



Minutes

LICENSING COMMITTEE MEETING

July 30, 2020

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Members:

Barna Szabados, P. Eng. (Chair)
Santosh Gupta, P. Eng. (Vice-Chair)
Christian Bellini, P. Eng. *[until 6:00 p.m.]*
George Comrie, P. Eng.
Mohinder Grover, P. Eng.
Lola Hidalgo, P. Eng.
David Kiguel, P. Eng.

Guests/Observers:

Changiz Sadr, P. Eng. *[until 5:15 p.m.]*
Leila Notash, P. Eng.

Regrets:

Roydon Fraser, P. Eng.
Luc Roberge, P. Eng.

Staff:

Bernie Ennis, P. Eng., Director, Policy and Professional Affairs

1. CALL TO ORDER AND CHAIR’S REMARKS

The meeting opened at 4:09 p.m.

The Chair informed the Committee members that L. Roberge had been appointed to the Committee as the Regional Councillors Committee (RCC) representative.

The Chair also advised that Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec (OIQ) has changed to a two-year experience requirement and has no Canadian experience requirement. OIQ has not updated their website with this change. The Chair noted that OIQ places more emphasis on assuring competency after licensing than PEO does.

Action: Staff to add Academic Requirements Committee (ARC) to the agenda item “Reports from other Committees”.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A motion was made to approve the agenda.

Moved by: S. Gupta Seconded by: M. Grover CARRIED

3. APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 23, 2020 MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the Minutes of the June 23, 2020 meeting.

Moved by: S. Gupta Seconded by: C. Bellini CARRIED

4. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS FROM LAST MEETING

Action: Staff to delete the PPE action item, as well as the action item relating to the Legislation Committee, as these items are no longer applicable.

Action: Staff to move “Independent Review of Academic Assessments - Briefing Note” to the completed section.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

6. ONTARIO FAIRNESS COMMISSIONER (OFC) UPDATE

B. Ennis reported that there have been no new discussions or contact with the OFC since the last meeting, except to receive notice that Tamish Tariq, the contact person at OFC, was leaving.

B. Ennis reported that work continues on upgrading licensing operations to allow applications to be handled while working remotely.

7. REPORTS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Academic Requirements Committee (ARC)

The Chair advised that M. Farag, Manager, Admissions, had reported to the ARC the changes to licensing operations. The major problem in delaying the licensing process is that PEO does not accept on-line applications.

Experience Requirements Committee (ERC)

D. Kiguel advised that the ERC held a virtual meeting, and that President Sterling and Deputy Registrar L. Latham attended.

The ERC updated its Terms of Reference policy for dealing with absentee members. Staff will review attendance of members annually.

The ERC has adopted a formal process for appointing members to subcommittees.

The ERC has developed rules for handling virtual interviews. Mock interviews will be conducted to test the rules. Approximately 20 members were willing to participate in the mock interviews. The Committee needs to modify guidelines for applicants, the content of interview opening remarks, and needs a means for applicants to identify themselves and assure interviewers that there is no one in the room assisting them.

L. Notash enquired if staff had access to the PEO offices as there are documents, such as theses, submitted from applicants prior to March 16, 2020 or by mail that have not been reviewed, and questioned if it was possible to have staff enter the building to obtain these. B. Ennis advised that there is currently a limited access policy in effect. Under this policy, individual staff members, with prior approval from the CEO/Registrar, can enter the PEO offices to retrieve items crucial to PEO operations.

30x30 Task Force

C. Bellini reported that this Task Force has not returned to work.

8. DISCUSSION REGARDING EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS

The Committee considered the idea that the only thing the experience requirement is concerned about is the applicant's ethics and behaviour since academic qualifications and technical competency are assessed in other ways.

- R. Fraser: The Code of Ethics needs to be interpreted from a Canadian perspective. This can only be assessed by observing it in Canada, which is why Canadian experience is required. However, Canadian experience does not have to be the first or last year of experience. Canadian experience needs to be redefined as a single year of experience does not provide sufficient detail of what is required or relevant.
- L. Hidalgo: If experience is required to assess an applicant's ethical behaviour, does Canadian experience need to be in an engineering context? Is one year enough to judge a person's ethics?
- G. Comrie: List of professional ethics, which are the good character suitability to practice, need to be measured in some objective manner. It is expected that every professional has integrity. How does one know if a person has integrity? PEO only knows that a person has integrity if they act in some way that is not in their best interests. It is likely that PEO will never see applicants in a situation where their integrity can be observed. The referee should be asked to describe the situation from which the assessment of good character is made. In order to make an objective assessment, PEO expects that all professionals have the same interpretation of the meaning of these ethical terms. Ethics are not identical with the characteristics of good character.
- B. Szabados: The referee questionnaire should ask whether the referee has had the opportunity to observe each particular attribute that needs to be assessed.
- C. Bellini: Agrees to some extent with G. Comrie and L. Hidalgo. The assumption that PEO will observe a person's ethical character during typical work is not reasonable. The applicant is not a decision-maker and will unlikely be in an ethical compromising situation.
- S. Gupta: PEO would like to know the applicant's suitability to practice as there is more to this than ethics; this is about soft skills.

There is a difference between knowing and doing; testing ethical knowledge does not indicate that a person will act ethically.

C. Sadr: There is no way to test ethical doing. Testing ethical knowledge would at least inform PEO of the ability of a referee to know the ethical behaviour expected of a professional. This can be handled by providing more through guidelines for the referee so that the referee has the same interpretation of ethics as PEO.

As exposure to ethical situations may not apply to every applicant, how can all applicants be fairly and equally assessed?

D. Kiguel: In general, the referee cannot be expected to observe an applicant in specific conditions to determine whether the applicant has traits required to be suitable to practice. The Committee should address the fact that many applicants do not have a professional engineer supervising them.

Even an entrepreneurial engineer will have worked with people in some capacity and could ask those people about the applicant; however, the Regulation requires that the Canadian experience is under the supervision of a P.Eng. If an applicant does not have a P.Eng. as a referee, it should be a requirement to be interviewed by the Experience Requirements Committee.

B. Szabados: Suggested that Chapters should be involved in the assessment of experience.

L. Hidalgo: Is it being suggested to build on the Licensing Assistance Program (LAP) program? New applicants are familiar with the LAP program.

B. Szabados: Based on his observations, most Chapter members do not know the policies and rules relating to the admissions process. Prior to relying on Chapters, PEO needs a way to instruct Chapter members about the rules.

S. Gupta: In the Scarborough Chapter, the LAP program is quite active; each mentor has a good idea of the experience and character of the applicant. Better communication to students is required regarding the LAP program through PEO staff and Deans. The LAP program should be extended by a Council directive to applicants other than EITs.

B. Szabados: Only applicants have access to Chapters; perhaps, it would be a good idea to develop a means to accommodate attendance of non-applicants at Chapter events.

There was a general discussion regarding the LAP program. A very small number of applicants participate, and there are more mentors than mentees. Very few people

take advantage of the program.

B. Szabados: How can PEO motivate people to feel that it is worthwhile to become a P.Eng.?

G. Comrie: Believes that there are serious limits to what a Chapter can do in assisting an applicant in obtaining a licence. The easiest thing would be to provide applicants with information, e.g. presentation by PEO staff. Some possibilities would be mock interviews and assistance in developing an experience portfolio. In order for a volunteer to do this, they would require training, and cannot depend on Chapters as a vehicle for assisting applicants in getting licensed.

B. Szabados: What does PEO agree on? What about two referees: one to comment on character and one on technical competency?

G. Comrie: Agrees that PEO could separate assessment of good character from technical skills. Current process is that PEO advises applicant to obtain four years of experience and subsequently advise PEO what they did and demonstrate that the work they did met the five elements. The problem with this approach is that PEO has waited until the end to tell an applicant what is required. The courts have advised that this is not appropriate. Applicants should be provided, at the beginning of their application process, with a written explanation of what skills and attributes that must demonstrated.

B. Szabados: It is not enough to identify the required attributes. PEO needs to provide an interpretation of what this means; how the requirement will be assessed.

The Chair asked the Committee members for their thoughts on what should be done next.

D. Kiguel: Some emphasis must be put into the inspection scheme as a substitute for those who do not have P.Eng. supervisor. PEO needs a solution that works within the spirit of the law, and then put this before Council.

Action: All members of the Committee are asked to write up what they would like the referees to know.

[Note: Comments on this subject provided in the Chat function are attached to these Minutes.]

9. ADJOURNMENT

Action: Staff to send a doodle poll for the next meeting for the second and third Thursday of September 2020, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

Addendum to Minutes - From Chat

From Leila Notash to Everyone: 04:59 PM

But then it will question the ethics of the referees as well (not just the applicant)
So we assume ALL the referee are highly ethical and the only issue is with regard to the applicants?

From lola mireya hidalgo to Everyone: 05:03 PM

agree with Christian. Ethics is probably all licensed engineers should be reminded of so that they can mentor future p.eng's properly as well
(probably part of the PEAK intent)

From iPad-Mohinder to Everyone: 05:08 PM

There is a problem with the term so called, "trusted referee". If we call some P. Eng.s as trusted, would that mean other P. Eng.'s are not? This creates the classes of P. Eng.'s.

From Leila Notash to Everyone: 05:19 PM

we could define "equivalency" for what the required 4-year experience would be

From lola mireya hidalgo to Everyone: 05:30 PM

Barna: I think that if this committee would agree that it is at least a good idea to entertain, that's why I was suggesting to perhaps talking with RCC (Regional Councillors Committee)
RCC is is Rakesh

From Leila Notash to Everyone: 05:35 PM

"The primary objective of the LAP is to help guide engineering interns through the licensing process, develop as a professional and assimilate into the engineering community."

From lola mireya hidalgo to Everyone: 05:44 PM

i think that if they represent peo via chapters, they should know peo processes such as licensing. agree this is a current gap which should be discussed to rcc. this should be part of a program.

From Leila Notash to Everyone: 05:55 PM

what will be the criteria for the "trusted" general (non-engineer) referee, e.g., would the manager of HR, who the applicant regularly plays squash with, qualify?
I agree George, competency-based assessment of Experience would allow this upfront

From Leila Notash to Everyone: 06:11 PM

BC's competency based assessment of engineering experience could be a good starting point