

WELCOME TO THE ENGINEERING SECTOR HUB!

Panel Members:

Hira Ahuja, Innovations Centre, Educational Program

Paul Martin, Zenton Inc., Project Manager, Board member – Ontario Society of Professional Engineers

Rakesh Shreewastav, MTO Engineering Office, Project Engineer did not arrive

Angela Shama, OACETT, Executive Director

Noreen Calderbank, Professional Engineers Ontario, Manager, Pre-Licensing Programs

Kirsten Williams, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Senior Policy Program Consultant

Facilitator:

Ray Gordezky, Camden Group

Instructions to participants: (if Facilitator provides to participants)

Survey of audience participants by facilitator:

- How many arrived within last year ~25-30 percent
- Within last 2 years - smaller group
- Within 2-5 years ago – still smaller group (two persons stood up)

Audience members invited to practice “elevator” pitch with their nearest neighbours.

Audience members invited to draw from their kits list of questions:

- Who are you and where are you from?
- What stood out for you from Lionel’s presentation?
- Members to give 50 second pitch to their neighbours.

Members were to work in pairs and find someone they did not know already.

Who are you and where are you from?

How long have you been in Canada?

What resonated with you from Lionel’s presentation? What was your key learning?

What is your specialty?

Give a particular highlighted example.
What position or work are you looking for?
Do you know anyone who can help?

Information and points put forth by panel members:

PANELISTS' PERSPECTIVES:

- Markedly substantial increase in labour supply in this sector over the past 12 years.
- Ontario Government solutions were presented including reference to information products that are presently in development for distribution abroad including overseas regarding the process of licensure. These products also to be used for distribution to relevant persons arriving to Canada
- Electronic fact sheets with self assessment for IEP (Internationally Educated Professional) engineers to determine whether they are ready to start licensure process with PEO (these to be disseminated throughout federal departments)
- Research consolidation regarding the whole set of sectors for presentation to various concerned audiences (e.g., government departments; IEPs)

Regarding the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE)

- Voluntary organization
- The OSPE is a member-interest, advocacy organization, created jointly by Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO) and the Canadian Society of Professional Engineers.
- The result of a process to separate regulatory and non-regulatory affairs for the profession; a separate advocacy organization. Whereas the PEO, a regulatory body that exists mainly to protect the public interest, is quite limited in what it can do in terms of advocacy, the OSPE is a separate organization with no regulatory role that is primarily concerned with promoting members' professional and economic interests, and acting as a stronger voice for its membership.

Brief Historical Overview:

- In 1990, approximately 1250-1350 IEP engineers came to Canada; 7700 engineers entering workforce that year. 25,600 Canadian educated engineers and 15,900 (IEP) engineers by immigration; 54% settled in GTA. 17 % increase in need versus 330% increase in terms of supply
- Technical services in this sector is in growth mode

- Baby boom generation in 10 years will be retiring indicating a substantial future need for replacement
- Not all practising engineers are licensed with PEO
- Recommendation: Get someone to proofread the résumé especially for English
- Look outside of GTA for greater opportunities

OACETT Technicians and Technologists & PEO

- In recent surveys, determined that approximately 62% of registrants are foreign-trained professionals
- OPTIONS program mentioned
- College employment data from Ministry and College survey shared:
 - 2000-2002 employment rate for college students approximately 85-89%
 - Salary survey indicated most were actively employed
- OACETT is one alternative to PEO registration
- Excellent for networking; contact body for more information on top ten industries (e.g., tool and die)

PEO

- Myths – not necessary to be licensed as engineer to be working in this field
- Absence of registration is not a barrier to employment
- If one applies for licensing with PEO, OACETT may still be determined as better option
- No barrier system existent
- 65% IEPs applying do not have to write any exams at all
- Body is experienced with system in place to evaluate foreign credentials
- Confirmatory exams may be waived
- PEO is not barrier to finding work in this province

Life Story of successful IEP engineer

- Encouragement given to seize opportunities
- How got first job through networking; networking as a means to that end was affirmed
- Venture into new unfamiliar territory – encouragement given
- That members already have experience was affirmed
- First generation immigrants may have to work harder.

- One of the barriers faced by IEP engineers is the “disconnect” between federal and provincial governments. For example, recruitment by immigration at federal level versus provincially controlled licensure.
- Provincial Premier to get agreement between federal and provincial authorities to minimize this disconnect. The Ontario Government website is www.gov.on.ca. One can email the Premier and can email the Minister of Training Colleges and Universities directly.
- Licensure with the PEO may appear to take unduly long; but this is attributable to academic professors voluntarily meeting throughout the province to evaluate credentials – these persons meet once per month. Different specializations take longer; some shorter. Stay in touch with your admissions representative. Respond promptly and accurately to requests from the PEO. Send your transcript and course description to expedite the evaluation. Confirmatory exam process: Four exams if on the first two you achieve an average over 60%, the remaining two exams may be waived. There are also opportunities for Prior Learning Assessment through specific requests. After having academic qualifications assessed, you are eligible to write the PPE. Further delays can depend. Good information on what is acceptable engineering experience from the perspective of the PEO is on the PEO website (). Do NOT send resume. A period of 48 months of experience must be demonstrated.
- The PEO is working on addressing the disparity occasionally observed in cases where candidates from a particular institution in a particular year are differentially evaluated with different outcomes.
- As to the question of “Canadian experience”, it was reiterated that licensure is not a general requirement. Some companies and some government projects may require it, but many do not. The PEO has created a “provisional license”. Contact the PEO and apply. Send an email to your admissions representative.
- Though there are bridges between IEPs and government bodies, there appears still to be a need to bridge IEPs with employers more directly. It was stated that employers need to be instructed on how to work with IEPs in addressing concerns relating to cross-cultural communications.
- EIT program of the PEO was mentioned. This represents a mentorship program.

SOME CLOSING REMARKS

- Our systems are better than for other sectors (not everyone has to write exams). The employers have the right to hire (capitalist society). Still, the license can be advantageous though not strictly essential. Encouragement to join the society given. GTA has only about 17% of the jobs though attracting approximately 55% of immigrants.
- Stay positive and flexible and pursue licensing and certifications as can be helpful. Network!
- More than 1/3 IEP engineers are PEO registered. Encouragement given to continue to pursue registration so that in the future audience members could be influential in making changes for the long-term.
- Be positive; typical employment situation in Canada is that most employees are not Canadian born

Questions, with corresponding answers, asked by IEP participants:

Question: What is the federal government doing to facilitate access to the labour market for internationally-trained engineering professionals?

Answer: The disconnect and inconsistencies between the varying levels of government are the critical problem. Progress is being made in the generation of Access to Professions and Trades (APT) projects within the province as it builds on provincial/federal interaction.

www.gov.on.ca - email the Premier directly or contact the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities – Mary Ann Chambers www.edu.gov.on.ca

Question: Why does it take so long to get licensed by the PEO?

Answer: Academic qualifications must be assessed by a volunteer Academic Requirements Committee within the PEO. Different specializations may take longer, some shorter.

Stay in contact with your admissions representative, respond promptly and accurately to requests from the PEO. As well as sending your transcript, provide course descriptions – this can facilitate faster assessment of the education and experience which you have.

Confirmatory exam process: four exams, if on the first two you achieve an average over 60%, the remaining two exams are waived.

There are also opportunities for Prior Learning Assessment through specific requests.

After having academic qualifications assessed, you are eligible to write the PPE. Further delays can depend on the timing of the PPE exam.

48 months of experience must be demonstrated for licensure.

www.peo.on.ca - includes guidelines on what “acceptable engineering experience” is according to the PEO.

DO NOT SEND A RESUME.

Be proactive in the process.

Question: After one candidate from a particular institution in a particular year has been evaluated and approved, approve or accept automatically those other applicants from the same institution and year.

Answer: The PEO is already working on this.

Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board (CEAB) – assesses the engineering institutions and programs in Canadian engineering programs.

There are 1584 different institutions on the books already, but they have passed through many years, and must be continuously re-evaluated.

Question: Why is ‘Canadian’ experience required?

Answer: Out of two years of experience, at least one must be Canadian.

Candidates must be able to demonstrate awareness and knowledge of Canadian codes and regulations.

There is another option for those able to demonstrate to a board that they do have those competencies and awareness. Contact OACETT for details.

Licensure is not a general requirement to work in Canada. Some companies and some government projects may require it, but many do not.

Provisional licenses may be applied for through the PEO as a new program for those who meet the academic requirements. You can take this license to employers, and seek to get your experience then.

Speak to your admissions rep and ask to move into this provisional license program!

Question: Not a question, so much as a further answer to the first question. Center for Foreign-Trained Professionals is one of many social agencies which support those in process of getting Canadian experience and work. Government is funding programs at many colleges as well including George Brown, Centennial, Seneca, Humber, etc.

Question: While there exists a bridge between international workers and government, the government has not successfully built bridges for supporting private corporations or business in employing internationally-trained professionals.

What about incentives for employing Newcomers to Canada?

Answer: Employers need to be supported and educated about working with internationally-trained professionals.

Question: When will the Bridge and Pathways programs begin again? The Canadian experience question needs to be dealt with, and even when not spoken outright, exists at a foundational level.

The government needs to focus on more programs with employers. A good resume and cover letter is not all that is required.

Answer: As an employer, the questions I ask are what tools do I have to evaluate the experience you have? What reference do I have to compare it to? Has someone else assessed it (ie. PEO or OACETT)?

Pathways, had 30 individuals in the pilot. 16 of 29 individuals who completed the project found employment. Paul doesn't think that the program was ineffective. It comes back to the problem of people with Canadian experience being 'less risky' for employers.

No decisions have been made on the status of the Pathways project.

The \$4 million dollar allocation for bridging programs includes many programs which provide 'workplace experience'. Some of the bridging programs are still in development, to start in the fall. Career Bridge is already running – 2000 applicants for 50 spaces. Check our websites and contact the projects directly.

We are attempting to communicate to employers the business benefits of employing Newcomers to Canada. We are building more partnerships with employers and Employer councils. The St. Mike's mentoring project, which focused on health, is being expanded as a model for programs.

There will be an educational marketing promotion to inform employers about the Provisional License program.

Check out the **options** program at OACETT. Start-up is taking place in the next month. SIGN UP NOW.

Question: Who should pay for placement services?

Answer: Employers must pay. It is illegal to require applicants to pay. Report them to government.

Question: What will be the impact of this conference? How will it affect government policy or development in this area?

Answer: Conferences such as these are not photo-ops. These are opportunities for those who work to reduce barriers to communicate with Internationally-Trained professionals, to provide the most up-to-date and accurate information as possible, and to get feedback from those in the process.

Question: Boundaries are more significant than I expected in coming here. Why does the government keep recruiting Newcomers with Engineering skills when the job market may not be sufficient to accommodate this growth in labour supply?

Answer: I hope that you will leave with a positive feeling, with optimism for your future. Be sure to network. There are alternatives.
EIT (Engineering internship program at PEO) – this is a mentoring program (currently waiting for funding confirmation) to match those in the application process with working engineers in Canada.
Highlight the skills and abilities you have. Consider entrepreneurial models.
Research your potential employers – seek innovative ways of working and making contacts.

Question: We sought volunteer opportunities, but couldn't find quality experiences, only low-level ones. Please clarify the purpose and benefit of PEO licenses.

Answer: It is true that you don't need a license. Most Canadian graduates never even apply. There are many successful engineers who are not licensed. If you want to provide services directly to the public (ie Engineering Consulting Firms), you must be licensed. Many of these companies will hire you in, particularly if you have a provisional license, and give you that Canadian experience.

Question: Can you please elaborate on the efforts to make sure that Newcomers considering coming to Canada have accurate Labour Market Information.

Answer: We are generating web tools (using decision-tree models, yes/no) to support prospective newcomers in evaluating their likely success. Get Citizenship & Immigration Canada online in supporting this. They are the principal conduit for this information overseas and need to be accurately representing opportunities in our embassies overseas. FAQ sheets are going out to VISA offices abroad related to many different positions. We are seeking to make FAQ sheets available at the airports again.

Question: How does the PEO assess those who have work experience in one area, while their academic qualifications are in another?

Answer: I warn people in Universities all the time to avoid doing explicitly this. We have a real problem when individuals work in one area when they were trained for a different specialization.