



Engagement on the Future of the Engineering Intern Program

Purpose of Engagement

At its meeting on November 29, 2024, PEO Council committed to reinstating a revised version of PEO's Engineering Intern (EIT) Program. As part of our efforts to conduct an inclusive and comprehensive review of our options, we are reaching out to stakeholders for input into the program's redevelopment.

Key Principles and Values

Council has identified several principles and values to consider in the development of policy options for a new EIT program. These include:

- Clarity of the path to licensure;
- Minimum eligibility requirements (e.g., academic qualifications);
- Grounded in legal and ethical practice;
- Continuous improvement;
- Enhancement of public safety;
- Demonstrating an ongoing effort to seek licensure; and
- Fair, including non-traditional, pathways to licensure.

Background

PEO's voluntary EIT program was originally created to support engineering graduates as they obtain the 48 months of work experience required for licensure.

On May 15, 2023, the program was suspended to new applicants following the launch of PEO's updated licence application process, which was revised to comply with new requirements under the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act* (FARPACKTA). The EIT program was incompatible with the new licensing regime that requires individuals to obtain both the academic and experience requirements prior to applying for licensure. Prior to May 15, 2023, applicants for a P.Eng. licence who had already met (or in the case of international applicants assigned technical exams, were in the process of meeting) academic requirements were eligible to participate in the program annually while they were acquiring relevant work experience to meet PEO's requirements.

The EIT program provided the following features:

- The right to use the title "EIT" for employment and other purposes;
- An annual review of experience submissions by PEO staff to ensure applicants are progressing appropriately (Note: These reviews are separate from those conducted during the formal application process);
- Eligibility to participate in the Licensure Assistance Program, a mentoring initiative through participating chapters that supports EITs as they work towards obtaining their P.Eng. licence;
- Membership in PEO chapters, including the right to vote and hold executive positions; and
- Eligibility for membership in the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers' intern class, which offers access to investment and insurance plans.

Noteworthy Statistics

- There are currently 10,118 EITs, of which 42.7% are graduates from Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board (CEAB)-accredited programs, while 57.3% are from non-CEAB programs.
- On average, EITs spend 2.9 years in the program.
- Licence completion rate is lower for EITs than for non-EITs for both CEAB applicants and non-CEAB applicants.



- The license completion rate for CEAB graduates is 30.6% for EITs, compared to 56.9% for those who are not EITs. Non-CEAB graduates have a completion rate of 15.7% for EITs, compared to 71.1% for non-EITs.
- On average:
 - 1.2% of EITs on average participated in an experience review
 - 1.4% of EITs attended a PEO event
 - 1.6% participated in the Licensure Assistance Program
- There is no time limit for holding EIT status—an individual could remain an EIT indefinitely, as long as they continue to pay the annual fee.

Further Considerations

- In all other provinces and territories, an engineering intern (or equivalent term) attains that designation prior to applying for a P.Eng. licence.
- While the title "EIT" is protected by law, PEO does not have jurisdiction over EITs. Specifically, PEO cannot investigate complaints or reports made against an EIT nor can it hold an EIT accountable for professional misconduct.
- Despite the assumption that EITs have met the academic requirements, an average of 24.3% of EITs are still in the process of completing their technical exams.

Questions to Consider

When providing your comments, we ask you to consider the following questions, in addition to the above-noted values and principles espoused by Council.

1. Program Benefits and Value

- What are the key benefits and value of the program, considering PEO's regulatory mandate?
- Should the program be mandatory or voluntary, and what are the potential implications of each approach?

2. Eligibility Criteria and Regulatory Oversight & Accountability

- What criteria should determine eligibility for the EIT program (e.g., meeting academic requirements; being employed in the field of engineering)?
- What ethical standards (e.g., Code of Ethics) and professional responsibilities should apply to engineering interns?
- What, if any, accountabilities should be assumed by employers over engineering interns?

3. Gaining Professional Experience

- What specific skills and competencies are most valued in engineering interns by employers?
- How can mentorship opportunities be strengthened within the program to better support the professional development of interns?

Comments should be sent to engagement@peo.on.ca no later than February 28, 2025.

Thank you in advance for your input.