



Tearing those barriers down

It's spring, when thoughts turn to...licensing? While not exactly a flowery topic, licensing is without question the basis for everything we do around here at PEO. It's also an interesting subject to delve into now in light of all the government and media attention being paid to accessibility and licensing. What with the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act* that passed last December to ensure regulators have fair, clear, and open licensing processes, and almost daily media coverage of internationally trained professionals slaving over deep fryers, you would almost think the general population feels somehow that the systems that license professionals are broken.

No regulator wants to bar seemingly qualified people from the profession, PEO included, but, at the same time, they are entrusted to uphold admission standards

and practice standards once admitted, to protect the public.

Part of the concern over licensing may simply be that the process is misunderstood. Licensing is a rigorous and sometimes complex process, especially as it applies to internationally educated graduates (IEGs) whose education or experience might not quite match Canadian expectations. Our features, starting on page 56, explain PEO's licensing process—how it works today, how it's evolved to this point, and how it will look in the future.

No doubt on the minds of many engineering students graduating this spring is the question of whether to apply for their P.Eng. licence. It's hoped that a large percentage of this year's graduating class will choose to get licensed, thanks to a new PEO program launching May 1. The Engineering Intern

Training (EIT) Credit Program (p. 12), allows graduates of CEAB-accredited engineering schools to apply for a P.Eng. licence at no cost. The first year of the EIT program is paid for, too. The catch? They have to apply within six months of graduation. The internationally educated are most definitely also included in this new program. They can get in on the deal if they apply for their P.Eng. within six months of landing in Ontario.

For the thousands of IEGs who are at various stages on their path to licensure, this spring also signals hope as opportunities appear to buff up their academic qualifications and acquire the all-important Canadian experience component. Music to the ears of IEGs may be Ryerson University's Internationally Educated Engineers Qualification Bridging Program (p. 20). Accepting its first applications from now until June, the program will offer two streams of academic program to help applicants meet the academic requirements for licensing, and it will help on the experience side as well with co-op placements and opportunities to network.

Another resource is Global Experience Ontario, a Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration-sponsored access centre for internationally educated people applying for licensure in an Ontario regulated profession.

Even a series of television commercials sponsored by the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, with input from PEO, highlighting the struggle of new immigrants in finding career-related work (p. 24), are doing their part to raise awareness and encourage employers to tap into IEGs as a source of valuable skills and experience when hiring.

Although these measures won't solve all of the challenges faced by IEGs, they're certainly a start.

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