

A Guide for Regulatory Authorities:

Best Practice Checklist of Website Content for Internationally Trained Individuals

FORUM OF LABOUR MARKET MINISTERS

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Introduction

A regulator's website will typically be the first point of contact for an internationally trained individual (ITI) seeking to learn about his/her occupation in Canada.

Providing online information that is well organized, comprehensive, and clear will help contribute to a positive experience for ITIs and reduce the number of follow-up questions. This checklist provides regulators with a tool to conduct an objective website review, with a particular focus on FQR messaging for ITIs. Your completed checklist can also serve as a guide when you next consider edits and/or revisions to your website.

An effective website will:

- Provide accurate FQR information from the authoritative source
- Support informed decision-making for ITIs considering pursuing their career choices in Canada
- Help manage expectations of ITIs who choose to pursue professional registration
- Reduce frustration for ITIs by providing clear, complete, and easily-accessible FQR information
- Reduce the burden on regulatory bodies and others to respond to questions

Review

This checklist organizes best practices in website content and design under four broad criteria: Organization, Comprehensiveness, Clarity, and Visual Design, Accessibility and Functionality. As you evaluate your website:

- Decide whether the best practice being described is present on your website
- Make notes in the comments/notes section that will help you to identify the best practices you will consider adopting for your website

¹ Best practices were compiled by the Mobility and Qualification Recognition Working Group (MQRWG) from work completed by the Nova Scotia Fair Registration Practices Act Review Office; the Government of Saskatchewan; the Government of Manitoba; and the Government of Ontario. Even though Québec is an active member of the MQRWG, the province did not participate in the drafting of this document and does not recommend its use by and/or distribution to its regulatory organizations.

Criterion 1.

Organization



Content is organized in a logical, layered, intuitive format supporting ease of navigation and access to information.

1.1 Website home page	Best practice present?	Comments / Notes / Rationale
<p>There is a link/tab for “internationally trained individuals” (ITIs), or comparable title, that directs users to a dedicated landing page.</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 280px;"></div>
<p>If there is no landing page, the navigation bar on the website home page includes a first-level menu item for ITIs under which all relevant information is organized.</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	
<p>There is a search tool that allows users to find information for ITIs.</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	

1.2 Menu items	Best practice present?	Comments / Notes / Rationale
<p>On the landing page (or first-level menu) for ITIs there are high-level menu items that organize information by sub-topic.</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 330px;"></div>
<p>Key words are used in menu items (e.g. “Profession in Canada”, “Registration Process”, “Forms and Documents”, “Tools and Resources”, “Examinations”, “Fees”, etc.).</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	
<p>Main menus have fewer than five (5) items.</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	

Criterion 2.

Comprehensiveness



Information for ITIs is detailed and complete, reducing the need for additional inquiries.

2.1 Registration process

Best practice present?

Comments / Notes / Rationale

There is a section dedicated to the registration process for ITIs.

Yes No

Details of the registration process are presented in a series of clearly defined steps.

Yes No

There is an illustration of the steps/pathway to registration.

Yes No

There is a statement on whether the licensing process can be started prior to arrival.

Yes No

There is a precise and concrete explanation of how a person can begin the licensing process, both prior to (if applicable) and upon arrival.

Yes No

There is information on the requirements for licensure, including a description of the criteria used for the assessment of qualifications (e.g. number of years of schooling, years of work experience, level of language test achievement, etc.).

Yes No

If a centralized or national body other than the regulator is involved in any part of the assessment or registration process, the website clearly describes the role of that body.

Yes No

There is information for applicants about when and how they need to contact the other body.

Yes No

It is stated when and how that body's results will be used in the licensure process.

Yes No

Criterion 2. continued

Comprehensiveness



2.1 Registration process

Best practice present?

Comments / Notes / Rationale

It is clear that the final decision for licensing rests with the provincial/territorial regulator.

Yes No

The website clearly states that immigration and professional registration (i.e. licensure) are two separate processes and that approval for immigration does not guarantee success in the licensure process.

Yes No

It clarifies if and how an educational credential assessment (ECA) used for immigration purposes may be used in the licensing process.

Yes No

2.2 Documents

Best practice present?

Comments / Notes / Rationale

There is a comprehensive list of all required documents, including any acceptable alternatives, and any applicable translation requirements.

Yes No

The website informs applicants at which stages in the application process they are to submit required documents.

Yes No

Applicants are informed of how to submit documents (e.g. sent directly from issuing institution/employer/language test centre, original or certified copies, etc.).

Yes No

The process for applicants who are not able to obtain original documents for valid reasons is described.

Yes No

Criterion 2. continued

Comprehensiveness



2.3 Exams	Best practice present?	Comments / Notes / Rationale
There is a list of all required examinations, including knowledge, practical, ethics and jurisprudence exams.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Costs of the examinations are included or links to costs are provided.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
There is information for applicants on when they must complete each required examination.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
There is information on the allowable number of attempts at each exam.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
There are links to the examination provider (if applicable).	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	

2.4 Fees	Best practice present?	Comments / Notes / Rationale
There is a section dedicated to explaining all the relevant fees and/or a cost estimator.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Fees are listed in Canadian dollars.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Fees required in currencies other than Canadian are clearly listed.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
There is an explanation of when each fee is due and how to submit it.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	

Criterion 2. continued

Comprehensiveness



2.5 Timeframes	Best practice present?	Comments / Notes / Rationale
It is stated how long it takes to receive an initial assessment decision.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
A complete timeframe for the length of the entire licensure process is provided.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	

2.6 Supports	Best practice present?	Comments / Notes / Rationale
Information, tools, and resources that are available to support the ITI through the registration process are provided or linked to, such as:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> orientation to the profession 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> self-assessment readiness tools 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bridge/gap programs 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exam preparation 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> language supports/programming 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mentorship 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
There are links to external individual supports for ITIs (e.g. immigrant-serving organizations, financial support programs, etc.).	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	

Criterion 2. continued

Comprehensiveness



2.6 Supports	Best practice present?	Comments / Notes / Rationale
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There are links to external information, tools, and resources that are available to support the ITI through the transition to employment, such as:

- labour market information Yes No
- career profiles Yes No
- job postings Yes No
- alternate careers Yes No
- employment services Yes No
- mentorship supports Yes No

Contact information that will allow the ITI to connect directly with the regulator is provided. Yes No

2.7 Appeals	Best practice present?	Comments / Notes / Rationale
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The website informs ITIs about the right to appeal decisions. Yes No

The website includes information on the process, fees and timelines of an appeal. Yes No

Criterion 3.

Clarity



Information is presented clearly and concisely. Plain language principles are applied wherever possible.

3.1 Writing Style	Best practice present?	Comments / Notes / Rationale
<p>Writing style follows plain language principles, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put the most important point at the beginning Use short sentences and paragraphs Use technical terms only when necessary and ensure their meaning is explained Use acronyms and abbreviations sparingly <p>Note: For information on plain language principles, see the list of resources at the end of the document.</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 700px; width: 100%;"></div>
<p>There are clear explanations, definitions, or a glossary to explain terminology (e.g. application, registration, certification, licensing, etc.).</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	
<p>Terminology is consistent throughout (e.g. website uses one of: credential assessment, credential evaluation, document evaluation, etc.).</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	
<p>Information provided is succinct.</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	
<p>Content starts as a summary, providing links to more in-depth information.</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	
<p>Users have a clear expectation of what they will find when they click on a link.</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	
<p>Instructions and processes are presented using active verbs (e.g. review, complete, attach, submit, write, etc.).</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	
<p>The website uses visual elements such as icons, flow charts, etc., to complement messaging.</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	

Criterion 4.

Visual Design, Accessibility, and Functionality



The visual design enhances the website’s purpose and content. The website supports a variety of platforms and is fully functional.

4.1 Visual Design and Accessibility	Best practice present?	Comments / Notes / Rationale
Site is accessible through a variety of platforms (e.g. desktop, tablet, smart phone, etc.).	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
If not accessible, there is a statement indicating with which device it works best.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Content displays appropriately on a variety of current and widely used browsers (e.g. Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, Safari).	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
If it does not display on all browsers, there is a statement indicating with which ones it works best.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Images provide additional clarity to content (e.g. icons for simplicity and clarity, static visuals to avoid visual chaos and distractions).	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Headings are appropriately styled to give a visual guide to their importance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H1 headings = largest • H2 headings = smaller • H3 headings = smaller still 	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Limited and complementary colours have been used.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Text colour has sufficient contrast with background colour.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Font, font sizes and font colours are consistently used.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Captions are provided to audio or video files.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	

Criterion 4. continued

Visual Design, Accessibility, and Functionality



4.2 Functionality	Best practice present?	Comments / Notes / Rationale
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All internal hyperlinks work.

Yes No

All external hyperlinks work.

Yes No

No errors are generated.

Yes No

Application forms and other forms are available online and are automated (e.g. can be completed, saved and printed online, etc.).

Yes No

All online forms function properly.

Yes No

ITIs can track the status of their application online.

Yes No

Additional Comments:

Plain Language – Resources

To the Point: A Plain Language Guide for Regulators

Published (2010) by the Province of Manitoba Office of the Manitoba Fairness Commissioner

Perfectly Plain: A quick-reference handbook for people who create websites, write emails, and design forms

Published (2013) by the Province of Nova Scotia Fair Registration Practices Act Review Office

What is Plain Language?

Source: Plain Language Association International

Other FQR Resources

Forum of Labour Market Ministers Website

A Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications

An Action Plan for Better Foreign Qualification Recognition

The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials

Government of Canada Information on Educational Credential Assessment

Improving Pre-Arrival Information Uptake for Internationally Educated Professionals