongoing research costs are covered by a large institution; however, Gail Stewart indicates that the tool may lack “face validity, and may not tap the target construct specifically.” In addition, she points out it may not be Canadian and an institution may still need to conduct its own predictive studies for the test. There is also the question of how to set the standard.

Making Language a Criterion on Clinical Skills Tests

There are also cost and time benefits to this approach. Applicants register and pay for only one test, and scoring on language and clinical components is done simultaneously. The fact that the candidates are performing within the occupational setting and tasks adds face validity to the process. The challenge when assessing results is to distinguish between clinical and linguistic failures. This raises questions about whether it is possible to pass the language component and fail the clinical or visa versa, and how the distinction would be made.

Twenty-six (26) regulators do not use any language assessment tools; they assume that an application to take licensure examinations indicates language competency.

⁴ Access Issue for Regulators: Workshop 3: Developing Professionally-Relevant and Fair Language Testing, Gail Stewart, Oct. 12, 2001 p. 2-3

Developing a Profession-specific Tool

There is a high degree of face validity and a high degree of control over content. Gail Stewart points out that as “it is tailor made, the length and type of administration are specified, and emphasis is placed on those skills deemed most important.” She adds that profession-specific tools are costly to develop, require a high level of expertise, are “expensive to maintain, time-consuming to administer, difficult to keep secure, and a significant responsibility for the institution.”

Three regulators have developed or are in the process of developing a profession-specific tool for assessing language competency.

English Language Assessment Tools

The following are the most commonly used language competency assessment tools. (See Appendix B for detailed descriptions.)

- Language Proficiency Index (LPI)
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS)
- Canadian Academic English Language Assessment (CAEL)
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
- The Test of Spoken English (TSE)
- Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC)
- Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB)
- Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (CELPIP)
- The Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CCPE)

Use of English Language Assessment Tools by Regulators

Of the twenty-eight (28) medical regulators, sixteen (16) had no English language assessment that they recognized. Five (5) regulators recognized three or more instruments; four (4) recognized two instruments; and three (3) recognized one instrument. Eleven (11) used TOEFL as one of their English language assessment tools, with minimum scores ranging from 500 to 580 for the paper-based test, 173 to 239 for the computer test, and 40 to 50+ for TSE. Seven (7) used IELTS, with minimum scores ranging from 6.5 to 7.0; four (4) used MELAB, with minimum scores ranging from 83 to 85; three (3) used Can Test, with minimum scores ranging from 3 to 4.5; and two (2) used VCC ELA with

minimum scores ranging from 145 to 160. One (1) organization used the CCPE with a C minimum score, CCAE with a B minimum score, and their own profession-specific test with a pass. One (1) other regulator used TOEIC with a 730 minimum score, and one (1) is developing the Canadian English Language Benchmarks Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN).

Of the twelve (12) non-medical regulators, only two (2) used English language assessments: the BC College of Teachers used three instruments, and the Society of Notaries Public used one. The College of Teachers used TOEFL (minimum 580 paper, 237 computer, 50 TSE), IELTS (minimum score of 6.5 and 7 for speaking and writing), and VCC ELA (minimum 160 with 27 for listening and speaking). The Society of Notaries Public used the LPI (minimum 6 on reading, English usage, and essay). The other ten (10) regulators did not use any English language assessments.

Some regulators determined English language levels by in-depth study of comparisons with other regulatory bodies, colleges, and university programs; others inherited language levels and were no longer aware of their basis. Some didn't use any language assessment because they believed that the best test of a sufficient command of the English language was to be able to pass an oral interview, to be able to write a paper, to pass a competency exam, or to successfully complete a supervised practicum/articling/work experience.

Inventory of Assessment Tools for Skilled Immigrants

Table 1: Regulators of Health Professions—English Language Assessment Tools

Regulators	No Tests	TOEFL Paper	TOEFL Computer	TSE	MELAB	IELTS	ELA VCC	CanTest	CCPE	CCAE	Profession Specific	TOEIC
BC College of Chiropractors	X											
College of Dental Surgeons- Dental Assistants of BC	X											
College of Dental Hygienists BC	X											
College of Dental Surgeons of BC	X											
College of Dental Technicians of BC		550					145 overall					
College of Denturists of BC	X											
College of Dieticians of BC	X											
Emergency Medical Assistants Licensing Board	X											
BC Society of Laboratory Science		550	213					Band Level 4				
College of Licensed Practical Nurses of BC		550	213	50		6.5 overall spoken band of 7						
College of Massage Therapists of BC	X											
BC Assoc of Medical Radiation Technologists		500	173	40								
College of Midwives of BC		580	237, 5 on Essay rating	50		7.0 overall min of 6.5 in each module	160		C	B	Pass	
College of Naturopathic Physicians of BC	X											

Inventory of Assessment Tools for Skilled Immigrants

Table 1: Regulators of Health Professions—English Language Assessment Tools (cont.)

Regulators	No Tests	TOEFL paper	TOEFL computer	TSE	MELAB	IELTS	ELA VCC	CanTest	CCPE	CCAE	Profession Specific	TOEIC
College of Occupational Therapists of BC		550	213	45		6.5 min of 6.5 on speaking						
College of Opticians of BC	X											
Board of Examiners in Optometry	X											
College of Pharmacists of BC		580	237	50	85 on each component	7.0 overall min of 6 in each module		4.5 on each component				
College of Physical Therapists of BC		585 with 50 on each component	239	45	85 with oral rating of 45	7.0		3 with no component lower than 2				
College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC		600	250									
BC Assoc of Podiatrists	X											
College of Psychologists of BC	X											
BC Society of Respiratory Therapists	X											
BC Assoc of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists	X											
College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of BC		550		200								
Registered Nurses Association of BC		550	213	50 or better	83 min and 3 for speaking	6.5 overall and score less than 6. With speaking score 7					CELBAN in development	730

Inventory of Assessment Tools for Skilled Immigrants

Table 1: Regulators of Health Professions—English Language Assessment Tools (cont.)

Regulators	No Tests	TOEFL paper	TOEFL computer	TSE	MELAB	IELTS	ELA VCC	CanTest	CCPE	CCAE	Profession Specific	TOEIC
College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners & Acupuncturists of BC	X											
BC Veterinary Medical Association		Min score of 550	Min score of 213	Min 50	Min 85	Min overall 6.5						

Additional English language testing tools used by the regulating bodies include:

- English Language Proficiency Interview, offered by the BC College of Pharmacists. The interview is used to determine whether further assessment of reading, writing, speaking, and/or listening/comprehension is required. The College and the UBC Faculty of Pharmacy are exploring ways to combine their interview processes to meet the requirements of both organizations and avoid duplication.
- BC Grade 12 or equivalent.
- Academic English 12 with a C+ or better.
- VCC English 081 and 091 each with a C+ or better.
- Written submissions.

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association also accepts the Canadian Academic English Language (CAEL) Assessment with a minimum score of 60.

Some regulators have indicated that they do not assess English competency or require applicants to take ESL assessment tests as a requirement of registration. The expectation is that if applicants cannot understand the application process and requirements and/or lack the English language competency to take the licensure exam, they will quickly recognize the need to upgrade their English skills before beginning the registration process. One regulatory body requires applicants to sign a statement indicating that they will not use their lack of English language competency as an excuse or in appeal of their results if they fail the examination. Three regulators pointed out that because they have contact with applicants regarding the registration requirements, they are able to establish whether or not an individual has enough English to proceed with the application process. They therefore do not see “language as a problem.” Another regulatory organization does not see the need for an English competency test and has even used interpreters to help applicants understand the practical skills examination.

Fluency can also be demonstrated by official documentation of the following:

- Applicant's first language is English.
- The language of instruction of the applicant's program of study was in English.
- The applicant has been practising in an English speaking country prior to coming to Canada.

Inventory of Assessment Tools for Skilled Immigrants

Table 2: Regulators of Non-health Professions—English Language Assessment Tools

Regulators	No Test	TOEFL Paper	TOEFL Computer	TSE	IELTS	ELA VCC	Profession Specific
Applied Science Technologist Technicians of BC	X						
Architectural Institute of BC	X						
Assoc of BC Professional Foresters	X						
Assoc of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of BC	X						
BC Institute of Agrologists	X						
BC College of Teachers		580	237	50	6.5 no band below 6, min.7 speak/writ bands	160 Min 27 listen speak	
BC Society of Landscape Architects	X						
Board of Registration for Social Workers in BC	X						
Certified General Accountants of BC	X						
Certified Management Accountants of BC	X						
The Law Society of BC	X						
Society of Notaries Public of BC							6 – Sentence, Read. Comp, Eng. Usage, Essay

Only two (2) of the non-medical regulatory bodies require English language tests: BC College of Teachers and the Society of Notaries Public of BC. Some of the reasons given for not having an English language requirement were:

- Organizations with an interview process assess English proficiency through the interview.
- Applicants need sufficient command of English to pass the examinations that they are all given.
- Applicants need sufficient command of English to pass articling, work experience, practicum requirements.
- Organizations with a practicum process under the supervision of a member get feedback from the supervising member on the command of English.
- English language tests do not test the specific vocabulary needed for particular occupations.
- In some occupations, such as landscape architects, practitioners can function adequately with a minimum of English language skills.

When regulators have no stated language requirements, it is difficult for internationally trained professionals to determine the level of English language competence they will need.

How Language Levels are Determined

Some of the regulators indicated that they contracted with “English language experts” to help them determine the required English language levels. Some adopted the standard from another province. Others reviewed the language requirements of related regulatory bodies in BC and across Canada and examined related university or college program language entrance requirements to determine English language levels. Observation of actual practices and job tasks was also used in determining levels.

The English language levels have also been determined by or adjusted as a result of inter-provincial recognition agreements. Moves to standardize

registration requirements have led some regulators to change their levels to match those recommended by the national organization.

Some regulators indicated that they had received feedback from employers that the English language competency of some of their members is not high enough, despite the test requirements. This presents a challenge for these regulators as they do not want to set the bar so high that they would exclude competent applicants. It was suggested that a formal assessment to determine whether or not their levels are appropriate for the profession might assist in addressing these challenges.

Some regulators have expanded the list of acceptable English language tests in order to make the process more accessible, especially for individuals applying from outside Canada. TOEFL, for example, was included because “it has been around for a long time and is known internationally.” The expansion of testing options was also a result of complaints by applicants about the lack of seats or infrequent testing times. Some respondents did not believe the tests adequately measured an individual’s ability to function effectively in English on the job. The reasons cited related to the fact that many of the tests were designed to measure English language competency in an academic setting. As a result, three regulators (midwives, nursing, pharmacy) have developed or are in the process of developing an English language test that is profession specific. Other regulators have also indicated that a profession-specific English language test would be more effective when determining English language proficiency.

One regulator cited a benchmarking study in another province that explored language requirements for theory, application of theory, and occupation competencies, and noted that it underscored the need for a more holistic approach to the assessment of language competency. As a result, they have adjusted their test scores so that if candidates are close to the required levels, the registration committee will grant a provisional practice certificate under the guidance of a supervising practitioner for six months. These candidates must then demonstrate through their written reports and overall communication interactions that they can practice safely on the job.

Concerns were also raised regarding the legal implications of requiring English language testing and whether a regulatory organization can legally implement English requirements without amendments to their bylaws. One regulator pointed out that in regulated profession, “only competent practitioners will be registered—as regulators have to protect the public.” If English language competency is required in order to protect the public, then requiring English language testing supports this mandate. There is a fear that legal and/or human rights concerns might arise if the required level is seen as unreasonable by a judge and is not a bona fide occupational requirement.

c) Observations

Some regulators would like to develop an English language test that relates directly to the profession. A lack of resources and staff time has prevented organizations acting on this need. *Developing an Occupation-specific Language Assessment Tool*, produced by Canadian Language Benchmarks, would provide a useful guide for regulators.

Some regulators have gone to a great deal of trouble to establish levels of language competency that match precisely the needs of their professions. Information about the process they used would no doubt help other regulators establish appropriate levels.

There are problems and inconsistencies when comparing English language test levels, and the systems of scoring are very different. For example, one regulator requires a TOEFL score of 550 (paper based) or an IELTS score of 6.5, but a university requires a TOEFL score 600 (paper based) or an IELTS score of 6.5. It is difficult for regulators to make comparisons among the tests and to understand the applicability of the scores to the profession’s requirements. Comments from regulators indicate that a document showing equivalency among tests would be useful.

d) Essential Skills

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) has defined essential skills as the fundamental skills that make it possible to learn all others. They are the non-technical, “soft skills” Canadians use in their jobs, skills that are common to and transferable across industry and geographic sectors. They are critical for life-long learning and employability, today and in the future. The nine essential skills identified by HRSDC are reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, thinking skills, computer use, and continuous learning. HRSDC notes, “Essential skills play a role in all jobs and occupational areas, although their specific form and complexity level may vary.”⁵

The research has indicated that the majority of regulators have integrated the assessment of essential skills into their competency-based assessment processes, and in particular into the clinical practice assessment component. Essential skills are defined as extremely important to the effective practice of many professions and are therefore built into the scope of practice guidelines and the competency framework. Essential skills assessment is therefore addressed under the competency assessment section of the report.

e) Academic Credential Assessment

The goal of academic credential assessment is to facilitate the recognition of academic qualifications for educational or employment purposes. This involves the comparison of academic credentials gained elsewhere with those awarded by Canadian academic institutions. Generally, this is done by comparing courses, curriculum, clinical components, and hours.⁶ This assessment involves gathering information about the education system, institution, authenticity of the documents, language of instruction, and comparable Canadian credentials.⁷

⁵ Knowledge Matters, 2002. Adapted from: Preparing for the Future: Identifying Advanced Essential Skills Needs in Canada, May 2003)

⁶ Viability of a Foreign Credential Assessment Service in Atlantic Canada, Gardner Pinfold Consulting Economists Ltd. June 13, 2003

⁷ International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES), Dec. 1999

To facilitate this process, organizations have developed reference libraries or databases representing a wide range of schools and courses. Some have developed a list of schools that meet their criteria. The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, for example, lists the jurisdictions that meet their criteria and are acceptable, those that are not acceptable, and those that are deemed inconclusive. Some also compare academic qualifications with an international organization's standards, such as the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) *Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists*.

The Medical Council of Canada will consider graduates of international medical schools only if they have completed all didactic and practical requirements to obtain the final qualification of Doctor of Medicine or equivalent qualification and have been awarded final medical diploma from the university that granted their medical degree. The university granting the degree must be listed in either the World Health Organization (WHO) *World Directory of Medical Schools* or the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER) *International Medical Education Directory*. The *World Directory of Medical Schools* provides information on 1642 schools worldwide. The electronic database on which the directory is based provides additional information relevant to medical curricula, educational approaches, the assessment of students, the availability and use of facilities and equipment, staff activities, continuing education, the mutual recognition of qualifications, and the evaluation or accreditation of medical school programs.

The International Medical Education Directory (IMED) provides an accurate and up-to-date source of information about international medical schools that are recognized by the appropriate government agency in the countries where the medical schools are located. The agency responsible for this recognition in most countries is the Ministry of Health.

Seven credential assessment services have been cited by respondents:

- International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES), located in BC
- International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS), located in Alberta
- World Education Services (WES), located in Ontario
- The Education Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates International Credentials Services (EICS)
- Canadian Architectural Certification Board (CACB)
- National Committee on Accreditation (NCA) – Law Society
- IQAB International Qualifications Appraisal Board – Chartered Accountants

All of these organizations provide services to individuals, professional licensing bodies, educational institutions, and employers. They prepare various types of evaluation reports. (See Appendix D for a detailed description of academic assessment services.)

Inventory of Assessment Tools for Skilled Immigrants

Table 3: Academic Credentials Review: Regulators of Health Professions

Regulators	No Assessment	BC In-house	BC External	BC In-house and External	National In-house	National In-house and External	Combination
BC College of Chiropractors	X						
College of Dental Surgeons-Dental Assistants of BC						IQAS ,ICES WES	
College of Dental Hygienists of BC						ICES, IQAS, WES	
College of Dental Surgeons of BC	X						
College of Dental Technicians of BC		X					
College of Denturists of BC			ICES				
College of Dieticians of BC							ICES
Emergency Medical Assistants Licensing Board	X						
BC Society of Laboratory Science						ICES	
College of Licensed Practical Nurses of BC				ICES			
College of Massage Therapists of BC				ICES			
BC Assoc of Medical Radiation Technologists					X		
College of Midwives of BC		X					
College of Naturopathic Physicians of BC	X						

Inventory of Assessment Tools for Skilled Immigrants

Table 3: Academic Credentials Review: Regulators of Health Professions (cont.)

Regulators	No Assessment	BC In-house	BC External	BC In-house and External	National In-house	National In-house and External	Combination
College of Occupational Therapists of BC						IQAS	
College of Opticians of BC				ICES			
Board of Examiners in Optometry	X						
College of Pharmacists of BC					X		
College of Physical Therapists of BC					X		
College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC						EICS	
BC Assoc of Podiatrists	X						
College of Psychologists of BC				CES			
BC Society of Respiratory Therapists					X		
BC Assoc. of Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiologists						IQAS	
College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of BC				IQAS			
Registered Nurses Association of BC		X					
College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of BC			ICES				
BC Veterinary Medical Association					X		

Assessment of Credentials: Non-medical Regulators

Two of the regulators said their national bodies assess all academic credentials, seven (7) use ICES or other external organizations (IQAS, IQAB), and three (3) do their own assessments. One organization reported that they do their own evaluations, but refer applicants to ICES if they have problems with the assessment. The large number of regulatory bodies using ICES or similar organizations seems to indicate that these organizations don't have or don't want to use their own resources to do these evaluations.

Organizations that do their own assessments have information about education and courses in specific countries and specific requirements needed from some of those countries. This information could be published on the Web site as an aid for internationally trained professionals.

One organization does not accept education from any country other than Canada; therefore, no assessment is needed.

Inventory of Assessment Tools for Skilled Immigrants

Table 4: Academic Credentials Review: Regulators of Non-health Professions

Organization	BC In-House	BC External	National In-House	Other
Applied Science Technologist Technicians of BC				Do not Accept Education outside of Canada
Architectural Institute of BC			CACB Can. Architect. Cert. Board	
Assoc of BC Professional Foresters		ICES Comprehensive Evaluation Report		
Assoc of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of BC	X			
BC Institute of Agrologists		ICES Basic Evaluation		
BC College of Teachers	X \$280.			
Board of Registration for Social Workers in BC		ICES		
BC Society of Landscape Architects		IQAS		
Certified General Accountants of BC	X	When needed uses ICES	IQAB	
Certified Management Accountants of BC		ICES Comprehensive Evaluation Report		
The Law Society of BC		NCA		
Society of Notaries Public of BC		ICES		

An academic assessment includes an application form and evaluation of the following documents:

University Degree Certificate

- Some regulators require a certified photocopy of the final university degree certificate, showing the qualification and date granted.
- If the certificate is not in English, applicants must submit certified photocopies of both the original and an official English or French translation.

University Transcript

- Some regulators require the original transcripts (a list of courses taken and grades obtained for each course attended in each year) to be sent directly from the educational institution to either the external assessing organization or the regulatory organization.
- In exceptional circumstances, such as when an institution no longer exists or the country is at war, this requirement may be waived. This is not regarded as a problem by most of those interviewed.
- Some organizations require that the translator must see the original or the original certified true copy of the original document. The candidate must also submit the original translation, certified or notarized by the translator as “a true translation of the attached document.” If a copy of the translation is submitted, it should be certified “a true copy of the original” by a certifying official.

The translation must appear on official letterhead paper and clearly identify the actual translator and bear the signature of the translator or of an official of the translation service.

Letter re. Licensure

- Applicants are responsible for requesting that the licensing authority in the country where they were most recently licensed send a letter on official stationery, stating that they are currently licensed and in good standing. Again, this letter must be sent to the licensing body directly.

All regulators also require:

- Proof of identity. A copy of the applicant's birth certificate (and marriage certificate if there is a name change).
- Professional experience record.
- Employer references, including hours worked in the profession. In most cases, reference letters must be sent to the licensing body directly.
- Demonstration of clinical/technical skills requirements, e.g., attendance as the primary midwife at a minimum of 40 births, with 30 having taken place in the last five years.

Candidates are asked to sign a consent portion on the application form or letter that allows the licensing body to check references and clinical/technical experience. If the above documents are not in English, they must be translated.

Some organizations also require:

- Statement of Professional Standing from government certification or licensing agency to show the person was licensed and practiced in the field. The statement must verify that the certificate has never been revoked, cancelled, or removed for any reason.
- An evaluation report (e.g., teacher evaluation report). This report describes performance in aspects of teaching such as short- and long-term planning, classroom management, and instructional strategies, and identifies the candidate's strengths or weaknesses as a teacher. If there is no evaluation report, the college will accept a detailed letter of recommendation from an administrative officer or educational supervisor.
- Confidential references

Some organizations have a form that must be signed and sent directly to the organization's evaluator (BC Teachers). Other organizations just ask for references sent directly to them.

English Translation of Documents

If the original documents are not in English or French, two of the regulators require the applicant to request an official translation from the issuing institution. The institution must send the documents in the original language, as well as an official translation, which must be prepared and certified as an accurate translation by a government official or official translator.

In all cases, documents that are in a language other than English or French must be accompanied by an English translation. The applicant is responsible for having the documents translated. The translation must include identification number and/or seal, name, address, telephone number, full name and signature of the translator.

Translations can be accepted only from:

- The consulate, high commission, or embassy of the country that issued the document.
- The Canadian embassy, consulate, or high commission of the country from which the applicant emigrated.
- An associate or certified member of the Society of Translators and Interpreters of BC.
- A translator who has received accreditation through a federal or provincial government in Canada.
- A document translation service pre-approved by the College (BC Teachers).

Some regulators have a two-step assessment process. The Registered Nurses Association of BC do a pre-assessment, which involves an initial check of the application, and send a letter that confirms that the application has been received and informs the applicant if the information is incomplete or missing. They will then request additional documentation in order to begin the assessment process. To aid the process and clarify the steps, the Registered Nurses Association of BC also offer information sessions every two weeks targeted to internationally trained nurses.

In some cases, where it is not possible for applicants to get their transcripts or marks sent directly to the regulator or evaluating service, original documents will be accepted from the applicant. For example, the College of Opticians of BC will allow applicants to submit original documents to ICES, but requires them also to request an official letter be sent by the issuing institution to confirm their credentials. These official degree confirmation letters must be sent directly to ICES and signed by the registrar or similar authority of the institution. In other cases, notarized photocopies will be accepted. Applicants who cannot get their documents sent directly to the Registered Nurses Association of BC can submit their own documents to the registration committee and will be required to swear an affidavit that the documents are authentic. The committee will try to verify the information by contacting the regulatory organization or employer in the country of origin.

Some countries charge a fee for the documentation, and this can be a barrier for some applicants.

In-house Credential Assessment

Some regulators prefer to do their own credential assessment rather than have applicants go to ICES or another organization. Some of the reasons offered relate to concern about additional costs for applicants, length of time that credential assessment services take to complete reports, and the need for the documents to be reviewed again in-house by people who have the technical expertise to more effectively and accurately determine equivalency. However, it was noted that it is expensive to maintain and update resources in-house regarding programs around the world. It is also labour intensive, and this is particularly challenging for smaller regulatory bodies. Those doing in-house credential evaluation have built up a database over time that allows them to process applications more quickly and efficiently. Delays occur, however, because of incomplete applications, and time is spent communicating with applicants to get the missing documents. One respondent indicated that in the past they would “go out of their way” to follow up with applicants but now they see it as essentially the responsibility of the applicants to follow up regarding their application process.

Two regulators emphasized that they do not evaluate the education programs but rather focus on an evaluation of an applicant's education. The process is individually focused.

It can take between 12 and 16 weeks for the evaluating committee to review applications.

Many of the regulators contacted indicated that it can be very difficult to get information about some education institutions and/or programs. These programs vary even within a given country, which presents challenges for regulators assessing an individual's transcripts and specific course content. This can make it more difficult to determine whether the program is comparable or not. Similarly, regulators also found it was harder to get information from particular countries. Contact is often made by telephone, e-mail, or mail. Some regulators found that, once they made contact with an individual in another country, the process became more efficient and the information more reliable.

Another challenge was related to the need to authenticate documents. Concerns were raised regarding the existence of fraudulent documents and the difficulty faced by many regulators and credential evaluation services in establishing the legitimacy of an applicant's papers and clinical practice. One of those interviewed indicated that it is important for regulators to avoid forming stereotypes about all applicants from a particular country because they have come across individuals from that country with fraudulent documents. Two respondents said it had been extremely useful to attend the American Assessment Association Conferences where they were able to get updated information on how to detect fraudulent documents. The conferences also provided an opportunity to make contact with others in the field and to gain insight into practices and standards.

Two of the national regulators pointed out that it is difficult to determine how close the education of an internationally trained applicant is to that of a Canadian-trained applicant because Canadian programs across the country are not necessarily the same.

They had to come up with a “minimum required benchmark” to determine whether an international program was substantially equivalent to a recognized Canadian program.⁸

Most have internal registration committees or individual assessors who review academic credentials, and also use an external credential evaluation service. In some cases, the external service is used primarily to check the authenticity of the documents and to determine if they are legitimate. Others have a contract with the external service to provide detailed, comprehensive, or supplementary reports. Some of the regulatory organization in this category will check the work or registration references themselves to determine if the applicant has worked and has been in good standing in the last five years. This is done by either a committee or an individual assessor. One regulator indicated that although they have used ICES in the past, they have not done so recently. They tend to rely on an informal interview to determine whether the applicant has the skills or not.

Many regulators send applicants a letter or report indicating whether or not they have met the requirements and are therefore eligible to take the exam. Alternatively, areas of weakness or specific gaps in their education or work experience would be outlined. Many of those interviewed said it is difficult for applicants to fill the gaps in training because, in some cases, the needed courses do not exist.

Organizations doing academic assessments charge fees that range from \$300 to \$725. In some cases, this is in addition to the external credential evaluation service fees. Sometimes this fee also covers the competency-based assessment.

Some of the registrars pointed out that academic assessment cannot adequately assess the level of skill and knowledge an individual has acquired on the job. Although academic assessment has been a critical element in the assessment process, some regulators have pointed out

⁸ Competency Based Assessment Programs for Internationally Trained Professionals Session Proceedings (Dec. 1, 2000) Catherine Laurier p.25.

that it does not give a true picture of how someone will actually perform on the job. One regulator indicated that a prior learning assessment might serve them better because applicants can “look good on paper but they do terribly in the exam.” A prior learning assessment could provide a more holistic picture of the applicant’s capabilities.

Registrars indicated that individuals applying to immigrate to Canada could assess where their education gaps are and take courses at home while their application is being processed. This could facilitate their transition to the workforce earlier and prevent applicants from arriving with unrealistic expectations. This would also reduce the negative comments being made about regulators because applicants fail to meet the requirements.

f) *Observations*

Many of the smaller regulators lack staff and resources to follow up on incomplete applications, which slows the process and leads to frustration for both the regulators and the applicants. Although regulators don’t see it as their role to provide it, most recognize that internationally trained professionals need support in navigating the process.

There were mixed responses regarding the utility of using an external credential evaluation service. Some regulators felt that the external service had a role in authenticating documents, a process that is often time consuming and difficult. Others used the service to produce comprehensive or supplementary reports and found the process efficient. Other organizations preferred to use their own academic assessment because they saw a need for technical knowledge in the assessment process. Universities also tend to use their own assessors. Concerns were raised about the length of time external services take to complete reports and about the financial costs for applicants having to pay both the external service fees and those of the regulator. It was suggested that there might be value in increasing the role of ICES, especially in relation to the authentication of documents.

One of the biggest challenges regarding academic assessment is the need for applicants to understand what documents are required and what the credential evaluation process involves. Developing a system whereby applicants could become informed about the requirements for registration prior to coming to Canada was seen as extremely beneficial.

g) *Competency-based Assessment*

Background

The Agreement on Internal Trade, which is designed to promote inter-provincial mobility for professions and trades, has set out principles that are also relevant for assessing and recognizing internationally trained professionals. These principles are that “entry-to-practice standards and procedures should be transparent, objective and fair, and should be based on criteria that are relevant to practicing the profession.”⁹ Regulators are exploring strategies to integrate these principles into the assessment of internationally trained professionals. This has led many regulatory bodies to look at competency-based assessment, which includes “competency-based entry-to-practice requirements, revamping professional curricula, developing or redesigning professional registration exams, implementing quality assurance programs, and exploring alternative forms of assessment.”¹⁰

Competency-based assessment attempts to establish what an individual knows and can do. The goal is to get “some kind of direct or indirect demonstration from them of their current skills and knowledge.”¹¹

Many professions have registration exams to test skills and knowledge that are essentially competency based. The purpose of the exams is to establish that the individual does have the core competencies to practice in the field. Many of these exams have been based on national and/or provincial competency frameworks. These have been developed through a rigorous process involving analysis of tasks, observation, consultation, and validation to ensure reliability and fairness.

⁹ Competency Based Assessment Programs for Internationally Trained Professionals Session Proceedings (Dec. 1, 2000) Catherine Laurier p.7.

¹⁰ Ibid p.8

Competencies represent learning outcomes—the specific skills, knowledge, and abilities the individual should be able to demonstrate. There is a broad range of competencies, “including practical [technical] or clinical skills, problem solving, decision making, clinical assessment, academic theory, communication skills, ethics, and case management.”¹² Several competency-based assessment approaches are currently being used by regulators.

These include:

- The College of Midwives process includes self-assessment; prior learning and experience assessment (PLEA), involving a portfolio assessment; Written Midwifery Exam; Clinical Midwifery Exam; and an orientation to practice in BC program.
- The Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science process involves self-assessment; prior learning assessment (PLA), involving a dossier assessment; national certification examination.
- The Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators uses a prior learning assessment and remediation (PLAR) process. This involves academic assessment to determine whether applicants are eligible for the PLAR process; a modified portfolio, which must focus on experience related to specific gaps identified in the academic assessment; physiotherapy competency examination, including a multiple choice exam and an objective structured clinical exam. Remediation is seen as an integral part of the process. Candidates have the option of taking approved courses instead of being assessed through PLA.
- The Paramedic Association of Canada has established national occupational competency profiles and practitioner levels to promote national consistency in training and practice and to enhance job mobility for practitioners. Provinces are currently aligning with the national system, assessing current programs and determining equivalencies.
- The BC Institute of Agrologists (BCIA) requires applicants to write a BCIA examination, which “is not onerous” and is intended to test knowledge and competency. The respondent provided an example of

¹¹ Ibid, p. 9

an applicant who did not feel sufficiently confident in his or her command of written English to take the examination: the applicant was allowed to take the exam verbally before several members. The person passed, demonstrating more than adequate knowledge and experience. This was the only example of an accommodation we encountered.

- BC Society of Landscape Architects also uses a competency-based exam. The LARE (Landscape Architect Registration Examination), administered over three days, has five sections: A. Legal and Administration, B. Analytical Aspects, C. Structural Considerations, which can be done on the computer, and D. Planning and Site Design and E. Grading, Drainage and Storm Management, which use vignettes and require “task analyses” and identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities newly licensed landscape architects need in order to perform landscape architectural services without endangering the health, safety, and welfare of the public. These sections are given at UBC and/or in major BC centres. The examination costs \$1100.
- Certified Management Accountants (CMA) National Entrance Exam. Offered each June and October, this is a two-day exam (4 hours scheduled each day) that costs \$1000. Day one uses multiple-choice questions to test technical knowledge of the 18 topic areas. Candidates acquire this knowledge by taking one of three accreditation paths available in the CMA qualifying program. At the end of day one, writers receive a detailed “backgrounder” on a company facing a particular situation. On day two, candidates are required to prepare a written report to management identifying the issues and stating how they would address them. This portion of the exam is designed to test the CMA students’ writing form, style, and ability to integrate issues. Writers must apply higher-level skills, employing judgment, analysis, strategic thinking, and written communication skills (essential skills). Students must pass each day with a mark of 60% or better.

¹² Ibid p.12

There is also a range of competency-based tools currently being used. These include:

- Prior learning assessments (including portfolios and dossiers)
- Exams (including written and practical)
- Structured oral interviews
- On-site clinical assessments
- Written reports

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

The underlying assumption of PLA is that adults are continually learning on the job and off the job, and that over time they develop an inventory of skills—essential skills and technical skills—and knowledge through a variety of activities. In Canada, many public colleges recognize prior learning in some programs. Some universities also recognize it, as do some licensing and certification bodies. Generally, PLA is assessed through a variety of processes, including demonstrations, structured interviews, portfolio development, and presentations.¹³ Regulators use PLA to assess the skills, knowledge, and abilities of internationally educated professionals. PLA includes portfolio/dossier assessment, written and clinical examinations, orientation programs, and in some cases, supervised practice. Some of the regulators contacted have introduced PLA as a component of their competency-based assessment process.

As a result of a critical shortage of dental technicians, the College of Dental Technicians of BC has been working with Vancouver Community College to develop a prior learning assessment to assess dental assistants who are interested in upgrading their skills to qualify as dental technicians. The goal of the prior learning assessment would be for individuals to “short circuit” the two-year Dental Technician program and qualify sooner.

¹³ Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, Fact Sheet No. 6: Information on Prior Learning Assessments and Recognition in Canada.

Portfolios/Dossiers

The College of Midwives, for example, includes a portfolio assessment as part of their prior learning and experience assessment (PLEA). The portfolio includes an application form, proof of formal midwifery education, proof of adequate clinical experience, proof of language fluency, and professional references.¹⁴ The Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science requires applicants to submit a “dossier” for assessment. The goal is for applicants to establish that their education, training, and work experience are equivalent to those obtained in an accredited program in Canada.¹⁵ The dossier includes an application form, proof of language fluency if education in medical laboratory technology was not in English or French, original transcripts, and an official outline of the content of the education program with specified hours of instruction. Other relevant education, professional certification, and work experience is also required as part of the dossier.

Many regulators provide applicants with information to assist them in determining whether their education, training, and work experience are of a similar standard to those of their Canadian counterparts, and whether they have the skills and knowledge to work in their field in Canada. In some cases, the applicants complete a self-assessment form and must demonstrate significant overlap between their skills and experience and the Canadian standard to participate in the prior learning assessment process. Regulators pointed out that because the PLA process involves a lot of work and effort, they did not want applicants to invest in the process if there was no chance of success. Once this self-assessment is made, the applicant then submits the portfolio or dossier. The portfolio or dossier is evaluated by a committee made up of registered, qualified individuals who have been trained as assessors.

The Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators does not use a standardized process where all candidates go through the same prior learning assessment and remediation (PLAR) process. Instead,

¹⁴ College of Midwives of British Columbia PLEA Applicant Handbook, 2004

¹⁵ Information Handbook for Prior Learning Assessment Applicants: Non-residents of Canada, Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science, Jan 1, 2004

applicants receive individual counselling to help determine the best way to address gaps. This can include submitting a modified portfolio to take credit for clinical or research experience, taking challenge exams, or taking courses.¹⁶

The College of Midwives has translated their forms into five languages in order to facilitate the application process.

Exams

There are a number of criteria to be met before an internationally trained applicant can write the examination to become a licensed practitioner. These include:

- A legal entitlement to work in Canada.
- Education/experience that is equivalent to that of Canadian-educated applicants (see Academic Qualifications Assessment).
- Currency in professional practice (completion of a specified number of hours of clinical practice).
- Language fluency (which does not have to be demonstrated before the examination—see English Language Proficiency Assessment).¹⁷

Exams vary in length from four hours to two days. Most written exams are a combination of multiple choice, true/false, matching, and written short answer or essay questions, which are often scenario based. Multiple-choice examinations can consist of 500 questions administered in four three-hour sessions. The National Dental Assisting Examining Board, in its written component, uses multiple-choice items and vignette-based items consisting of a brief description of a scenario followed by a number of associated items related to the vignette. The examination also includes matching items, with the use of a vignette along with a set of answers and several associated items. This exam is followed by the Clinical Practice Evaluation.

¹⁶ Competency Based Assessment Programs for Internationally Trained Professionals Session Proceedings (Dec. 1, 2000) Catherine Laurier p.68.

¹⁷ Partnering on Access Solutions to Regulated Health Professions: Regulators, Community and Internationally Educated Professionals – Specific Focus on Examination and Supervised Practice, March 2004

Although all regulatory bodies use written examinations, some also have a clinical practice examination or objective structured clinical evaluation (OSCE). These practical exams are also attempting to assess communication skills, problem-solving skills, and overall style of interaction with a patient. These essential skills or general abilities are defined as critical to many health professions. One regulatory organization has only a practical skills exam (with a small written component) because the emphasis is on how individuals actually apply their learning.

Practical exams can take different forms, including clinical stations, or clinical scenarios with actors playing the roles of patients, or technical assessments using “real” patients. In the exam, candidates move from station to station, and each scenario lasts about 7 to 15 minutes. A trained assessor/examiner observes, records, and assesses how the candidates interact with the “standardized patient” and complete the task, using specific, standardized assessment criteria.¹⁸ Each of these components is measured against set criteria based on established competencies.

The development of competencies for the examination process often utilizes a consultative process involving practitioners from the field, association representatives, experts, academics, and regulators. The process also involves reviewing competence definitions of other health-care professions nationally and internationally. In some cases, the competencies were validated through focus groups, feedback from selected individuals, and feedback from randomly selected clinicians.

The competencies describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are required to practice “safely, effectively, and ethically.” They constitute both the entry to practice requirements and the continuing competency requirements. In most cases, the competencies include “soft” or “essential” skills components.

¹⁸ Qualifying Examination Information, The Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada, 2004

For example, the College of Occupational Therapists of BC includes competencies in relation to communication skills. It seeks evidence that a candidate:

- Identifies and communicates with key individuals, organizations, and groups with whom collaboration is necessary.
- Uses client-centred principles in the communication process.
- Fosters open, honest, and clear communication.
- Works collaboratively with the client and other relevant individuals to understand and establish his or her expectations and desired outcomes.
- Communicates, ensuring that clients are enabled to make informed decisions.
- Shares appropriate knowledge with clients, peers, and colleagues.
- Respects and considers the information and opinions of clients and colleagues.
- Maintains a professional relationship in all communications.
- Demonstrates an understanding of styles of communication and their impact on the professional relationship.
- Fosters collaborative relationships in practice.
- Manages discrepancies or conflicts in a diplomatic manner.
- Demonstrates timely and effective communications.
- Maintains confidentiality and security in the transmission, storage, and management of information.

Generally, candidates are expected to take a qualifying examination, administered by the provincial or national body, that includes both a written and practical component. Once candidates have successfully completed the qualifying examinations, they are required by many regulators to take a provincial jurisprudence examination. This examination is designed to assess the candidate's knowledge of and ability to interpret and apply all legislation that affects the current practice of their profession in BC. For example, the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada administers the Qualifying Examination, Part I (MCQ—Multiple Choice Question format) and Part II (OSCE—Objective Structured Clinical Examination).

Part I is a written examination in a multiple-choice question format divided into two sittings, taken on two consecutive half-days. Part II is a practice-based examination consisting of seven-minute tasks or simulations based on common and critical practice situations.

There are a number of fees required for each of the examinations. Most of these range from \$187.25 for the jurisprudence examination to \$1,200.00 for the qualifying examinations.

The National Examining Board (NEB) of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association is responsible for administering the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVALE), an eight-hour computer-assisted exam with 360 multiple-choice questions. Approximately 10% of the exam includes questions involving graphs or pictures. Once applicants have passed the NAVALE, they take the Clinical Proficiency Examination (CPE), also administered by the NEB. The CPE, which takes four days to complete, is a hands-on exam in which candidates must treat animals, and during which their communication skills are assessed. The CPE has nine sections of clinical work, requiring three to four hours each. Once they have passed the NAVALE and the CPE, candidates wishing to practice in BC must pass an exam on the bylaws of the BC Veterinary Medical Association. The fee to take the NAVALE is \$749.00, and to take the CPE, \$6420.00.

Some regulators pointed out that some internationally trained professionals have difficulty with the OSCE format. This could be related to a lack of familiarity with this type of examination or it could reflect differences in training and role expectations. Others pointed out that the examination measures, to some extent, the degree of familiarity the candidate has with the cultural norms. Applicants therefore need to be orientated to the culture of practice before taking the OSCE. One regulator identified subtle cultural bias in the examination questions as a factor in the lower examination scores of internationally trained individuals. Concerns were also raised that there might be bias against those who speak accented English, especially given the high weighting of communication skills.

Another regulator indicated that because internationally trained graduates (with some exceptions) require more attention and training when being supervised, there is a tendency to distrust competency even if the individual has passed all the qualifying exams. Examinations alone are not “a measure of an individual’s competency in the profession.” A competency assessment would better evaluate an individual’s skills, knowledge and practice.

Most regulatory bodies provide information about their licensing examinations on their Web sites or at their offices. This includes a description of the examination process, the examination format, sample questions, list of competencies, fee structure, and dates and locations of examinations. In some cases, this information is intended to provide a self-assessment mechanism for applicants to determine if they are able to take the examinations.

Regulators vary in how they communicate the results of licensing examinations. Some provide a detailed description of candidates’ performance in each area of practice for both written and clinical exams. These reports point out gaps in knowledge and skills. Other regulators simply indicate whether the candidate has passed or failed. In some of these cases, applicants can request a breakdown of their scores or a file review for an additional fee. A problem raised by some regulators is that there is currently a lack of specific courses for individuals to take if they require additional training.

Course Work

Several regulators require candidates to undertake course work before accepting them into their membership. For example, the Society of Notaries Public offers 16 months of course work via Internet correspondence for \$2500. Examinations are based upon that course work. The Law Society of BC requires applicants to take a 10-week, full-time course, the Professional Legal Training Course (PLTC), and requires candidates to write and pass two qualification examinations during the last week of PLTC. The examinations are based on PLTC work and the

practice material. The fee for the Law Society Admission Program (LSAP), which includes the PLTC is \$2500 + 7% GST.

APEGBC (Engineers and Geoscientists) requires all applicants to take a seminar or view a CD-ROM program on ethics and law. The law section includes practice law for engineers and geoscientists, occupational health and safety, and employment law. The ethics section includes information on the roles and responsibilities of APEGBC, the Canadian Council for Professional Engineers (CCPE), and the Canadian Council for Professional Geoscientists (CCPG); professional practices and ethics; the Gilban Gold case; and a disciplinary hearing.

Structured Oral Interviews

The Interview is used in a variety of different ways by regulatory bodies.

The process can be used to:

- Learn in more detail about the prior learning and work history of the applicant.
- Assess the applicant's knowledge of specific aspects of the profession (e.g., information related to the BC context such as bylaws, regulations and statutes).
- Assess applicants' skill in expressing themselves, answering questions, and making presentations with ease.
- Get to know more about the person in general.
- Assess applicants' cultural understanding of Canada and their language skills.

The nominating committee and executive officer of the Society of Notaries Public of BC conduct an interview to get to know a person better, to learn about applicants' work and education background, to assess their communication skills, and to assess their cultural understanding of Canada.

The BC Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA) also has an oral examination, which is intended to review applicants' familiarity with

contract law, the builders lien act, and other BC statutes and regulations that relate to landscape architects.

The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC (APEGBC) will interview applicants whose academic qualifications are not accepted. The purpose is to determine applicants' academic background and experience, and to assess their practical language skills in relation to ability to understand, knowledge of profession-relevant terminology, and ability express themselves.

Clinical Assessment

Catherine Laurier defines on-site clinical assessment as the process by which an individual goes into a clinical setting for a period of time and is evaluated by a supervisor against a list of professional competencies. The supervisor checks off the competencies as the candidate completes them and signs off at the end to verify their completion.¹⁹ Although this is not a common practice in BC, in some cases, temporary licenses are granted that allow internationally trained professionals to gain additional experience under supervision. Applicants are then assessed by the supervisor against a set of professional competencies. The applicants have to find their own supervisors.

The lack of supervisors in some professions has been identified as a problem, as has the need for applicants to find their own clinical supervisors, which is particularly hard for individuals who are not familiar with the system and do not have contacts in the field.

One regulator pointed out that internationally trained practitioners are often identified as not knowing the job: "There is a preconceived idea regarding how people will perform; there is a tendency to sum up whole countries and not look at individuals."

¹⁹ Competency Based Assessment Programs for Internationally Trained Professionals Session Proceedings (Dec. 1, 2000) Catherine Laurier p.13.

Work Experience/Supervised Work

Many organizations have a supervised work experience component, which is intended to:

- Expose the applicant to a wide area of professional practice.
- Allow the applicant to gain local experience in the field.
- Enable the applicant to develop professional practice skills under the guidance of a sponsoring person in the field or a registered member, and receive supervision of and feedback on their work.
- Sensitize the applicant to the rights and obligations of a practicing professional, including those under the Code of Ethics binding all members.

BC Landscape Architects (BCSLA) has a two-year work requirement, one year of which must be in Canada; the Law Society of BC has an articling supervised work requirement of one to two years; the Board of Registration for Social Workers requires 3500 hours of work; APEGBC (Engineers and Geoscientists) requires three years of work experience, and the ABCFP (Professional Foresters) requires two years' (24 months) experience.

BCIA (agrologists) specifically appoints a mentor who provides support to the applicant, gives feedback and provides an informal assessment on English language and work related competency to the regulator.

Written Report

Some organizations require the applicant to write a report about his or her professional experience: jobs, duties related to the job, and projects completed. The report enables them to:

- Learn in more depth about the applicant's past work experience.
- Assess the applicant's English writing skills.

The BCIA (Agrologists) requires a written report about the applicant's past education and work history. APEGBC (Engineers & Geoscientists) requires applicants to write a report describing their work history and experience and presenting a sample of previous work.

The ABCFP (Professional Foresters) asks applicants to write a professional report describing a problem or situation relevant to professional forestry and professional forest management. The report should demonstrate clear and logical reasoning based on scientific principles and professional judgment, and should provide meaningful conclusions and recommendations for action. If applicants have such a report written as a requisite to meeting educational requirements, this report may be submitted; otherwise the report should be based upon personal research and analysis.

Orientation

Some regulators have indicated that they would like to see an online orientation to their profession. This program would focus on the scope of practice, culture of practice, role of the professional association, and examination preparation. The orientation would increase an applicant's chances of negotiating the registration process successfully.

The Society of Notaries Public, for example, offers five-day mediation training for its members, given by a member of the UBC Law faculty. Most organizations do not have a mechanism for assessing essential skills, although some (e.g., landscape architects) can see a need for those skills.

h) Observations

Although the specifics differ from profession to profession, the fundamental requirements and challenges regulators deal with in assessment are the same. It would be beneficial to find a mechanism for regulators to share ideas and possibly work together on the development of a blueprint.

Cultural bias seems sometimes to be a factor in the assessment of internationally trained professionals. A tendency to base opinions about the training standards or standards of practice in an entire country on experiences with one or two applicants was not uncommon and suggested the existence of unexamined stereotypes. In many cases, too, there was

an assumption that the training and professional scope of international candidates would not simply be different from Canadian training and experience, but also, almost by definition, inferior to it. Several respondents indicated this in the way they expressed their concern for their legal obligations and their commitment to their patients or clients: “We don’t want to lower standards.”

Cultural differences and problems transitioning to the Canadian health-care system are difficult issues and barriers for many internationally trained professionals. There is a need for orientation to the profession that can provide information on ethics, value-based practices, and an overview of the profession. As one respondent said, “If you know the language but not the culture, it’s problematic. No test exists that doesn’t have cultural implications.”

A lack of familiarity with profession-specific norms and practices in Canada was cited as a significant barrier to the integration of internationally educated professionals.

There is a need for self-assessment tools for applicants to use before coming to Canada.

It has been demonstrated that prior learning assessment is a useful tool for establishing essential competencies to practice. Designing and administering PLA tools is time consuming and costly for regulators to undertake alone.

All the non-medical regulators, with the exception of College of Teachers and the Board of Registration for Social Workers, have an examination component. Many Web sites include questions and answers pertaining to the examination, guides and resources for studying, and even sample examinations. All the examinations appear to have a knowledge section, which often consists of multiple-choice questions, and a problem analysis/solving section that uses essential skills. It seems the regulators provide information to support and help prospective members pass the examination.

i) Employability Skills Assessment

The Employment Readiness Scale (ERS) is a computer-based tool, consisting of 45 items to be rated on a 5-point scale and 30 items to be answered True/False. It takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Clients take the ERS at the beginning of the employment program to establish a baseline, then again when they and program staff believe they are ready to enter the labour market. They may take the ERS a third time if necessary.

The ERS begins with the assumption that clients face a number of barriers or challenges that act as stressors and that can be incapacitating if not managed well. Clients facing significant challenges without assistance in handling them are likely to fail at work even if they are successful in getting a job. So all three parts of the employment readiness model are equally important. Key components of the ERS:

- self-sufficiency in five employability dimensions;
- understanding the particular stresses or challenges one faces;
- coping effectively with the stresses or challenges one faces, drawing on four sources of supports.

Organizations pay an annual licensing fee (\$270) for the program; they also pay a fee (\$10-\$14) for each client (up to three uses). There is no charge to the client.

Overall, there is a perception that the ERS has little applicability for colleges and regulators assessing internationally trained professionals. In general, internationally trained professionals already have the skills the ERS is designed to evaluate and develop.

One organization that does use ERS has been able to deliver it successfully to 90%-95% of clients. It has been a useful tool to validate the work of staff, who now have data instead of just gut feeling to guide and validate their activities.

Typically, clients self-administer the test, but there have been difficulties with people who are at a low ESL level. Some concern was expressed, too, about cultural bias inherent in the program. It was also noted that the usefulness of the ERS was dependent on the duration and type of program in which it was used: clients taking the ERS twice within two or three weeks will probably see little improvement.

2.3.3 Academic Institutions

a) *Undergraduate Programs*

Information about the following Lower Mainland universities, colleges, and university colleges was gathered from their Web sites and through interviews: University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, Douglas College, Capilano College, Langara College, University College of the Fraser Valley, Kwantlen University College, British Columbia Open University, and Vancouver Community College.

b) *English Language Assessments*

Of the ten (10) universities, university colleges, and colleges, six (6) used two English language assessment tools, and five (5) used three or more assessment tools. Of the colleges, university colleges, and universities and some specific programs, seventeen (17) used TOEFL as one of their acceptable English language assessment tool with minimum scores ranging from 175 to 250 for the computer test, and 500 to 600 for the paper-based test. Eight (8) identified TWE, with minimum scores ranging from 4.0 to 5.0; two (2) identified TSE, with minimum scores of 5.0; and four (4) identified TOEFL, with essay with minimum scores ranging from 40 to 45. Ten (10) identified IELTS, with minimum scores ranging from 5.5 to 7.5 (the majority identified a minimum score of 6.5 with no band below 6.0). Six (6) used the LPI, with a minimum range from 3 to 5. Three (3) institutions and programs identified MELAB as an indicator, with minimum scores ranging from 88 to 85; and three (3) institutions used the VCC ELA, with minimum scores of 145 to 160. Other tests, such as the Graduate Record Exam (GRE, SFU Graduate studies), the Langara English Test (LET, (Langara College), the Canadian English Language

Proficiency Index Program (CELPIP), CPE, and UBC CEL were used by only one of the institutions contacted.

Vancouver Community College is in the process of assigning Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) levels to their assessment tools, and will then benchmark their programs.

Tables 5 and 6 show the various English language tests/examinations and the minimum scores required by various colleges, universities, and specific programs.

Inventory of Assessment Tools for Skilled Immigrants

Table 5: The Use of English Language Competency Tests by Colleges, University Colleges, and Universities

Colleges, University Colleges, and Universities	TOEFL Paper PBT	TOEFL Computer CBT	TWE	TSE	TOEFL w/essay	MELAB	IELTS	GRE	GCE
BCIT	580, 550, 500+	240, 220, 175+	5.0, 4.5	50					
Capilano	560	220					6.5, no band below 6		
Douglas	560	220					6.5 no band below 6		
Kwantlen	550	213	4.5		4.5				
Langara									
Langara, Dietetic Canadian Experience Program	550								
Open Learning /BCOU	600	250	4.5				6.5 no band below 6		
Simon Fraser University Undergraduate *	540 570 600	207 230 250	4.5		4.5		6.5 5.5		
Simon Fraser University Graduate	600	230	5.0					400 v 740q 700a	
Simon Fraser University Graduate Business Admin	570		5.0				7.5		
UBC, Undergraduate	550	220	4.0	5.0	4.0	85	6.5 no band below 6		
UBC Graduate, Computer Engineering	600	250				88			"B"
Colleges, University Colleges, and Universities	TOEFL paper PBT	TOEFL computer CBT	TWE	TSE	TOEFL w/essay	MELAB	IELTS	GRE	GCE
UBC Grad. Social Work	580	237							
UBC Grad. Education	600	250							
UBC Grad. Medical Lab Science	600	250				85	6.5 w/ no band below 6		
University College of the Fraser Valley	550	213					6.0+		
Vancouver Community College		220	5.0				6.5		
BCOU: Registered Nurse Refresher Certificate	550	213		50			6.5		

* **SFU** Students are generally exempt from the university's English language requirement or TOEFL requirement, provided they have been living in an English-speaking environment for at least 4 years.

Inventory of Assessment Tools for Skilled Immigrants

Table 5: The Use of English Language Competency Tests by Colleges, Universities, and University Colleges (cont.)

Colleges, University Colleges, and Universities	ELA: VCC	Can Test	LPI	LET	Grade 12 Equivalent	CELP/IP	CAEL	CPE	UBC CEL
BCIT	160 Eng12 145 Eng11 135 Com12 135 Eng10 125								
Capilano	145								
Douglas			3						
Kwantlen			5+						
Langara Arts and Science (Engineering)			Min 25	Min. level 4					
Langara: Computer Science & Technology			5 Eng. Usage Min 25	Min level 3					
Open Learning Simon Fraser University Undergraduate			5 30/40 essay						
UBC, Undergraduate UBC Graduate			5+			4L, 4H, CELPIT-A CELL CENTOP C	Overa II 70	C	Cert. Of Eng. Lang.
University College of the Fraser Valley									
Vancouver Community College	Various levels								

Additional Requirements

Some colleges, university colleges, and universities have other criteria, such as:

- Grade 12 English with a C or better (K)
- EASL 0085 level: a minimum B grade (K), 300 level with mastery (D)
- Completion of English 1099 or PSPE 1091 with a minimum C grade (K)
- Kwantlen Placement Test, which costs \$30, and enables placement in Engl. 1099, ABEE 0091, PSPE 1091, or EASL 0085.
- Douglas College Writing Assessment with a score of Writing Skills Review
- Douglas ESL Program Assessment Test
- University College of the Fraser Valley: piloting Accuplacer as single test for the institution
- Communications 12 with a minimum grade of B (D)
- English Literature 12 with a minimum grade of A (L), C (D)
- Technical and Professional Communications 12 with a minimum grade of C (D)
- GED Language Arts Writing and Reading Test with a min. score 450 (D)
- BC English 12 or equivalent with an A (L)
- English 1107, 1108, 1110 with a S (L)
- Completion of BCIT Pre-Entry Communications course. The requirements of COMM 0005 and 0008 are English 12 with a B, C+, C or P or better, English 11 with a 50%.
- Some BCIT trades programs allow applicants to write a Trades Admission Assessment Test (pre-test) to determine their English language and math ability and eligibility for entrance.

c) *Assessment of Academic Qualifications***Secondary School Graduation**

In order to assess previous academic qualifications, colleges, university colleges, and universities need an official high school/secondary school transcript showing that the applicant has graduated. The transcript is needed if there are prerequisite courses to be taken for specific programs. Official transcripts are transcripts that arrive at the Admissions and Records office in a sealed envelope from the sending institution, and include the official seal or signature of that institution. All universities and most colleges want official transcripts delivered in this manner; however, there is variation in what they will accept. Some universities, university colleges, and colleges:

- Have strict rules about this and will not accept the transcripts obtained in any other way (UBC and SFU).
- Will accept a transcript delivered by hand in envelope that has been stamped and is unopened (Langara). Admissions must be able to read the stamp.
- Will accept certified transcripts by fax if the originals are subsequently brought in (Douglas, BCIT).
- Will accept notarized copies of certified transcripts (Capilano, VCC).
- Understand the difficulty of having transcripts mailed directly from an institution/government ministry of particular countries, and will accept certified transcripts mailed directly from applicants (UCFV).

BCOU wants transcripts assessed by ICES, so certified copies go to ICES; BCOU may also ask for a copy of a certified transcript. VCC also uses ICES for academic assessment.

If transcripts are not in English, a certified translation may be required. UBC undergraduate admissions will do their own translations if they have someone in their office who is fluent in the particular language; otherwise, they recommend MOSAIC as a service for doing certified translations. Douglas College recommends the use of BCIT's translation service.

Kwantlen does not require transcripts from applicants who graduated or left high school five or more years before beginning their studies unless they are needed to verify English proficiency or to satisfy specific program and course admission requirements.

Each department at VCC generally assesses academic credentials rather than the admissions office: the admissions office is not familiar with specific program needs and content and therefore does not have the technical knowledge to accurately assess an applicant's credentials.

For students applying to Langara on a conditional basis (i.e., those who may not have completed all requirements), official transcripts of only Grade 11 and 12 courses are requested.

The UBC and SFU Web sites show minimum undergraduate admission requirements related to education in other countries.

UBC's Web site lists those requirements for three countries in Africa, five in the Americas, nine in Asia, six in Europe, three in the Middle East, and for the US. The requirements include the equivalence to secondary school graduation and the course requirements needed for entering specific programs, such as agricultural sciences, applied sciences (engineering), arts, commerce, and sciences. Some examples from the UBC Web site:

- Applicants from Mexico need a "Bachillerato" and three (3) years of math, and two (2) of chemistry, physics, and biology for entering the agricultural sciences program, or three (3) years of math, two (2) years of chemistry for entering the applied sciences (engineering) program. Requirements are also listed for those applicants entering the arts, commerce, and sciences.
- Applicants from China need a Senior High School Graduation Diploma and a report of their grades; they need the same prerequisite courses for entering specific programs such as agriculture and applied sciences.
- Applicants from India need a high secondary school certificate awarded on completion of Standard XII; they need the same

prerequisite courses for entering specific programs such as agriculture and applied sciences.

- Applicants from Indonesia need a “Sekolah Menengah Umum” (SMU) and “Ebtanas” results; they also need the same prerequisite courses for entering specific programs, such as agriculture and applied sciences.

SFU's Web site indicates the undergraduate equivalence in more detail for 25 countries, but does not list the course requirements needed for specific programs. Some examples from the SFU Web site:

- Applicants from Mexico need a “Bachillerato” on an academic program with a minimum of 8/10, but normally 9/10 is required, plus results of a University Entrance Examinations.
- The requirement for a student from India depends upon the Indian state, the type of academic institution (e.g., private, public, national or international, etc.), and when the program was completed. In general, 12 years of academic preparation is required and the following certificates are acceptable: the Indian Senior School Certificate (ISC), Intermediate Certificate, Higher School Certificate, Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC), or All India Senior School Certificate awarded after Standard XII with a minimum Second Division/Class Standing, but normally a First Division/Class Standing is required, and a statement of marks with a minimum of 60%, but normally 70% is required.
- Applicants from China need a Senior Middle School Graduation Diploma with superior standing and a minimum score of 70% in the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE).
- Applicants from Iran need a Diploma (National High School Diploma) and pre-university year with a minimum score of 14/20, but normally 17/20 is required.

Other colleges, such as UCFV, have occasionally used the SFU Web site in doing their credential assessments.

Transfer Credits

Transfer assessments are done on a course-by-course basis. For UBC and Langara, the process takes from two to six weeks. In the case of UBC, the cost is part of the application process. For Kwantlen, the process takes eight weeks, and the cost is \$50 in BC, and \$125 in other parts of Canada or outside Canada. For Douglas College, the process takes six to eight weeks and costs \$25. Douglas College will return original transcripts.

Applicants must submit original transcripts(s) from all post-secondary institutions they have attended. Again, there is variation in how an original transcript is to be received:

- Some institutions accept only original transcripts mailed directly from the institution of origin with a seal of that institution.
- Langara College prefers the above but will accept original transcripts in an unopened envelope with a stamp and seal unbroken.
- VCC will accept notarized copies.
- Capilano College and VCC also prefer the above but will accept notarized copies of transcripts.
- University College of the Fraser Valley will accept an original transcript with a seal and a copy.

Applicants must send a detailed course outline and/or official syllabi. A detailed course outline consists of:

- A statement of the course objectives
- The topics covered
- The number of weeks duration (excluding final exam period)
- The hours per week of lecture, laboratory, tutorial, seminar, and/or studio work
- The hours per week of required open laboratory or open studio work
- The method of evaluation and grading
- The textbooks used
- The amount of credit (or equivalent value) awarded for successful completion.

Students may also be required to provide copies of exams and /or assignments.

Some institutions accept only the official syllabi from the year the courses were taken (UBC Teacher Education); other institutions ask for the university/college calendar of the year the course was taken and a three-page detailed course outline (Douglas); yet other institutions will accept unofficial course descriptions or will get that information verbally from the applicant (UCFV).

Official MOSAIC translation of documents that are not in English or French may be required. Kwantlen requires an official translation. UBC undergraduate also requires an official translation unless someone in their office can translate the course descriptions. Douglas uses BCIT services to translate.

Transfer credit at UBC is generally limited to the first two years of an undergraduate degree program. Credit at a more senior level is possible, but requires the approval of the relevant faculty. Generally, no more than 60 transfer credits (or 50% of the credits required for a UBC degree) are allowed. Upon request, 50% or 30 credits of Langara College diploma, certificate, and associate degree program may be transferred from another recognized post-secondary institution and must be completed within the first 50% of the program. In some programs, the maximum may be lower. Transfer credits are awarded only for studies taken at institutions that have UBC-approved recognition or accreditation.

The Evaluation Process

Most universities, university colleges, and colleges do their own assessment of applicants' previous education (secondary schools, colleges, university colleges, and universities). They check that the institution is recognized, and check marking systems. For transfer credits, they see if they can give credit for a block of courses. Reference works and resources colleges, university colleges, and universities use in evaluation include the following:

- Books about international secondary schools and universities and international education and educational systems. For example, *A Guide to Educational Systems Around the World* has the names and grading breakdowns of the high schools, and post secondary level equivalencies (diplomas, certificates) for many countries from around the world. There are also listings of other reference books and sites for the countries. Other books used are the *WES International Grade Conversions* booklet for post secondary grading, *World Higher Education Database*, *World Directory of National Information Centre for Academic Recognition and Mobility*, *Educational Qualifications* (4th Edition).
- Books about education in specific countries.
- UNESCO Web sites on international schools, universities, and colleges, *International Guide to Educational Qualifications*
- Web sites about education in specific countries, reference books, and equivalence.
- Web sites from particular schools for detailed course outlines.
- Telephone calls to specific schools.

Most Lower Mainland colleges, university colleges, and universities do their own academic assessments with the exception of Open Learning Agency (OLA), which uses ICES. BCIT recommends ICES for evaluations of its applicants when they are unable to do them. In most cases, the cost of the assessment is part of the application fee, but there are exceptions. Kwantlen checks on the accreditation of schools and how schools are accredited in specific countries. The charge for evaluation of transcripts is \$50 for residents and \$120 for people living outside of BC and Canada. The process can take eight to ten weeks.

The UBC education admissions officer evaluates all post-secondary transcripts and advises applicants in writing of academic requirements. Applicants may be expected to take courses to remedy any academic deficiencies or to upgrade marks.

The Interview Process

At Capilano College, some programs interview students to ensure they are applying for a program that matches their employment or other goals. Many career programs, especially those offered in the Applied Business Technology area are similar, and the students may be better suited to one program than another. The interview also helps to evaluate English language barriers. Students who don't go to the interview may attend information sessions that provide program overviews.

d) Assessments of Prior Learning

Prior Learning or Flexible Assessment and Recognition (PLFAR)

Langara College recognizes the learning that students have acquired through non-formal education, work, and life experiences. PLFAR is a way that such learning may be assessed for college credit, and the college has implemented a PLFAR service, which is dependent upon the resources available to support the process. It is not always available and depends upon the department.

Credits earned via prior learning assessment (PLA), challenge credit, or the equivalent are acceptable at UBC provided the course to which those credits apply is recognized by the university as suitable for transfer credit. The university accepts only PLA credits that are assigned to specific courses.

Vancouver Community College also uses a prior learning assessment process in the Dental Assisting, Practical Nursing, and the Dental Technician programs. The latter two PLA processes will be in place in the fall of 2004. The PLA for the practical nursing program includes a challenge exam and a clinical skills assessment.

When asked to identify gaps, some of the colleges indicated a need to develop prior learning assessment processes, and a need for an orientation to the culture of practice of a specific profession. Time and money and the difficulty finding teaching staff who know the field and who have teaching skills were seen as contributing factors. Another big

challenge was the difficulty in finding clinical placements for students to have on-the-job training.

2.3.4 Graduate Programs

a) *English Language Assessment*

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

- Minimum TOEFL score for graduate studies is 550; however, some departments require a higher score. For example, the Department of Social Work requires 580 (237) on the TOEFL, Civil Engineering, Architecture, and Pharmacy require 600 (250) on the TOEFL.
- A Minimum IELTS overall band score is 6.5, with a minimum score of 6.0 in each component.
- A minimum overall MELAB score of 81.
- The GCE A-Level English examination with a standing of at least B is acceptable in lieu of TOEFL.

Requirements

- Two sets of original transcripts sent from university of origin sent by mail in a sealed envelope with the seal of the institution. UBC and SFU do not accept transcripts that have been opened or that are not in sealed envelopes endorsed by the issuing institutions, or transcripts that arrive without the official seal of the university. They also do not accept photocopies of transcripts. If transcripts do not include a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) this must be calculated by the applicant and included in the application materials.
- Certified English translation by MOSAIC.
- Degree certificates from the country of origin.

Additional department requirements may include:

- **Written submission:** Applicants submit a Study Plan of approximately three typewritten, single-spaced pages, which includes a topic, rationale, professional context, and short annotated bibliography.
- **Letters of Reference:** (confidential—SFU) Letters reference (3) from at least one person who supervised the applicant in a position of paid

employment or voluntary service, a person who knows of the applicant's academic ability (UBC). Letters of reference must be sealed with the referee's signature across the seal and sent direct to the School of Engineering Science, Graduate Admissions (SFU).

- **List of Scholarly works:** Typically for PhD programs (SFU).

Evaluation Process

Evaluation is done by country and specific course. Institutions use a variety of resources: books that have descriptions of universities in different countries, Web sites, and direct contact with universities.

Web site www.grad.ubc.ca: Minimal admission requirement guidelines for 188 countries. Examples:

- China: bachelor's degree of 4 years, B+ standing or 85% PRC.
- Columbia: Licenciado + Professional title, 4 on a 5 point scale, 4 on a 5 point scale for a doctorate in Columbia.
- India: B Engineering, B Science, B Architecture, B Pharmacology, or a MBBC or MA in non engineering/medical/pharmaceutical fields with a 1st class standing, 1st class honours for a doctorate.
- Iran: BA of 4 years' study, 16 on a 20 pt scale, 16 on a 20 pt scale for a doctorate.

Transcript Evaluation

- CGPA Web site
- Cumulative grade point average
- Graduate evaluation committee
- Dean of graduate studies knows standards for several countries, such India, China

Example of specific program at UBC: Department of Social Work

- Evaluation is weighted: 50% academic history, 20% written submissions of the study plan, and 30% letters of reference. The graduate studies department can overturn an individual department's decision.

- For special consideration, an applicant must submit a letter indicating why he or she should be considered, gaps in training/academic background, and areas of Social Work curriculum that are lacking, outlining gaps, a resume, transcripts of all post-secondary studies (copies will suffice).

b) Observations

Evaluating/assessing education is time consuming and there is no coordination between schools. Each student is assessed on an individual basis. Schools don't share information and aren't aware of the processes other institutions use to evaluate educational institutions, degrees, and courses from other countries. The Ministry of Education could help with providing information and setting some transfer guidelines related to other countries.

Most schools have their own English language assessment and in a lot of cases don't recognize those of other schools. As a result individuals who transfer often have to retake the English language assessment test required by that school.

Each institution does its own assessment: everyone is inventing the wheel separately. Many see their needs as unique, so it may be that they develop their own assessments because they believe others' will not meet their institution's criteria. Also, there is no mechanism for them to share information. The respondent at UBC said, "perhaps someday we might sell our information. We could not use others' assessment because we have the highest standards." A good deal of time and energy are expended by each institution duplicating the process. The information on the Web sites of UBC undergraduate and graduate programs and SFU undergraduate programs about the equivalence of international degrees is useful for internationally educated/trained professionals, for school evaluators, and for regulatory bodies.

In several cases, it was difficult to find the right person to talk to, or indeed, to find a person to talk to at all. Perhaps because academic

institutions encourage people to register and get information through their Web sites, telephone numbers are often difficult to find on their sites. Their telephone systems are often a series of menus, not all of them leading ultimately to a person. Also, at this time of year the research was conducted (April and May), institutions are processing new admissions, so many of the people answering the telephones have no time to talk. This was particularly apparent with UBC. It took a great deal of perseverance to get beyond the telephone system in undergraduate admissions; the person who finally responded said she was too busy with admissions, couldn't answer any questions, and didn't know who would have the information requested.

2.4 Summary

This report has provided an inventory of assessment tools used by regulators and public colleges, university colleges, and universities to assess skilled immigrants. Indicators of the characteristics of assessment services, such as the type of assessment, the assessment process, assessment requirements, the fees, and estimated time frame, have been described. The tables included in this report indicate which assessment tools regulators and public colleges, university colleges, and universities recognize and use. The tables facilitate a comparison among users of these assessment services. The report also highlights gaps and challenges raised by the respondents in this research. Recommendations address the issues and concerns and cite some possible steps for improving existing assessment services. They are included in the executive summary.

APPENDIX A: PROJECT INTRODUCTORY LETTER AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introductory Letter

MOSAIC and Circa Enterprises

MOSAIC, with funding from the International Qualifications Program, Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (MCAWS), has contracted with Circa Enterprises to inventory and analyse the delivery of a variety of existing assessment tools used within the Lower Mainland to assess skilled immigrants. The focus will be on the assessment of English language proficiency, essential skills, academic qualifications, technical skills, and employability skills.

You have been contacted because the project aims to identify public colleges, regulatory bodies and other agencies that provide assessment services for skilled immigrants. The objectives of the research will be to determine what type of assessment tools are being used, whether these tools are recognized by other institutions and/or regulatory bodies, how they compare to other assessment tools, and the perceived gaps and challenges related to existing assessment services for skilled immigrants. If you do not do assessments we will be asking you what assessments you do accept and why.

The information provided will inform the future development of labour market attachment initiatives for skilled immigrants in BC. The research will also make recommendations toward the best delivery model/s of assessment tools for skilled immigrants.

Sandy Berman will be contacting you in the next week to set up a date and time for a telephone or on-site interview

The research questions will include:

1. What is the name of the assessment?
2. How much does it cost to take the assessment?
3. What does the assessment involve?
4. How long does it take to complete the assessment?
5. Who administers the assessment?
6. How does the assessment compare to related assessments?
7. Is the assessment recognized by other public colleges and/or regulatory bodies?
8. What other English language proficiency/ essential skills/ academic qualifications/ technical skills/ competency-based/knowledge based assessment/employability skills assessment tools does your organization recognize?
9. How do skilled immigrants find out about your assessment services? Who refers individuals to you?
10. Do you see any gaps or challenges with regard to assessments for skilled immigrants?
11. How could these issues be addressed?

If you have any questions, please contact Sandy Berman at (604) 873-8545 or email at sandraberman@shaw.ca

Sandy Berman
Circa Enterprises

Kelly Pollack
Director of Employment Programs
MOSAIC

Interview Questions

For Organizations who provide Assessment Services to Skilled Immigrants

Does your organization provide English language proficiency assessments?

If yes:

1. What is the name of the assessment?
2. How much does it cost to take the assessment?
3. What does the English language proficiency assessment involve?
4. How long does it take to complete the assessment?
5. Who administers the assessment?
6. How does the assessment compare to the Canadian Language Benchmarks or related assessments?
7. Is the assessment recognized by other public colleges or regulatory bodies? If yes, state which.
8. What other English language proficiency assessment tools does your organization recognize?
Name of Assessment: Organization offering the Assessment:
9. How do skilled immigrants find out about your assessment services? Who refers individuals to you?
10. Do you see any gaps or challenges with regard to English language proficiency assessments for skilled immigrants?
11. If yes, please describe - How could these issues be addressed?

Does your organization provide an essential skills assessment?

If yes:

1. What is the name of the assessment?
2. How much does it cost to take the assessment?
3. What does the essentials skills assessment involve?
4. How long does it take to complete the assessment?
5. Who administers the assessment?
6. How does the assessment compare to other essential skills assessments?
7. Is the assessment recognized by other public colleges or regulatory bodies?
8. If yes, please state which.
9. What essential skills assessment tools does your organization recognize?
Name of Assessment: Organization offering the Assessment
10. How do skilled immigrants find out about your assessment services?
11. Who refers individuals to you?
12. Do you see any gaps or challenges with regard to essential skills assessments for skilled immigrants? If yes, please describe - How could these issues be addressed?

Interview Questions (cont.)

Does your organization provide academic qualifications assessments?

If yes:

1. What is the name of the assessment?
2. How much does it cost to take the assessment?
3. What documents do skilled immigrants need to submit for assessments? Do you accept photocopies or only originals? Do you accept documents only if sent direct from the original educational institution?
4. What does the academic qualifications assessment involve?
5. How long does it take to complete the assessment?
6. Who administers the assessment?
7. How does the assessment compare to related assessments?
8. Is the assessment recognized by other public colleges or regulatory bodies? If yes, please state which.
9. What academic qualifications assessment tools does your organization recognize?
Name of Assessment: Organization offering the Assessment:
10. How do skilled immigrants find out about your assessment services? Who refers individuals to you?
11. Do you see any gaps or challenges with regard to academic qualifications assessments for skilled immigrants?
12. If yes, please describe - How could these issues be addressed?

Does your organization provide technical skills/knowledge based/competency-based assessments?

If yes:

1. What is the name of the assessment?
2. How much does it cost to take the assessment?
3. What documents, if any, do skilled immigrants need to submit for a technical skills assessment (e.g. letters of reference etc.)?
4. What does the technical skills assessment involve?
5. How long does it take to complete the assessment?
6. Who administers the assessment?
7. How does the assessment compare to other technical skills assessments?
8. Is the assessment recognized by other public colleges or regulatory bodies? If yes, please state which.
9. What technical skills assessment tools does your organization recognize?
Name of Assessment: Organization offering the Assessment:
10. How do skilled immigrants find out about your assessment services? Who refers individuals to you?
11. Do you see any gaps or challenges with regard to technical skills assessments for skilled immigrants?
12. If yes, please describe - How could these issues be addressed?

Interview Questions (cont.)

Does your organization provide employability skills assessment services?

If yes:

1. What is the name of the assessment?
2. How much does it cost to take the assessment?
3. What does the employability skills assessment involve?
4. How long does the process take?
5. Who administers the employability skills assessment?
6. How does this process compare to other employability skills assessment services?
7. What employability skills assessment tools does your organization recognize?
Name of Assessment: Organization offering the Assessment:
8. How do skilled immigrants find out about your employability skills assessment services?
Who refers individuals to you?
9. Do you see any gaps or challenges with regard to employability skills assessments for skilled immigrants?
10. If yes, please describe - How could these issues be addressed?

APPENDIX B: ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

English Language Proficiency Tests

Name:	Language Proficiency Index (LPI)
Purpose:	The LPI provides a consistent and standardized measure of Canadian English language proficiency. Intended to help instructors, professional associations, and administrators assess the level of post-secondary English the examinee has mastered.
Recognized / Used:	Primarily by post-secondary institutions and professional organizations.
Offered Where:	Several locations throughout BC (and in the rest of Canada and in Hong Kong).
Offered When:	Year round (several times a month in Lower Mainland, several times a year elsewhere)
Tests:	The test consists of four parts: identifying errors in sentence structure (10 points); identifying errors in English usage (10 points); evaluating and/or summarizing short prose passages (20 points); and writing an expository essay (40 points).
Cost:	Registration fee (\$45 in BC, \$65 outside of BC, \$95 outside of Canada)
Name:	Langara English Test (LET)
Purpose:	Developed by Langara to assess/place students in its own courses.
Recognized / Used:	Langara
Offered Where:	Langara
Offered When:	Year round (1-3 times each month)
Tests:	120-word summary of a reading passage. Markers are looking for clarity of writing and accuracy of information. Short essay focused on one of three topic choices provided on the exam. Markers are looking for a clear, unified and logically developed piece of writing.
Cost:	Registration fee: \$40.00
Name:	International English Language Testing System (IELTS)
Purpose:	Assesses candidates' readiness to study or train in English.
Recognized / Used:	Widely recognized as a language requirement for entry to all courses/programs in further and higher education.
Offered:	IELTS is jointly managed by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), the British Council and IDP Education Australia: IELTS Australia.
Where:	SFU Harbour Centre; (beginning Feb 2004) Camosun College, Victoria.
When:	Year round (approx. once a month)
Tests:	Candidates are tested in listening, reading, writing and speaking. All candidates take the same listening and speaking modules and can chose academic or general training reading and writing modules. The four modules are completed in one day and are always taken in the following order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listening: 4 sections, 40 items (30 min) • academic reading: 3 sections, 40 items (30 min) OR general training reading: 3 sections, 40 items (60 min) • academic writing: 2 tasks (150 & 250 words) (60 min) OR general training writing: 2 tasks (150 & 250 words) • speaking: personal interview with examiner (10-15 minutes)
Length:	2hours 45 minutes
Cost:	Vancouver \$245.00; Victoria \$275.00 (includes \$30.00 offsite surcharge)
Level(s):	All scores are given on a 9-Band scale from non-user to expert user with a "fully operational command of the language."

English Language Proficiency Tests (cont.)

Name:	Canadian Academic English Language Assessment (CAEL)
Purpose:	To effectively identify students who can participate actively in academic study. The CAEL Assessment tests ability to <i>use</i> English as it is used in Canadian universities, university colleges, and colleges. It allows test takers to experience what it is like to participate in a Canadian post secondary classroom.
Recognized / Used:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of British Columbia • British Columbia Open University • Columbia College • University College of the Cariboo • Coquitlam College • Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design • Malaspina University-College • Northern Lights College • College of the Rockies • Royal Roads University • Selkirk College • Simon Fraser University • Trinity Western University • University of Victoria
Administered by:	The Language Assessment and Testing Research Unit (LATRU) at the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies at Carleton University is responsible for managing the development of the CAEL Assessment, its delivery at international testing centres, and the monitoring of test results and research activities.
Offered Where:	NO BC test sites. Canadian test sites in Edmonton, Ottawa, Hamilton, Guelph, Kingston, Peterborough, Halifax, Windsor.
Offered When:	Varies—approx 9-12 times per year
Tests:	<p>Reading section (approx 50 min). Test takers are given two readings that are on the same topic as the listening and writing sections. Readings are taken from first-year university textbooks, magazine and academic journal articles, brochures or information leaflets, newspaper articles, graphs and charts, and government documents. Reading tasks include identifying main ideas, extracting specific information, understanding vocabulary in context, classifying information, and following a logical or chronological sequence of events.</p> <p>Listening section (approx 20 min). Test takers listen to a pre-recorded lecture on the same topic as the reading and writing sections. The lecture is adapted from a first-year university course. The recording is played only once. Test takers answer questions while they are listening. While they listen, test takers take notes and respond to tasks related to the lecture. Listening tasks include identifying main ideas, completing charts and diagrams, taking notes, sequencing information, filling in the blanks, and recording specific information.</p> <p>Speaking section: The CAEL Assessment Oral Language Test (OLT) The OLT (approx 25 min) is a tape-mediated test of spoken English in use for academic purposes. It consists of five tasks that represent ways in which students talk about their academic work within colleges, university colleges, and universities. Speaking tasks include making short presentations, relaying information, explaining choices, summarizing main points, and listening and responding to group discussions.</p> <p>Writing section (approx 45 min) is always the final task of the test. The essay topic is always provided at the beginning of the test, and test takers use the information from the reading and listening sections to write a 1-2 page essay. The essay topic asks the test taker to agree or disagree with a claim, argue for or against a position, discuss advantages and disadvantages of a course of action.</p>
Length:	Approx 2 hours and 15 min.
Cost:	\$85 (sites show \$110, which includes \$25 admin fee)

English Language Proficiency Tests (cont.)

Name:	The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
Purpose:	TOEFL measures the ability of non-native speakers of English to use and understand North American English as it is spoken, written and heard in college and university settings. Most people who take the TOEFL test are planning to study at colleges, university colleges, and universities where instruction is in English. In addition, many government agencies, scholarship programs, and licensing/certification agencies use TOEFL scores to evaluate English proficiency.
Recognized / Used:	<p>More than 4,400 two- and four-year colleges, university colleges, and universities, professional schools, and sponsoring institutions accept TOEFL scores, including, in BC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCIT • University of British Columbia • Columbia College • University College of the Cariboo • Capilano College • Columbia College • Coquitlam College • College of LPNs • Douglas College • Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design • Kwantlen • Langara • Malaspina University-College • Northern Lights College • Okanagan University College • RNABC • Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts • Regent College • Simon Fraser University • Trinity Western University • University of Northern BC • University of Victoria • VCC
Offered Where:	Test sites throughout BC, including Vancouver, Victoria, Kelowna, Kamloops, Fort St. John.
Offered When:	Frequent, ongoing.
Tests:	<p>The paper-based test has three sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening Comprehension measures the ability to understand spoken English. • Structure and Written Expression measures the ability to recognize standard written English. • Reading Comprehension measures the ability to read and understand non-technical material. <p>The Test of Written English (TWE) is also required for everyone taking the paper-based test. Test takers are given 30 minutes to write a short essay on an assigned topic.</p> <p>The computer-based TOEFL test has four sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening measures ability to understand English as spoken in North America (40-60 minutes, 30-50 questions) • Structure measures ability to recognize language appropriate for standard written English (15-20 minutes, 20-25 questions) • Reading measures ability to understand short passages similar in topic and style to academic texts used in North American colleges, university colleges, and universities (70-90 minutes, 44-55 questions) • Writing measures ability to write in English on an assigned topic (30 min. one assigned topic)
Length:	The paper-based TOEFL test takes about 3 hours & 30 min to complete. The computer-based TOEFL takes 2 hours & 35 min. to 3 hours & 20 mins to complete
Cost:	\$130 US

Inventory of Assessment Tools for Skilled Immigrants

English Language Proficiency Tests (cont.)

Name:	The Test of Spoken English (TSE)
Purpose:	TSE measures the ability of non-native speakers of English to communicate orally in English and indicates how candidates' oral language ability might affect their ability to communicate successfully in an academic or professional environment.
Recognized / Used:	TSE scores are used by many North American institutions of higher education to select international teaching assistants (ITAs). The scores are also used for selecting and certifying health professionals, such as physicians, nurses, pharmacists, physical therapists, and veterinarians. For example, the Registered Nurses Association of British Columbia (RNABC) accepts TSE scores, combined with TOEIC test scores from nurses wishing to register to practice in British Columbia.
Offered Where:	TSE test is given at some TOEFL test centres, but is NOT administered as part of the TOEFL test.
Tests:	The test requires you to demonstrate your ability to communicate in English by responding orally on tape under timed conditions to a variety of printed and recorded information. Candidates are asked to tell a story based on a six-picture sequence and answer a related question, describe a graph and answer a related question, respond to two questions about ideas, respond to three questions by taking the part of someone in a workplace situation. There are nine questions.
Length:	Approx 20 min.
Name:	Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC)
Purpose:	Designed to assess English proficiency in the professions.
Recognized / Used:	TOEIC is now accepted to meet the English language requirements of several professional licensing organizations in Canada.
Offered Where:	Selkirk College, University College of the Cariboo, Trend College (Kelowna), Pacific Gateway International College (Vancouver & Victoria)
Tests:	<p>A paper-and-pencil, multiple-choice test; 200 questions in two separately timed sections.</p> <p>Section I: Listening: 100 questions delivered by audiocassette. Examinees listen to a variety of statements, questions, short conversations, and short talks recorded in English, then answer questions based on the listening segments. The Listening section takes approximately 45 minutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 1: Photographs 20 items (4-choice) • Part 2: Question-Response 30 items (3-choice) • Part 3: Short Conversations 30 items (4-choice) • Part 4: Short Talks 20 items (4-choice) <p>Section II: Reading: 100 questions in written format in the test booklet. Examinees read a variety of materials and respond at their own pace to questions based on the item content. The Reading section lasts approximately 75 minutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 5: Incomplete Sentences 40 items (4-choice) • Part 6: Error Recognition 20 items (4-choice) • Part 7: Reading Comprehension 40 items (4-choice) <p>Examinees also complete biographical questions on the answer sheet and respond to a brief questionnaire about their educational and work history.</p>
Length:	2 hours
Cost:	\$110

Inventory of Assessment Tools for Skilled Immigrants

English Language Proficiency Tests (cont.)

Name:	Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB)
Purpose:	Primarily to test the English language proficiency of non-native English speakers applying to academic institutions in Canada and the US. Also for Internationally trained professionals who need to work in an English-speaking environment. In 2002, the MELAB program officially requested that MELAB longer be recognized for the purpose of certifying health care workers.
Recognized / Used:	UBC (score of 85+); Kwantlen (score of 85+); Royal Roads (score of 82+); U Vic (score of 90+)
Offered Where:	No test sites in BC. U of T, Guelph, Waterloo, Calgary.
Offered When:	
Tests:	Written composition, listening comprehension test, multiple-choice test of grammar, vocabulary, etc. An oral interview/speaking test is added if required.
Length:	Approx 3.5 hours
Cost:	\$110 for written, \$55 for oral. Rush (2-3 weeks) reports cost and additional \$85 for the first, \$40 for each additional report.
Name:	Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (CELPPIP)
Purpose:	Developed by UBC to provide information about candidate's competency in English, primarily for post-secondary institutions and professional organizations. Designed to reflect the CLB.
Recognized / Used:	See below.
Offered Where:	UBC (also in Toronto and several locations in China)
Offered When:	Two sittings each month
Tests:	<p>CELPPIP is a complete set of language competency tests, each designed to meet a specific need.</p> <p>CELPIT-G assesses proficiency levels of general reading and writing skills. The test consists of five parts based on everyday general reading and writing tasks. Accepted by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) for immigration points. Also suitable for certain post-secondary and employment training programs where functional reading and writing skills are required.</p> <p>CELPIT-A assesses proficiency of beginning college or university-level reading and writing. The test consists of four subtests: sentence structure, reading comprehension, English usage, and essay writing. Suitable for university or college programs where a higher level of English communication and composition skills is required.</p> <p>The Canadian English Language Listening Test (CELL) assesses proficiency levels of functional listening skills. This test requires candidates to choose responses to pre-recorded questions based on statements, short dialogues, and longer conversations. Accepted by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) for immigration points. Also suitable for post-secondary or employment programs requiring listening comprehension skills.</p> <p>The Canadian English Language Test of Oral Proficiency (CELTOP) assesses the proficiency level of oral communication skills. Candidates respond to pre-recorded questions based on everyday situations, tabular or graphic material, news items, telephone messages, and conversations. Accepted by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) for immigration points. Also suitable for post-secondary or employment programs requiring oral communication skills.</p>
Length:	CELPIT-G 120 min; CELPIT-A 150 min; CELL 30 min; CELTP 30 min.
Cost:	\$220 for CIC test package, which includes CELPIT-G, CELL, and CELTP.
Level(s):	1-6, corresponding to CLB levels 1-12.

English Language Proficiency Tests (cont.)

Name:	The Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) is the highest level of the Cambridge exams in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). It is a very advanced level exam, set at Level C2 of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework.
Purpose:	CPE is for learners who have achieved a high level of language skills and are able to function effectively in almost any English-speaking context. Successful candidates at this level are approaching a standard of English similar to that of an educated native speaker. The exam also requires an appropriate level of educational and personal maturity. Every year over 45,000 people take the CPE exam in more than 80 countries, and success at this level represents a significant personal achievement.
Recognized / Used:	CPE certificates are recognized by institutions of higher education in many countries - including almost all universities in the United Kingdom and a rapidly growing number in the USA. Employers throughout the world also recognize CPE. A list of institutions and employers that recognize CPE is available at www.CambridgeESOL.org/recognition In BC, the following recognize CPE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCIT • BCOU • Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) • Capilano College • College of Midwives of BC • College of the Rockies • Columbia College • Douglas College • Kwantlen University College • Langara College • Malaspina University College (British Columbia) • Okanagan University College • Royal Roads University SFU • Trinity Western University • University College Fraser Valley • University College of the Cariboo • UBC School of Dentistry University of Victoria
Administered By:	CPE is provided by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations - a department of the University of Cambridge in England. CPE is part of the Main Suite of Cambridge English examinations, which is linked to the Council of Europe's Common European Framework (CEF).
Offered Where:	Columbia College, Asia Pacific Education Centre
Tests / CPE has five papers:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading (1.5 hours). Assesses candidates' ability to read and understand texts taken from a wide range of sources, including fiction and non-fiction books, journals, newspapers and magazines. Candidates are expected to understand the meaning of written English at word, phrase, sentence, paragraph and whole text level. It includes understanding of text content, organisation and structure, and the development of ideas, opinions and attitudes. 2. Writing (2 hours). Assesses candidates' ability to write non-specialized texts types such as letters, articles, reports and reviews for a given purpose and target reader, covering a wide range of topics. The paper also includes questions on set texts. Responses are of 300-350 words in length. 3. Use of English (1.5 hours). Candidates are expected to demonstrate their knowledge and control of the language system by completing various tasks at word, sentence and text level. These include gap-filling and word formation exercises, comprehension questions and a summary writing task. 4. Listening (40 min). Assesses the ability to listen to and understand texts taken from a variety of text types including interviews, discussions, lectures and conversations. It tests the ability to understand the meaning of spoken English, to extract information from a spoken text and to understand speakers' attitudes and opinions. 5. Speaking (19 min). Assesses candidates' ability to interact in conversational English in a range of contexts. The paper contains three parts, which take the form of an interview section, a collaborative task and individual long-turns with follow-up discussion. Candidates are provided with picture and written stimulus. Candidates normally take the Speaking Test in pairs.

English Language Proficiency Tests (cont.)

Name:	English Language Assessment (ELA)
Purpose:	Primarily to test the English language proficiency of non-native English speakers for admission and placement for VCC programs.
Recognized / Used:	College of Dental Technicians of BC: 145I, College of Midwives: 160, BC College of teachers: 160, BCIT: 160.
Offered Where:	Assessment Centre, King Edward Campus, Vancouver Community College
Offered When:	
Tests:	A battery of tests in six general areas: reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, written composition, oral interaction, and grammar.
Length:	Approx 2.5 hours plus .5 hour for administrative details.
Cost:	\$30 for application and \$50 - \$90 for the assessment.

APPENDIX C: LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS: ACADEMIC

INSTITUTIONS

BCIT English Language Assessment

To write the test, applicants are required to register for COMM 0015, which is an individual assessment by the BCIT Communications department. To be eligible to write this test, applicants must have applied to their chosen full-time program for evaluations and have received approval from the Admissions Department to register for the test. The cost is \$90. The test has three sections: the grammar section takes 40 minutes to complete, the reading section takes 40 minutes, and the written section takes 60 minutes.

BCIT accepts different TOEFL scores, depending on the course. They also identify the equivalence between TOEFL scores and grades for English 12 and 11.

Paper-based test score requirements:

- English 12 with a B or better is TOEFL 580, TWE 5.0 and TSE 50+
- English 12 with a C+ pass is equivalent to TOEFL 550+ and TWE 4.5+
- English 11, English 12 ME, or Communications 12 is equivalent to TOEFL 500+, TWE not required.

Computerized test score requirements:

- English 12 with a B or better is equivalent to TOEFL 240, TWE 5.0, and TSE 50+
- English 12 with a pass C+ is equivalent to TOEFL 220, TWE 4.5+
- English 11, English 12ME, or Communications 12 is equivalent to TOEFL 175+

University College of the Fraser Valley (UCFV)

UCFV has specific English language criteria only for academic programs. Although students may be conditionally accepted into academic or career programs based on their transcripts and TOEFL or IELTS scores, final placement is determined after completion of a UCFV English language assessment of Composition Placement Test (CPT). Those who do not achieve the requisite score may be required to complete ESL and/or pre-college English courses. Students with a TOEFL score lower than 550 or an IELTS score lower than 6.0 must first apply the ESL program.

The Composition Placement Test (CPT)

This is the English language assessment provided by the University College of the Fraser Valley. Even if students have met TOEFL or IELTS criteria, they must take the CPT to determine final placement and course selection. It costs \$25 and is a 3 1/2-hour test with a grammar section and a 300-500 word essay to write on a topic provided. Students must have a score of 48+ before they can begin full-time studies. The CPT can be mailed overseas to a qualified invigilator who is willing to supervise the test. The cost of an overseas CPT is \$50. CDN.

BCOU English Language and Writing Assessment: Open Learning Agency (OLA)

This assessment is not a test but a tool to help OLA recommend the English course that is best suited to the student's needs. For example, a student of social work who does not want to take English 106 may use this assessment to determine if this prerequisite can be waived. The test has no time limit.

The test is in 5 parts:

- Part 1: English usage
- Part 2A: sentence structure
- Part 2B: punctuation
- Part 3: reading
- Part 4: expository essay
- Part 5: business letter

Parts 4 and 5 are most important because they provide a sample of a student's writing. The test doesn't cost anything, is sent out to applicants by mail or e-mail, and upon completion, can be scored within 3 or 4 weeks.

The Kwantlen English Placement Test

This test is used to assist in placing students in appropriate English courses. It is used for diagnostic purposes only and is not graded on a pass/fail basis. Students who write the test receive a copy of the detailed comment sheet filled out by a member of the English faculty indicating the recommended course placement. Although any student may write the English Placement Assessment, students who have already met prerequisites for English courses through other means are not required to write the test. The cost of the test is \$30. The test consists of two sections: 1. Summary of a short prose passage (100 words), and 2. well developed paragraph response to the summary (150 words). Students have 90 minutes to complete the test.

Langara English Test (LET)

All students must take the LET or the Language Proficiency Index (LPI) unless they have an A in English 12 or Literature 12. The LET is designed to assess the literacy of students and ease the workload of the instructors. The LET is specific to the language needs of Langara, whereas the LPI is broader and more general. Although it is adapted to the English language needs of students who go through Langara College, it is also recognized by Vancouver Community College and King Edward College, and may be recognized by Kwantlen, Douglas, and Capilano informally. Langara representatives believe that the TOEFL isn't as reliable a test, e.g., a student could pass the TOEFL grammar section, but wouldn't necessarily be able to write to meet the requirements of students at Langara. The LET costs \$40. The results define five levels of proficiency, with Level 1 being ESL, Level 4 being university transfer, and Level 5 being literate at the university level. There are trained teachers to advise and the English Articulation Committee delivers and administers the test. The Langara Writing Centre offers free tutorials.

Graduate Record Examination (GRE)

The GRE is a requirement of graduate students at SFU and measures analytical writing, verbal, and quantitative skills. The analytical writing section, which is 75 minutes long, tests the ability to:

- articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively;
- examine claims and accompanying evidence;
- support ideas with relevant reasons and examples;
- sustain a well-focused, coherent discussion; and
- control the elements of standard written English.

The verbal section tests the ability to:

- analyse and evaluate written materials and synthesize information obtained from the material;
 - analyse relationships among component parts of sentences; and
 - recognize relationships between words and concepts.
- The quantitative section tests the ability to:
- understand basic concepts of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and data analysis;
 - reason quantitatively; and
 - solve problems in a quantitative setting.

These content areas are usually studied in high school.

The TOEFL and GRE writing sections are very different in that the former are designed to test command of vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and syntax, not higher levels of thinking and analytical writing. Therefore the scores on the two tests are not comparable. The TOEFL can be a good supplement in helping faculty determine whether a low GRE analytical writing score is due to a lack of familiarity with English or an lack of ability to produce and analyse logical arguments.

Test takers whose native language is not English naturally find the analytical section more challenging, and steps have been taken to ensure that these performance differences are not due to differences in cultural accessibility of the topics. Special fairness reviews occur for all topics to ensure content and tasks are clear and accessible for all groups of test takers, including those whose first language is not English. Scorers are trained to focus on the analytical logic of the essay responses not spelling, grammar, or syntax.

Students can prepare for the GRE through a CD-ROM containing GRE POWERPREP Software - Test Preparation for the GRE test. The software includes a test tutor, practice questions, and two actual computer-adaptive tests for the quantitative sections. It also includes sample topics and essays for the analytic writing section. When applicants register, they are sent the Practice General Test book. The test costs \$115 US for testing in the US, \$175 for testing in China, Hong Kong, Korea, and Taiwan, and \$140 in other locations. The test is given year-round on a computer in the US, Canada, and other countries where computers are available; otherwise paper-based tests are available.

APPENDIX D: ACADEMIC CREDENTIAL ASSESSMENT

1. International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES)

Basic Report (\$115 one credential and \$85 each additional credential)

- Identifies each fully or partially completed educational credential and indicates the comparable credential in Canada.
- Lists the academic institution attended, provides a brief program description, and indicates the number of years of education completed.
- Normally takes at least four weeks to complete from the date all necessary documents are received by ICES.

Detailed Reports (\$175 one credential and \$125 for each additional credential)

- Includes all information in a Basic Report.
- Lists the courses studied and provides a conversion to Canadian standards of either the credit hours or units of study (Detailed Credits Report), or the grades (Detailed Grades Report).
- Identifies the language of instruction.
- Normally takes at least six weeks to complete from the date all necessary documents are received by ICES.

Comprehensive Report (\$200 one credential and \$150 each additional credential)

- Includes all information in a Detailed Course Report.
- Converts both grades and credits or units and provides a calculation of the grade point average.
- Normally takes at least seven weeks to complete from the date all necessary documents are received by ICES.

Supplemental Report

- Designed to meet the specific needs of an institution or organization.
- Normally takes at least seven weeks to complete from the date all necessary documents are received by ICES.

2. International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS)

Basic Assessment (\$100.00 fee) This assessment will provide a certificate which indicates the level of education achieved outside of Canada and how the education compares to Canadian credentials. The information presented on the certificate includes:

- the name of the institution(s) attended;
- the degree(s), diploma(s) or certificate(s) received;
- the length of the program;
- the area(s) of specialization; and
- a general statement about the comparative levels of achievement in Canada.

Description of Course Work (\$200.00 fee one credential and \$75 for each additional credential)

This assessment also provides a certificate that includes the same information as the basic assessment, with an additional listing of courses completed and credits earned (sometimes expressed in terms of hours of study).

Assessment for Educational Institution (\$100.00 fee)

This assessment provides an evaluation for admission into specified post-secondary educational institutions in Alberta or Saskatchewan. The assessment will evaluate an individual's course work to determine how it compares to Alberta or Saskatchewan high school courses. The results of this evaluation are listed in an assessment table that indicates the level of achievement in specific high school courses required for admission into a post-secondary program.

3. World Education Services (WES)

Document-by-Document (\$100)

A document-by-document evaluation identifies and describes each diploma or certificate, indicates dates of education, and provides an equivalency for each document.

Course-by-Course Report (\$200)

In addition to providing all of the information contained in a document-by-document report, the course-by-course evaluation:

- lists all subjects completed at the post-secondary level;
- provides semester credit and grade equivalent for each course;
- provides Canadian grade average.

4. The Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates International Credentials Services (EICS)

Fee: US \$150

EICS assists medical registration organizations in obtaining primary source verification of medical education and registration credentials of physicians applying for licensure whose medical education was completed outside their jurisdictions. EICS does this by obtaining primary source verification of medical school diplomas, medical school transcripts, certificates of postgraduate training and certificates of medical registration.

A Credentials Verification Report is sent directly to regulatory organization.

5. Canadian Architectural Certification Board (CACB)

The Board was established to assess and certify academic qualifications of individuals holding a professional degree/diploma in architecture in accordance with criteria and procedures contained in the Canadian Education Standard for Admission to Provincial Architectural Associations in Canada. Prior to registration with any of the provincial associations of architects in Canada, applicants must have their academic qualifications certified by CACB. Following certifications of academic qualifications, applicants are required to complete the licensing requirements for the province in which they wish to be registered.

CACB has set up an Assessment Committee of eight members that meets approximately every four to six weeks with the CACB Registrar to review the academic credentials of all applicants for certification. The requests for assessment are evaluated in the order in which they are received. An initial evaluation of documentation is performed by the CACB staff; additional documentation is requested if necessary; a detailed evaluation is prepared by the CACB staff and presented along with the applicant's submission. The Assessment Committee members meet with the Registrar to decide if the academic qualifications meet the requirements of the Canadian Education

Standard for admission to provincial architectural associations. Applicants are notified of the assessment's results by mail.

Applicants should allow a minimum of three months to be informed of the result after submission of their completed application form and all requested documentation. The submission must include:

- Completed application form.
- Official transcript of record or certified true copy thereof showing grade or standing achieved in each subject for each year of the course in architecture completed.
- Certified true copy of the official translation of the transcripts if the original documents are not in French or English.
- Certified true copy of all degrees.
- Certified true copy of the official translation of degrees if the original documents are not in English and French.
- University Calendar describing all programmes including architecture undertaken by the applicant or equivalent documentation.
- Certified true copy of the official translation of the university calendar if the original documents are not in English and French.
- List of academic design projects as well as a brief description of each project.
- Portfolio of academic design. (Although this is not mandatory, it is strongly recommended.)
- Cheque or money order for \$1070. (\$1000 + 7% GST) to cover assessment fee.

6. National Committee on Accreditation (NCA)

This is a standing Committee of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada and is made up of representatives from the Council of Canadian Law Deans, members of the practicing bar, and members involved with the administration of provincial law societies. The NCA evaluates legal training and professional experience of persons with foreign or non-common law legal credentials who wish to be admitted to a common law bar in Canada. Upon completion of its review, the NCA issues a recommendation describing the scope and extent of any further legal education the applicant needs to complete to equal the standard of those who have earned a Canadian LL.B. degree. The NCA bases its recommendations on the applicant's legal background, both academic and professional. It takes into account the source country of legal education, subject matter studied, academic marks and standing, nature of the degree granting institution, professional qualifications, and length and nature of professional legal experience. Upon completion of the review, the NCA issues a recommendation that the applicant:

- Pass examinations in specified areas of Canadian law.
- Take further education at a Canadian law school with a specified program of studies, or
- Complete a Canadian LL.B. program.

An applicant must provide the NCA with the following documents, information, and fees:

- Transcripts of pre-law grades or a certificate of standing.
- Certified transcripts of law grades, official or certified copies must be forwarded to NCA.

- A description of the contents of each course taken in the applicant's legal program, the number of hours allotted to each course, the number of class hours per week, and number of weeks per year. This information may be supplied through a prospectus, calendar or bulletin from the law school.
- A detailed account of professional and other work experience since leaving law school.
- An application fee of \$535 CDN and a completed application form.

7. **International Qualifications Appraisal Board (IQAB)**

This is a committee of CICA (Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants) that approves organizations for reciprocity or organizations that are equivalent to the CICA. Members look at educational credentials and training, and every five years they evaluate organizations. At this time, they have approved the following organizations for reciprocity: the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Australia, England and Wales, Ireland, Scotland, South Africa, the Japanese Institute of Certified Public Accountants, L'Ordre des Experts Comptables et des Comptables Agrées (France), Netherlands Institute of Register Accountants, Instituto Mexicano de Contadores Publicos, Institut des Reviseurs d'Enterprises de Belgique, and some State Boards of Accountancy in the USA.

The research indicates that there are seven approaches that medical regulators use to assess academic credentials: internally, through an external academic evaluation service, through a combination of both internal and external, through the national body who does the academic assessment internally, through the national body using an external academic evaluation service, through a combination of both the national body internal and external service or by using a combination of all these approaches including both provincial and national processes.

APPENDIX E: ORGANIZATIONS CONTACTED

Twenty-eight (28) Medical Regulatory Bodies and Associations were contacted by telephone and e-mail regarding specific details on assessment tools. Basic information was available through Web sites.

Regulatory Body/Association	Contact	Phone Number	Email Address	Web Site
BC College of Chiropractors	Doug Alderson	(604) 270-1332	registrar@bcchiro.com	http://www.bcchiro.com/bccc/
College of Dental Surgeons - Dental Assistants of BC	Betty Larsen	(604) 736-3621	Betty@CDSBC.org	http://www.cdsbc.org/ http://www.cdaa.ca/
Certified Dental Assistants of British Columbia (not a regulatory body)	Marlene Robinson	(604) 714-1766	info@cdabc.org	http://www.cdabc.org/
College of Dental Hygienists BC	Cynthia Johansen	250 383-4101	cdhbc@cdhbc.com	http://www.cdhbc.com/
College of Dental Surgeons of BC		(604) 736-3621	postmaster@cdsbc.org	http://www.cdsbc.org/
College of Dental Technicians of BC	Rosemary Ishkanian	(604) 734-4776	cdtbc@telus.net	http://www.cdt.bc.ca/
College of Denturists of BC		(604) 515-0533	reistrar@cd.bc.ca	http://www.cd.bc.ca
College of Dieticians of BC	Laura Cullen	(604) 736-2016	collegeofdietitiansbc@telus.net	http://www.collegeofdietitiansbc.org
Emergency Medical Assistants Licensing Board		250-952-4297		http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/ema/
BC Society of Laboratory Science		(604) 714-1760 or 1-800-304-0033	bcsls@bcsls.net	http://www.bcsls.net/ http://www.csmls.org
College of Licensed Practical Nurses of BC	Tania Jackson	(604) 660-5750	info@clpn.bc.ca	http://www.clpnbc.org/

Inventory of Assessment Tools for Skilled Immigrants

Medical Regulatory Bodies and Associations (cont.)

Regulatory Body/Association	Contact	Phone Number	Email Address	Regulatory Body/Association
College of Massage Therapists of BC	Douglas M. McRae	(604) 736-3404	office@cmtbc.bc.ca	http://www.cmtbc.bc.ca/ http://www.camrt.ca/english/home.htm
BC Association of Medical Radiation Technologists	Susan Hansen	(604) 513-2243	bcamrt@intergate.ca	http://www.bcamrt.bc.ca/ http://www.camrt.ca/
College of Midwives of BC	Wendy Martin	(604) 875-2643	plea@cmbc.bc.ca	http://www.cmbc.bc.ca/
College of Naturopathic Physicians of BC		(604) 688-8236		http://www.cnpbc.bc.ca/index.htm
College of Occupational Therapists of BC	Kathy Corbett	250 386-6822 or 1-866-386-6822	kcorbett@cotbc.org	http://www.cotbc.org/
College of Opticians of BC	Nick Atkinson	(604) 278-7510	office@cobc.ca	http://www.cobc.ca/
Board of Examiners in Optometry	Caroleann Cameron	(604) 623-3464	optometry_board@telus.net	http://www.optometrybc.com/
College of Pharmacists of BC	Doreen Leong	(604) 733-2440	doreen.leong@bcpharmacists.org	http://www.bcpharmacists.org/
College of Physical Therapists of BC	Marilyn Atkins	(604) 730-9193	info@cptbc.org	http://www.cptbc.org/ http://www.physiotherapy.ca/
College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC	Dr Elliot Phillips	(604) 733-7758	registration@cpsbc.ca	http://www.cpsbc.ca/ http://mcc.ca/english http://rcpsc.medical.org
BC Association of Podiatrists		(604) 602-0400	bcap@foothealth.ca	http://www.foothealth.ca/contact.htm http://www.podiatrycanada.org/ (national)
College of Psychologists of BC		(604) 736-6164		www.collegeofpsychologists.bc.ca/
BC Society of Respiratory Therapists	Lynn Beaton	(604) 623-2227	lbeaton@cw.bc.ca	http://www.bcsrt.com/ http://www.csrt.com/

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Medical Regulatory Bodies and Associations (cont.)

Regulatory Body/Association	Contact	Phone Number	Email Address	Regulatory Body/Association
BC Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists	Lisa Avery	(604) 714-0945	averyl@interchange.ubc.ca	http://www.bcaslpa.bc.ca/ http://www.caslpa.ca/
College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of BC	Mary McGinnis	(604) 944-4941	info@crpnbc.bc.ca	http://www.crpnbcc.bc.ca/
Registered Nurses Association of BC	Carla Taylor	(604) 736-7331	taylor@rnabc.bc.ca	www.rnabc.bc.ca/
College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners & Acupuncturists of BC		(604) 638-3108	dorist@ctcma.bc.ca	http://www.ctcma.bc.ca/
BC Veterinary Medical Association		(604) 929-7090	info@bcvma.org	http://www.bcvma.org/

Inventory of Assessment Tools for Skilled Immigrants

Twelve (12) Non-Medical Regulatory Bodies were contacted by telephone and e-mail regarding specific details on assessment tools. Basic information was available through Web sites.

Regulatory Body	Contact	Phone Number	Email Address	Web Site
Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of BC		(604) 585-2788	techinfo@asttc.org	www.asttbc.org
Architectural Institute of BC	Wendy Grandan, Director of Registration & Licensing	(604) 683-8588	wgrandan@aibc.ca	www.aibc.ca
Association of BC Forest Professionals	Karen Ung, Registration Coordinator	(604) 331-2327	kung@abcfp.ca	www.rpf-bc.org
Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC	Elvis Riou	(604) 430-8035		www.apeg.bc.ca
BC Institute of Agrologists	Garth Bean-Registrar	(604) 855-9291	info@bcia.com	www.bcia.com
BC College of Teachers	John Murphy, Evaluator	(604) 731-8170		www.bcct.bc.ca
Occupational Fact Sheet for Internationally Educated Teachers, 2003	Prepared by MOSAIC and the BCCT			www.mosaicbc.com
Board of Registration for Social Workers		(604) 737-4916	brsw@brsw.bc.ca	www.brsw.bc.ca
BC Society of Landscape Architects	Ian Wasson, Registrar Credential Committee Chair	(604) 294-7216		www.bcsla.org
Certified General Accountants of BC	Jaz Randala Admissions Lily Law- Examination	(604) 732-1211 (201) (604) 732-1211 (211)	admissions@cga.bc.org	www.cga.bc.org
Certified Management Accountants of BC	Jeannine Bauer (Transcript evaluations/Admissions)	(604) 687-5891 (235) or 1-800-663-9646	jeannine@cmabc.com	www.cmabc.com
Law Society of BC	Patricia Parker	(604) 669-2533	memberinfo@lsbc.org PParker@lsbc.org	www.lawsociety.bc.ca
Society of Notaries Public of BC	Rick Evans Educations Coordinator	(604) 681-4516 or 1-888-350-2288	society@notaries.bc.ca	www.notaries.bc.ca

Inventory of Assessment Tools for Skilled Immigrants

Ten (10) Colleges, Universities, and University Colleges: Obtained information by telephone interview and from Web sites.

Institution	Contact	Phone Number	Email Address	Web Site
University of British Columbia	Thea Parkin, Undergraduate	(604) 822-4319	records.inquiry@ubc.ca	www.ubc.ca
	Rock Hewko, UBC Graduate	(604) 822-2848	graduate@interchange.ubc.ca	www.ubc.ca
Simon Fraser University	Undergraduate	(604) 291-3224	undergraduate-admissions@sfu.ca	www.sfu.ca
	Terry Pattinson, Graduate - Student Information Services	(604) 268-6568	enscgrad@sfu.ca	www.ensc.sfu.ca/grad/admissions/
British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)	Anna Dosan, Supervisor of Admissions	(604) 432-8576	infobcit@bcit.ca	www.bcit.ca
Capilano College	Kelly Fuller, Admissions	(604) 990-7955	kfuller@capcollege.bc.ca	www.capcollege.bc.ca
Douglas College	Michelle Condry, Registrar	(604) 527-5478	registrar_office@douglas.bc.ca	www.douglas.bc.ca
Kwantlen University College	Isha, Admissions	(604) 599-2772		www.kwantlen.ca
Langara College	Chris Chow, Admissions-Evaluator	(604) 323-5667	cchow@langara.bc.ca	www.langara.bc.ca
	Debra Scott, LET Test	(604) 323-5366		
University College of Fraser Valley (UCFV)	Elaine Harris, Associate Registrar	(604) 854-4501		www.ucfv.bc.ca ,
BC Open University BCOU	Student Services	(604) 431-3000	student@bcou.ca	www.bcou.ca
	Information about Examinations)	(604) 431-3300		
	Information about ICES	(604) 431-3402	icesinfo@ola.ca	
Vancouver Community College	Jane Sheil, Assessment Centre	604-871-7095	jsheil@vcc.ca	www.vcc.bc.ca
	Pat Bawtinheimer Dean, Health Sciences Programs	604-443-8599	bheimer@vcc.ca	

APPENDIX F: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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