# A Pan-Canadian Framework

**for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications**

## 10-Year Anniversary Report

2009-2019

*flmm*
Forum of Labour Market Ministers

*fmmt*
Forum des ministres du marché du travail

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Contents

# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CWE   Canadian Work Experience program

ECA   Educational Credential Assessment

ESDC   Employment and Social Development Canada

FCR   Foreign Credential Recognition

FCRP   Foreign Credential Recognition Program (ESDC)

FLMM   Forum of Labour Market Ministers

F/P/T   Federal/Provincial/Territorial

FQR   Foreign Qualification Recognition

IEHPI   Internationally Educated Healthcare Professional Initiative

IRCC   Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

ITI   Internationally Trained Individual

MQRWG   Mobility and Qualification Recognition Working Group of the FLMM

SWG   Settlement Working Group (IRCC)

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) launched *A Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications* (the Framework) in 2009, federal, provincial, and territorial governments have used its principles of fairness, transparency, timeliness, and consistency as a guide for collaborative work to enhance foreign qualification recognition (FQR) processes across Canada. Improved FQR systems support internationally trained individuals (ITIs) in more quickly putting their skills and experience to work in the Canadian labour market.

Recognizing that collaboration is essential to systemic improvement, governments have worked closely over the last ten years with regulators and other key partners to bring about positive change. This report provides a small selection of examples from the multitude of best practices and innovative projects that have been implemented under the Framework's principles.

Through consultation with target occupations, occupational action plans were developed to lay the foundation for ongoing improvements, define FQR priorities, and inform investments and policy development. A number of key priorities were funded at a pan-Canadian level, resulting in improvements along the Pathways to Recognition, including the development of online application portals, streamlined assessment processes, and improved pre-arrival resources and processes.

The Framework has changed mindsets and inspired stakeholders to take actions. Regulators and other stakeholders have used the Framework as a model on which to base their FQR improvements. Provincial and territorial governments have provided funding and support to increase stakeholders' capacity to improve their FQR processes. This has resulted in:

- Improved information for ITIs regarding regulated occupations as well as increased opportunities for ITIs to begin licensing processes overseas.

- Increased consistency and transparency of assessment processes as well as innovative assessment practices, such as competency-based assessments or alternatives to Canadian work experience requirements.

- Supports to overcome financial barriers.

- Increased access to bridge and gap training.

- Increased workforce participation supports.

Collaboratively, governments have also developed resources and conducted research to support stakeholders in the development of pre-arrival resources, website content for ITIs, alternative career supports, and post-licensure employment supports.

Much of the FLMM's collaborative work to date has focused on the commitment to timely service which indicates that regulators or their designates will communicate an initial assessment decision to ITIs within six months of their application for licensure. Moving forward, there are opportunities to look beyond the time to an initial assessment decision and to work together to improve the fairness, transparency, consistency, and timeliness to full licensure. FQR stakeholders will also need to focus on sharing resources that have been developed and on creating partnerships to provide access to programs that exist. In addition to finding ways to share existing resources across jurisdictions, future FQR work should focus on the intentional creation of programming where identified gaps exist. By working collaboratively and combining efforts across jurisdictions to share resources, stakeholders will be able to make systematic FQR improvements in a cost-effective manner.

# I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

## Introduction

Immigration is vital to the development of a skilled and flexible labour force in Canada, as the Canadian population is increasingly aging and birth rates are declining. With more of the population reaching retirement age, the size of the labour force is shrinking, resulting in an increased need for workers. Immigration is expected to remain a major contributor to demographic and economic growth.

According to Census data[1], immigrants in Canada are more highly educated and more likely to have a university education compared to the Canadian-born population. However, skilled immigrants trained in regulated occupations face a number of well-documented challenges integrating into occupations aligned with their skills and training. These include a lack of language proficiency, Canadian work experience requirements, and culturally defined soft skills, as well as complex foreign qualification recognition (FQR) processes.

The Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM)[2] launched *A Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications*[3] (the Framework) in 2009. While jurisdictions may have begun FQR initiatives prior to its launch, the Framework articulates a joint vision for federal, provincial, and territorial (F/P/T) governments to take individual and collective action to improve the integration of internationally trained individuals (ITIs) into the Canadian labour market.

> **Did You Know?**
>
> ITIs include immigrants as well as Canadians educated abroad.

Since the launch of the Framework, much progress has been made in improving and coordinating FQR in Canada. This report will highlight the achievements of the past ten years and provide future directions to facilitate ongoing improvement in the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications.

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[1] Statistics Canada, *The Daily* (November 29, 2017)

[2] The FLMM is an inter-governmental forum composed of federal, provincial and territorial (F/P/T) ministers responsible for labour market policies and programs, whose purpose is to promote discussion and cooperation on common labour market priorities. Through the FLMM, F/P/T governments work cooperatively to ensure Canada has a skilled, adaptable and inclusive workforce that supports a competitive Canadian economy.

[3] The Québec government has not endorsed A Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, but it supports its principles and collaborates with other governments on FQR. While it does not participate in the evaluation activities of the Framework, information on projects implemented by the Government of Quebec and its partners to facilitate FQR is available here: https://www.qualificationsquebec.com/reconnaissance-competences/english/

# Context

## What is Foreign Qualification Recognition?

FQR is the process of verifying that the knowledge, skills, work experience and education obtained in another country are comparable to the standards established for Canadian professionals and tradespersons.

For occupations where no certification, registration or licensure is required by law to practice, the employer usually determines the appropriate qualifications, training or experience necessary to work. It is the employer's responsibility to assess whether a potential worker meets those requirements. Approximately 80% of the occupations in Canada are non-regulated. Many employers and ITIs in these non-regulated occupations also experience assessment and qualification recognition issues.

> **Did You Know?**
>
> "Qualification" recognition is a broader concept than "credential" recognition and refers to the recognition of formal and informal qualifications and experience. Credential recognition refers more narrowly to the recognition of specific education or other formal credentials for the purposes of licensing and registration processes.

Approximately 20% of occupations in Canada are regulated. This means the qualifications to work in the occupation are required by law. The authority for most regulated occupations in Canada lies within provincial and territorial governments. Governments often delegate their authority to a regulatory body within the jurisdiction. Regulatory bodies set the requirements to obtain certification, registration or licensure.

> For any regulated occupation, ITIs should contact the regulatory body to determine if they must obtain their certification, registration, or licensure before they are legally able to work.

For some occupations, jurisdictional regulatory bodies exist, but obtaining their certification, registration or licensure is not a requirement to work - it is voluntary (similar to obtaining credentials of higher levels of education). However, employers may require workers to obtain certification, registration or licensure as a condition of employment.

The primary purpose of regulation in an occupation is to protect the Canadian public by establishing practice standards that ensure public, consumer and environmental protection. Regulatory authorities are responsible for assessing the skills and credentials of

> **Did You Know?**
>
> Because the authority for regulated occupations is held jurisdictionally, assessments, licensing requirements and scope of practice for the same occupation often differ across Canada.

each applicant against those practice standards and granting certification or licensure to qualified applicants. They also monitor professional conduct and ongoing continuing education. Within Canada, there are over 150 regulated occupations[4] and more than 600 regulatory bodies.

Other parties may play a role in the assessment and recognition of an individual's foreign qualifications. For example, national assessment and examination bodies may complete a portion of the assessment process on behalf of a regulator.

## Barriers and Challenges to Foreign Qualification Recognition

The FQR process is complex and varies for each individual depending on factors such as the occupation, the content and length of education and training, language requirements, previous work experience, and access to gap training and education in Canada. Developing FQR processes for ITIs has proven to be a complicated, costly and time-consuming undertaking for regulators. At the same time, systems that do not support the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications in a timely manner present barriers to workforce participation and negatively impact the ITI, employers and the economy. The most commonly cited barriers to licensure and workplace participation for ITIs are lack of language proficiency; difficulty in obtaining required documentation; lengthy and expensive processes; need for professional (Canadian) experience; and lack of Canadian soft skills.

> The distinction between assessments required for the immigration process and those required for licensure can be a source of confusion for ITIs.

ITIs incur additional costs through fees and lost potential income from the time spent to take additional tests and/or training. The longer ITIs are not working in their field, the greater the chance of skills atrophy. In some professions, regulators have a requirement for currency of practice and/or number of practice hours. If an ITI is not able to complete the assessment process within a specified period, they may be required to take refresher training before they can apply for licensure.

> ### Did You Know?
>
> The more access to information and assessment processes an ITI has pre-arrival, the more informed they are, and the less time they are likely to spend out of practice upon arrival in Canada.

Reducing barriers to qualification recognition is one step towards improving the economic integration of ITIs. Because the majority of regulated occupations fall under the authority of the provinces and territories, individual and collective

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[4] Occupations in Canada are classified using the 4-digit National Occupation Code (NOC) (there are approximately 500 NOC occupations in Canada). This estimate was obtained after analyzing both Job Bank and Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials databases. Included were occupations that are regulated in more than three provinces in at least one of the databases (note that there are sometimes important discrepancies between the two databases).

efforts are needed at all levels of government and by other relevant stakeholders to meet the mutually shared goal of improving FQR.

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

In 2009, the Framework established a public commitment between F/P/T governments to improve FQR processes, outlining principles to guide collective and individual efforts. Since that time, the FLMM has worked toward improved recognition systems through research, collaboration, information sharing and development of best practices documents and other resources. Twenty-four target occupations were identified, and through stakeholder consultations, FQR action plans were developed.

# 2009-2019 Overview

The following section provides an overview of the FLMM's key milestones and activities under the Framework over the past ten years.

**2009**

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

The Framework was launched on November 30, 2009. This document "describes the ideal steps and processes that governments aspire to build in order to address the current gaps to successful immigrant labour market integration". [5]

The Framework sets out the four guiding principles of fairness, transparency, timeliness, and consistency (see Appendix A for a summary of these principles).

The FLMM established an F/P/T working group for ongoing implementation and collaboration under the Framework.

The Framework also illustrates the "Pathways to Recognition" (Pathways), outlining the steps that an individual undertakes in having their foreign qualifications assessed, with the ultimate goal of workforce participation.

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[5] FLMM (2009)

# Pathways to Recognition in Canada
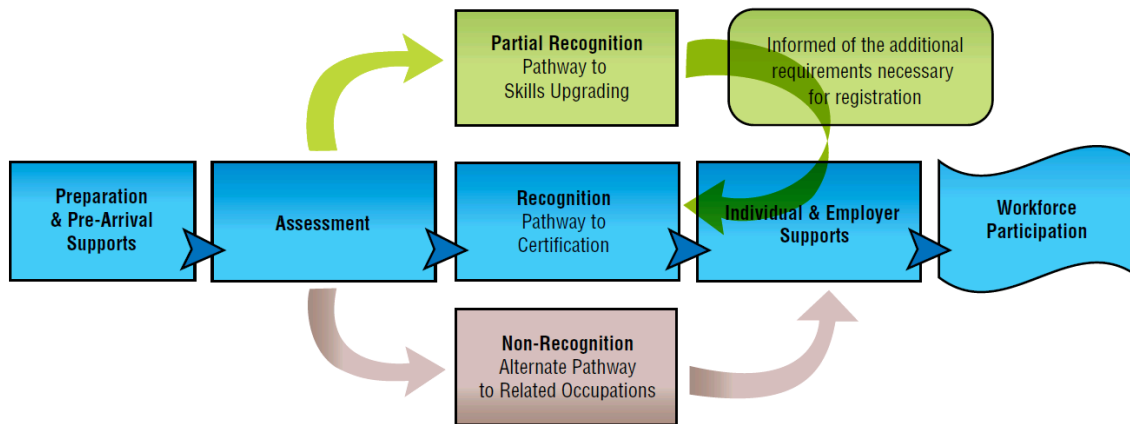


"The direct *Pathway to Certification* [through the centre line of the figure] is for applicants who fully demonstrate the required qualifications. It involves the regulatory authority for a given occupation registering or licensing the applicant so that they may practice in their chosen occupation.

The *Pathway to Skills Upgrading* [shown on the top line of the figure] is for applicants who must complete some additional requirements in order to practice in their chosen occupation. This pathway will involve skills upgrading and reassessment should the individual wish to pursue licensure.

The *Alternate Pathway to Related Occupations* [shown on the bottom line of the figure] is for those applicants whose qualifications do not meet the requirements of their occupation, and for whom skills upgrading is not an option. It involves the provision of career planning advice to the individual so that they can most effectively build on their experience in related occupations."[6]

The Framework establishes a pan-Canadian commitment to timely service: "Our goal is that, within one year, an individual will know whether their qualification will be recognized, or be informed of the additional requirements necessary for registration, or be directed toward related occupations commensurate with their skills and experience."

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[6] FLMM (2009), p.6

The Framework identifies two sets of target occupations for governments' individual and collective action. Work with target occupations focuses on establishing the processes and supports necessary to ensure the application of the Framework's principles, including the commitment to timely service.

| First set of Target Occupations | Second set of Target Occupations |
|---|---|
| Architects<br>Engineers<br>Financial Auditors and Accountants<br>Medical Laboratory Technologists<br>Occupational Therapists<br>Pharmacists<br>Physiotherapists<br>Registered Nurses | Dentists<br>Engineering Technicians<br>Licensed Practical Nurses<br>Medical Radiation Technologists<br>Physicians<br>Teachers (K-12) |

While a timely initial assessment decision is vital to an ITI to make an informed career decision, it does not usually lead to full licensure. It is a beginning step, often leading to additional requirements including practical assessments, language fluency testing, bridge training, examinations, and workplace experience requirements.

### *Progress Report: November 2009 to December 2010*

**2010**

In 2010, the FLMM issued a progress report on the first year of the Framework's implementation. A key achievement during this period was the establishment of occupational action plans for the first group of target occupations. Occupational action plans were developed in collaboration with national associations and provincial and territorial regulatory authorities. They defined priorities and joint objectives for different stages of the FQR pathway. Stakeholders and governments have used these plans to guide their own work on policy development and investments related to FQR.

In addition, this progress report highlighted F/P/T promising practices along the Pathways and indicated that initial assessment decisions within the first group of target occupations were meeting the commitment to timely service. The report highlighted the need for ongoing engagement with regulatory authorities and other stakeholders; government funding for promising FQR initiatives; and the improvement of data collection and reporting.

**2013**

### *Making Progress Together: 2013 Progress Report*

Published in 2013, this second progress report highlighted the development of occupational action plans for the second set of target occupations as well as their success in meeting the commitment to timely service. The FLMM also established a monitoring and evaluation strategy to assess the licensing and labour market outcomes of ITIs to help promote further improvements to FQR processes. The report highlighted the need to build on the strong foundation already in place through improved monitoring and evaluation and by working with new target professions and trades.

> Recognizing the need to monitor outcomes to support continuous improvement, the FQR working group developed an evaluation strategy which included data collection on FQR systems outcomes and processes. Following a pilot survey and data workshops in 2010, 2012, 2015 and 2016, the working group conducted surveys of regulators and national bodies for the target occupations in 2016 and 2018. The 2018 survey also included trades certification bodies.

### *Foreign Qualification Recognition and Alternative Careers*

Completed in 2013, this research report contributed to a better understanding of alternative careers for ITIs and analyzed the structure and delivery of effective alternative career supports. The FLMM organized presentations to share the findings of this report at the Canadian Network of Agencies for Regulation (CNAR) conferences in 2012 and 2013.

**2014**

### *On the Current State of Pre-Arrival Supports among Canadian Regulators*

Completed in March 2014, this research report defines pre-arrival supports and provides an overview of promising practices. Findings of the commissioned report were disseminated during workshops at the CNAR conference (November 2014) and the Metropolis conference (March 2015). The report coupled general information (i.e. categorizing existing supports) with an in-depth analysis (i.e. of promising practices and examples) to help inform stakeholders' creation of evidence-based pre-arrival supports.

## Alternative Careers Roundtable

A roundtable was held in March 2014 with FQR stakeholders to promote promising practices in alternative careers, support collaboration amongst stakeholders, and identify approaches for advancing alternative careers work. This led to a Summary Report: *Alternative Careers Roundtable*. The report highlighted five key priorities for advancing alternative careers identified by participants: 1) supporting collaboration and innovation; 2) research and innovation; 3) developing competency standards and tools; 4) developing the use of online tools; and 5) collaborating with employers.

### Third set of target occupations

In July 2014, the FLMM announced a third set of target occupations with the addition of five professions and five skilled trades, for a total of 24 target occupations.

## An Action Plan for Better Foreign Qualification Recognition

Five years after the publication of the Framework, the FLMM issued a "renewed plan of action", which resulted from consultations that solicited input and perspectives from ITIs, regulatory authorities, Fairness Commissioners and national associations. The following four priority areas for renewed collaboration were identified:

> **Third set of Target Occupations**
>
> Professions:
>
> Audiologists and Speech Language Pathologists
>
> Midwives
>
> Geoscientists
>
> Psychologists
>
> Lawyers
>
> Skilled Trades:
>
> Carpenters
>
> Welders
>
> Electricians (industrial and construction)
>
> Heavy Duty Equipment Technicians
>
> Heavy Equipment Operators

1. Pre-Decision Information and Assessment Processes

> Continue to improve early access to reliable and accurate information and supports.

> A Pre-Arrival Commitment was established:
>
> "An ITI destined to Canada, will be able to apply to an appropriate regulatory authority, or designate, prior to arriving in Canada and receive a timely response regarding initial assessment, and be informed of additional requirements for registration."

2. Workforce Participation and Integration Supports

Identify and share information on tools, resources or programming on career guidance, workplace integration supports and initiatives that remove barriers for ITIs.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

Continue work on developing measurable benchmarks of success and reporting timelines.

4. Communicating F/P/T Actions to Stakeholders

Develop a shared communications strategy to enhance communication with regulators, stakeholders, Canadians, and ITIs.

**2015**

**Trades Task Team established**

A Trades Task Team[7] was established to improve FQR in the trades. Consultations were held with representatives of the five skilled trade target occupations. Key issues identified included the need to improve provision of information for common assessment processes and standards and to address language barriers.

The Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA) FQR Committee, with involvement of the Trades Task Team, reviewed the assessment of qualifications for internationally trained tradespeople. They developed the CCDA FQR Application and Assessment Promising Practices Guide and the Trade Qualifier Certification Program Model.

**2016**

*Improving Pre-Arrival
Information Uptake for Internationally Educated Professionals*

Released in June 2016, the report explores the uptake, navigability and effectiveness of available pre- and post-arrival information related to FQR assessment and recognition. Working group members shared the report with regulators in their jurisdictions. The report deepened collective understanding on ways to improve the uptake and effectiveness of pre-arrival resources.

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[7] Comprised of P/T representatives, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), and IRCC in collaboration with the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA) and jurisdictional trade time assessors.

**Target for initial qualification recognition shortened to six months**

In October 2016, the FLMM announced that the one-year pan-Canadian commitment to timely service was being reduced to an aspirational target of six months in all 24 target occupations.[8]

**2019**

*A Guide for Regulatory Authorities: Best Practice Checklist of Website Content for Internationally Trained Individuals*

Released in 2019, this checklist provides regulators with a tool to conduct an objective website review, with a particular focus on FQR messaging for ITIs.

*Post-Licensure Employment Outcomes for Internationally Trained Individuals*

This research provides a better understanding of the workforce participation of ITIs after obtaining licensure in one of the 19 target professions. It also supports a better understanding of the availability of post-licensure employment outcomes data. The report identified common themes on challenges ITIs face in obtaining employment post-licensure, as well as recommendations to address those challenges. The report also recommends methods to improve data collection.

# Framework Implementation

By endorsing the Framework, F/P/T governments have agreed to apply its four guiding principles to their individual and collaborative actions to improve foreign qualification assessment and recognition processes. Individual activities may include specific programming targeted to the needs of the province or territory. Examples include bridge training and language programming for individuals, as well as outreach to regulators or employers. Collaborative actions may include F/P/T programming, but also formal working group activities, as occurs under the FLMM.

**FLMM Partners**

**Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**

ESDC plays a lead role in FQR by funding programming through the Foreign Credential Recognition Program to improve the labour market outcomes of highly skilled immigrants (Appendix B). The Minister of ESDC is one

**Did You Know?**

Through its Foreign Credential Recognition Program, ESDC has invested approximately $140 million dollars in 159 projects over the past 10 years.

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[8] FLMM (2016)

of the co-chairs of the FLMM, and ESDC officials co-chair the FLMM working group dedicated to FQR.

## Provinces and Territories

Provinces and Territories also share the responsibility of co-chairing the FLMM FQR working group on a rotating basis. In addition to working collectively through the FLMM, provinces and territories implement the principles of the Framework and facilitate FQR improvements in their jurisdictions. Many provinces have strategic frameworks and dedicated units working to improve FQR processes within their jurisdiction. Funding for FQR projects and supports along all of the Pathways is available through most provinces and territories.

Some provinces have fairness legislation and/or Fairness Commissioners/Review Officers, who play an important role in FQR[9].

> **Did You Know?**
>
> Fairness Commissioners/Review Officers ensure that regulated professions have registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair.

## Non-FLMM Partners

### Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

IRCC plays an important role in supporting FQR through pre-arrival and settlement services (Appendix C). An effective foreign qualification recognition process aligns with IRCC's mandate to support the successful integration of permanent residents into Canada.

### Health Canada

In 2005, the Internationally Educated Health Professionals Initiative (IEHPI) was implemented by Health Canada (Appendix D). The purpose of this initiative was to increase the supply of health professionals in the Canadian workforce by expanding the assessment and integration of internationally educated health professionals (e.g. physicians and nurses). Projects under this initiative were funded until 2017.

## Other Stakeholders

Regulatory authorities play a central role in improving FQR along the Pathways to Recognition. Numerous other individuals and organizations, including professional associations, post-secondary and vocational institutions, immigrant-serving organizations, and employers, are meaningfully involved. Collaboration and coordination between these stakeholders is necessary to create synergy, reduce duplication and to continue system-wide enhancements.

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[9] Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Nova Scotia have fairness legislation and offices. In 2019, Alberta passed legislation and is working towards implementation.

# II. IMPROVING FQR ALONG THE PATHWAYS

Improving processes for FQR requires time, money, and collaboration. Since the launch of the Framework, substantial efforts have been made to improve these processes. Below are some examples of activities, accomplishments, and promising practices along each step of the Pathways to Recognition. It is important to note that different stakeholder groups, including governments, regulatory authorities, and credential assessors, are involved in each of the steps along the pathway.

## Preparation and Pre-Arrival Supports

The Framework highlights the importance of preparation and pre-arrival support, as early as possible in the immigration process to ensure immigrants have access to reliable and accurate information and assessment services. The provision of clear information, self-assessment tools, orientation services, and other supports that give ITIs an understanding of licensure requirements allows ITIs to make informed decisions before immigrating to Canada. In addition, the more application, assessment, and bridge training processes become available to ITIs prior to arrival in Canada, the less time an ITI must spend out of practice in Canada as they pursue full licensure.

> The results of the 2016 survey indicated that nearly all regulators and national bodies provided information on their websites to help ITIs understand the occupational licensing process in Canada.

### Examples of Promising Practices in Pre-Arrival Supports

The following are select examples of promising pre-arrival practices. This list is by no means exhaustive, and examples may pertain to more than one step of the pathway.

- Pre-arrival preparation tools for physicians:

  o The Medical Council of Canada, with funding from ESDC, developed sustainable and streamlined pathways to guide the entry of International Medical Graduates into the Canadian medical system[10]. This included the development of an updated qualification exam, offered with increased frequency; development of pre-arrival self-assessment and orientation modules to prepare for the qualification exam; and pre-arrival information (including links to preparatory resources, routes to licensure, core competencies expected for residency and independent practice, and updated exam information). The result is a fair, transparent, timely and consistent assessment process that is better aligned with the Canadian immigration system and

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[10] This project resulted from an occupational action plan.

responsive to labour market needs across the Canadian medical system. The Medical Council of Canada also managed an ESDC-funded project that established a national registration process for internationally educated physicians, resulting in the creation of a single web-based portal (physiciansapply.ca).

- **Provision of online information, networking and courses:**

  o The Province of Manitoba, in collaboration with 19 Manitoba regulators, developed 20 online Fact Sheets representing 20 professions and trades. Each fact sheet directs users (pre- and post-arrival) to information, tools, and resources to help navigate the professional registration processes. To accompany the fact sheets, Manitoba also developed an online Question & Answer Guide to Regulated Professions and Trades to help ITIs gain a better understanding of terminology, policies, and processes related to professional registration (licensure/certification).

  o Also in collaboration with Manitoba regulators, the Province developed enhanced online resources including (i) audio/visual presentations of registration processes; (ii) registration overviews (steps to registration); and (iii) document submission checklists. Resources were prepared for 11 professions including: agrologists, certified technicians and technologists, chiropractors, dental hygienists, dietitians, lawyers, licensed practical nurses, medical laboratory technologists, midwives, opticians, and physiotherapists.

  o The University of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Body (SPTRB), Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, and Government of Saskatchewan collaboratively developed an Internationally Educated Teachers Certificate (IETC) program. The SPTRB determines eligibility for the program. Eligible candidates can register for and participate in the IETC pre-arrival. There are four online courses covering topics relevant to teaching and learning in Saskatchewan (legal context, First Nations and Métis culture and diversity, special education, and Saskatchewan's curriculum). The final course of the IETC must be completed in Saskatchewan and consists of a six-week workplace practicum.

  o Physiotherapy Alberta - College + Association developed an online networking platform for internationally educated physiotherapists. This provided a network, as well as space for ongoing education and learning. Canadian-educated physiotherapists have used the platform as well. Although this was not initially the original objective of the project, the platform is being used extensively as a source of advice on preparation for physiotherapy licensure exams.

- o The Access Centre for Internationally Trained Individuals, known as Global Experience Ontario, introduced profession-specific webinars on how to become licensed in six professions in Ontario (Accounting, Engineering, Social Work, Teaching, Early Childhood Education and the Skilled Trades). The webinars include information on mentorships, internships, and other relevant programs. The Centre also provides training workshops to frontline staff in organizations that work with ITIs so they can better support them in understanding how to get their license to practice in Ontario and make better use of existing tools and resources.

- o The National Dental Examining Board of Canada and the Canadian Dental Regulatory Authorities Federation, with funding from ESDC, developed and implemented a new assessment process to determine equivalency of non-accredited dental graduates[11]. This included the enhancement of the web-based self-assessment tool to determine potential for successful completion of the equivalency process prior to immigration.

- • **Preparation for assessment:**

  - o The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, under Health Canada's IEHPI, funded the initial development and implementation of online education modules for internationally educated nurses (IENs), to support their preparation for competency assessments. The online education modules provide greater accessibility and flexibility for IENs by enabling them to complete the modules in their home province or country. In 2017, the on-line modules were revised to maximize the success for IENs, and to enhance FQR capacity in the province.

  - o The Nova Scotia College of Nursing developed a Pathway to Success for Internationally Educated Nurses program to support IENs in their efforts to gain licensure to work as Licensed Practical Nurses in the province. This includes educational programming to enable IENs to pass the mandatory, national registration exam. The program provides information pre- and post-arrival, an online Self-Assessment Readiness Tool, and other assessments and skill enhancement courses, some of which are offered online and some in-person.

## Assessment

The Framework indicates that methods used for assessing foreign qualifications will be reasonable and objective, and regulatory authorities will share information regarding the

> The 2016 survey of regulators found that 95 percent of respondents indicated they communicated the first assessment decision to applicants within six months in the 19 target professions.

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[11] Also as a result of the occupational action plan.

approaches they use with their regulatory counterparts in other jurisdictions.

## Examples of Promising Practices in Assessment

- Health Canada's IEHPI worked with provinces and territories, health regulatory authorities, post-secondary institutions, and professional associations to:

  o Work towards building harmonized approaches for assessment of IEHPs, with significant progress in nursing and medicine:

    ▪ Funding was provided to the Medical Council of Canada to implement a nationally standardized entry-to-residency assessment tool, which allows provinces and territories to streamline their clinical skills and competency assessment process for International Medical Graduates.

    ▪ The National Nursing Assessment Service (NNAS) offers a streamlined process for IENs to submit their documents for assessment.

  o Implement bridging programs:

    ▪ Health Canada provided funding to the College of Family Medicine of Canada to implement bridging programs for internationally educated health professionals. The bridging programs helped to determine equivalency for internationally trained family physicians from four international jurisdictions to the Canadian certification standard in family medicine.

  o Track IEHPs:

    ▪ Funding was provided to the Canadian Post-M.D. Education Registry, for the International Medical Graduate (IMG) database, to help track and recruit IMGs and conduct research.

- Development of assessment processes for ITIs:

  o In British Columbia, the Association of BC Forest Professionals developed and implemented a pan-Canadian, integrated credential assessment process for ITIs. A web-based tool was developed for internationally trained practitioners to evaluate themselves against national certification standards, additional assessors were recruited from provinces and territories, and the assessment process was modified to unify, streamline, and centralize the requirements for those with college diplomas and university degrees. This initiative supported provincial forestry regulators in harmonizing their assessment processes.

- Developing capacity in FQR:

  o Prince Edward Island's Building Bridges Program supported projects encouraging the development of fair, transparent, consistent, and timely foreign qualification assessment and recognition processes and contributing to improving labour market integration outcomes of ITIs in targeted occupations and sectors. In addition, provincial expertise in foreign qualification assessment in non-regulated occupations was enhanced following a survey of more than 12,000 employers and regulators. The information gained has served to increase understanding of the challenges and best practices with respect to ITIs, and to increase employer engagement.

- Innovative assessment methods:

  o The Saskatchewan Society for Medical Laboratory Technologists, in collaboration with several provincial partners, is currently developing a competency-based clinical skills assessment program using virtual reality technology as the platform to assess internationally trained medical laboratory technologists (IEMLTs) or MLTs that have not practiced for more than five years.

- Assessment while gaining Canadian work experience:

  o In Nova Scotia, the Internationally Educated Engineers and Architects Bridging Program provides a 12-week, work-site-based competency assessment that allows internationally trained engineers and architects to demonstrate their skills and knowledge to a local employer. Funded by the Nova Scotia International Qualification Recognition/Recognition of Prior Learning Funding Program, the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Association of Architects and Engineers Nova Scotia collaborated to give participants the opportunity to gain important Canadian work experience and employers the opportunity to determine if a candidate is a good fit for their company. The goals of the program are to help internationally educated engineers and architects complete an assessment with an engineering or architecture firm, meet the Canadian engineering experience required for licensure, and, ultimately, gain employment in Nova Scotia.

## Partial Recognition

For those who do not fully meet entry-to-practice requirements, additional training may be required. The Framework indicates that immigrants should be made aware of bridge-to-licensure opportunities so they may upgrade their qualifications. They should have access to information

regarding the availability of training that addresses their gaps in qualifications, and they should be able to complete required upgrading with minimal repetition of their previous training.

## Examples of Promising Practices to Address Partial Recognition

- Bridge-to-licensure projects:

  - Alberta has funded a number of bridge-to-licensure projects to develop resources and programs that improve licensure success for ITIs. Examples include support for the development of a dietetic bridging program, and the development of jurisprudence learning modules in several professions. For example, the Online Jurisprudence Learning Module for Prospective Professional Chemists was developed by the Association of the Chemical Profession of Alberta to replace a requirement for Canadian work experience, leveling the playing field with domestic candidates, and expediting the registration of international applicants as Professional Chemists.

- Online bridging program:

  - British Columbia provided a grant to the College of Opticians of British Columbia to develop an online bridging program with 13 possible bridging courses that correlate with the national competencies for Canadian opticians for use by provincial regulators of opticianry, except for Quebec. In addition, an instruction manual was developed on how to create and manage bridging courses for use by other professions. As a result, provincial opticianry regulators can easily assign bridging courses to registration applicants. These applicants are provided with resources to address any entry-to-practice competency gaps. The bridging courses have significantly reduced the amount of time it takes internationally educated opticians, who have gaps in knowledge, to be eligible to sit the licensing exam. The cost of licensure decreased since applicants no longer have to pay for bridging courses and instead pay an administrative fee to access the end-of-course assessment. Any extra revenue is put towards ongoing upgrades and improvements to the bridging courses and online platform.

- Pathway to licensure and employment:

  - In Ontario, the University of Toronto's Faculty of Physiotherapy offers a 10-month hybrid Bridge Training program that provides internationally educated physiotherapists with educational and clinical opportunities (including theoretical knowledge, occupation-specific workplace culture and communication training and clinical internships) to prepare them for the national written and clinical licensure examinations. The program also offers mentoring opportunities and employment supports to enter physiotherapy practice in Ontario as well as post-hire workplace

integration supports. An Advisory Committee with representation of key stakeholders guides the program. The program collaborates with the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators, the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario, the Ontario Physiotherapy Association and Canadian Physiotherapy Association to ensure it is meeting all provincial and national standards.

- **Bridging program:**

  o The Yukon Government, with funding from ESDC, developed and launched the "Accountant Bridging Program" which helped participants gain the skills and confidence they need to meet the demands of financial management jobs in Canada. After completion of the program, participants gained knowledge of accounting practices earned through certificate programs; business communication skills in English; understanding of Canadian and Yukon workplace culture; and employability in financial management in Yukon.

# Recognition of Foreign Qualifications

As established in the Framework, recognition-related decisions will be clearly and comprehensively communicated in a timely fashion. This is paramount because it allows individuals to more quickly make informed decisions and, ultimately, find a job commensurate with their skills.

As the Framework outlines, the criteria for decision-making should be transparent and easy to understand. Individuals should be informed about the reasons for the decision, along with any additional requirements for licensure and any avenues for appeal.

## Promising Practices in Recognition

Pre-arrival, assessment and bridging projects aim to improve recognition timeliness and success. Loans are one form of support to help pay for the cost of processing.

- Obtaining licensure can be a costly process and many newcomers do not have the financial resources to cover the costs of bridge training, licensing exams, or upgrading to meet licensure requirements. In addition, many newcomers have no credit history in Canada or collateral that would allow them to access conventional loans. Low-interest FQR microloans address these financial barriers and expenses related to FQR. ESDC, as well as many provinces and territories (for example, Alberta, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Ontario), support microloans programs for ITIs seeking financial help to cover the costs associated with qualification recognition and/or training.

# Non-Recognition

The Framework includes an alternative pathway to related occupations for those applicants whose

qualifications do not meet the requirements for their occupation, and for whom skills upgrading is not an option. Ideally, it involves the provision of career planning advice to the individual so that they can most effectively build on their experience in related occupations.

> In the 2016 FLMM survey, approximately one third of regulators who responded said they formally or informally refer ITIs to alternative career supports.

## Examples of Promising Practices to Address Non-Recognition

- Career planning:

  o The International Medical Graduate (IMG) Support Program provides support services to non-licensed IMGs living in Saskatchewan, including information and navigation, study supports, a pre-residency assessed clinical experience opportunity, and alternate-related career planning (including career counselling, education options and referrals).

- Online information:

  o In Ontario, the Health Force Integration Research and Education for Internationally Educated Health Professionals (HIRE IEHPs) project developed free online educational resources, including an Alternative Careers Program. This program focuses on providing IEHPs with a process for identifying non-regulated employment options commensurate with their knowledge, skills, experience and interest.

- Alternate careers resources:

  o The Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Scientists developed a comprehensive alternate careers resource for individuals who might consider pursing an alternative career to medical laboratory technology while going through the licensure process or as a permanent career option. The careers identified were ones in which they could make use of their skills, knowledge and work experience without applying to another regulated occupation.

# Individual and Employer Supports, and Workplace Integration

The Framework indicates that, ideally, immigrants and employers will be able to access supports to facilitate successful integration into the workforce in a timely fashion. For immigrants, labour market and career guidance information should be available early and throughout the immigration process. Supports for labour market integration also include language upgrading, career advice, study preparation, mentorships and internships, and bridging-to-employment programs. Employers may require access to tools and resources, such as diversity awareness, workplace receptivity, and workplace retention practices, to enhance their ability to integrate and retain immigrants.

## Examples of Promising Practices in Supporting Workplace Integration

- Tools for employers to support workplace integration:

  - In Alberta, new FQR tools and resources were created to help employers integrate ITIs, to create welcoming workplaces, and to support individuals in seeking employment and developing their careers. Examples of projects funded include resources to support intercultural interviewing; an online tool for newcomer employee integration; and workshops to help employers enhance their cross-cultural competence and promote the hiring and integration of internationally educated individuals.

  - One funded project was the development of an Employer Inclusivity Index tool, by the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion. Employers are provided with an overall score and report that measures the inclusivity of their workplace for under-represented groups including, but not limited to, newcomers or skilled immigrants to Canada. The index includes input both from the organization and from employees and is implemented through an online tool that can generate customized reports. Each report provides information on how to improve inclusivity overall, with a particular focus on immigrants. The intent of the project was to break down barriers to hiring of immigrants by promoting awareness among employers of inclusivity issues, and by providing a systematic framework and a practical assessment tool to measure and improve inclusion in the workplace.

- Workplace integration programming:

  - In 2018, AXIS Career Services, the employment division of the Association for New Canadians (ANC) in Newfoundland and Labrador, launched the Workplace Communications and Integration Training Program. Funded by the provincial government, this online short-term training program is designed to become an essential resource to assist ITIs with adapting to their new work culture, and further

enhancing their professional skills for career and job advancement. The program includes four units: Professional Writing, Canadian Workplace Culture, Business Communication, and Continuous Learning in the Workplace. The content addresses employability skills that are unspoken and prevalent in the Canadian workplace and impacts confidence, competence and professionalism. This innovative program enhances available supports for new Canadians and at the same time, maximizes their human capital potential.

o In Ontario, the HIRE IEHPs project was a research and practice development collaboration with the objective of identifying and implementing evidence-informed solutions to support better integration of IEHPs in the Canadian workforce. Their suite of free online educational resources included:

o Practice Readiness e-learning Program (PREP), which focuses on providing IEHPs with the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to tackle the complex interpersonal communication and inter-professional care environment they would encounter in practice;

o Workplace Integration Network (WIN), which focuses on providing employers with a suite of online resources for onboarding, continuing education, and business case rationale for hiring IEHPs; and

o Employment Resources Starter Kit for IEHPs, which is an online tool to serve self-directed career exploration through Career Journey and orientation videos; and in-person workshops, sessions, and pilot projects.

• **Employability skills and experience:**

o In New Brunswick, the Multi-Stakeholder Working Group of Fredericton, along with partners, launched a workplace project, which provides a 12-week employability skills training phase, a 16-week paid work placement as a Bricklayer Apprentice, and 12-weeks of theoretical training. Reported results included improvements in language proficiency and confidence level for all participants; engagement of employers who had not previously hired newcomers; and employment connections and experience for participants. Discussions around replicating the pilot with other professions are being undertaken.

o In 2017, ESDC launched the Canadian Work Experience (CWE) pilot program. The CWE pilot is a 27-month initiative, representing six funded projects across three provinces, with an additional research analysis project overseeing results. This pilot is providing evidence on the most effective ways to help highly-skilled newcomers get their first Canadian work experience in their intended professions, and to identify opportunities for scaling-up promising measures nationally. The

CWE pilot projects will measure the impact of paid internships, structured mentoring and networking, as well as pre- and post-employment supports provided to newcomer participants seeking long-term and sustainable employment in their field of study.

# Examples of Collaborative Practices

Collaboration is an essential element for making progress along the pathways to recognition. In addition to the collaboration intrinsic to the examples already listed throughout this report, the following are some other notable examples where collaboration is improving FQR processes.

- Fostering a community of practice:

  o To spread awareness of projects and best practices, Alberta increased its engagement and outreach activities with its FQR partners, holding seven forums between 2014 and 2017 attended by 580 participants from regulators, immigrant-serving organizations, post-secondary institutions, employers, industry trades partners and government.

- Bringing regulators together:

  o Prince Edward Island holds an Annual Regulators Conference, which brings together partners from across the province to highlight best practices in FQR and discuss the issues important to both government and regulatory bodies.

- Local-level collaboration between stakeholders:

  o In New Brunswick, the The Multicultural Association of Greater Moncton initiated a stakeholder working group in the finance and accounting sector to explore the pathway to licensure and the possibility of alternative careers. The group is exploring ways and tools to facilitate access to language training and support while studying to achieve licensure. They seek to increase the accessibility of cultural diversity and sensitivity training for both internationally trained candidates and employers. Accessing language training includes both French and English language training, although French courses and material are not easily accessible in New Brunswick.

- Bringing experts together:

  o ESDC, IRCC and Nova Scotia collaborated to hold an emerging and best practices conference entitled "Eliminating barriers to FQR". The conference participants identified emerging and best practices to improve the qualification recognition process and/or the integration of immigrants that could be used by government,

regulatory bodies, immigrant serving organizations, educational institutions, and others. A [Summary Report](#) was published to share the information with other stakeholders.

- **Bringing experts together:**

  o The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador (CPSNL), collaborated with the provincial government to hold a one-day conference entitled "Licensing and Continued Supports Necessary for the Safe and Competent Practice of IMG Physicians in Newfoundland and Labrador". The purpose of the conference was to obtain a greater understanding of the stipulated roles played by relevant stakeholders in the recruitment, licensure, and post-licensure supports required for an IMG to successfully practise in Newfoundland and Labrador. Topics of discussion included licensing, recruitment, system navigation, supports, and continued competency. Attendees included officials from CPSNL, regional health authorities, the provincial government, and licensed IMGs currently practicing in Newfoundland and Labrador.

# III. MOVING FORWARD

*A Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications* has increased collaboration and information sharing between governments and key actors in addressing FQR barriers and strengthening FQR processes. The principles outlined in the Framework - fairness, transparency, consistency and timeliness – have been foundational to improving outcomes of ITIs who are seeking licensure in a timely and effective manner.

Much of the FLMM's collaborative work to date has focused on the commitment to timely service. While a timely initial assessment decision is vital for an ITI to make an informed career decision, it does not necessarily lead to full licensure. It is a beginning step, often leading to additional FQR activities, including practical assessments, language fluency testing, bridge training, examinations, and workplace experience requirements. The issue of timeliness, as with any FQR issue, intersects with a variety of stakeholders. The pathway to recognition is highly individualized, as each ITI has different needs in meeting Canadian standards. Shortening the timeframe to full licensure therefore necessitates consideration of a range of factors along the FQR pathway.

Recognizing that much has been accomplished in improving time to an initial assessment decision in the target occupations, future strategic FQR directions could focus on improving fairness, transparency, consistency and timeliness to full licensure. This would support collaborative work toward systemic improvements that will see more newcomers licensed in a timely manner.

> **Potential for Future Work:**
>
> Finding ways to make assessment processes and gap training available pre-arrival will decrease the time it takes an ITI to achieve full licensure/certification after landing in Canada, thereby reducing time spent out of practice, costs, and unforeseen hardship for the ITI.

Over the last ten years, stakeholders have worked together on a multitude of projects to improve FQR systems. Much focus has been on program creation. FQR programs can be costly to develop and require resources to exist. Moving forward, stakeholders could focus on working collaboratively to share resources that have been developed and on cultivating partnerships to provide access to programs that exist.

> **Potential for Future Work:**
>
> A regulator in Jurisdiction X has developed an effective bridge training program. Regulators for that occupation in jurisdictions Y and Z do not have one. They partner with the regulator in Jurisdiction X to provide the curriculum developed in an online format. They then coordinate practical placements for their bridging candidates within their own jurisdictions.

In addition, future **FQR** work could focus on creating programming where identified gaps exist (for example, where there is a lack of assessments, gap training, or language supports).  By combining efforts across jurisdictions and sharing resources, stakeholders can continue to improve **FQR** practices and processes.

Identifying and implementing these future initiatives requires collaboration with key **FQR** stakeholders, such as F/P/T governments, national consortia of professional regulators, national assessment and examination bodies, and post-secondary institutions.

# FLMM REPORTS

## Framework:

*A Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications:* https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/foreign-credential-recognition/funding-framework.html

*A Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications: Progress Report November 2009 to December 2010:* http://flmm-fmmt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Pan-Canadian-Framework-First-Progress-Report.pdf

*A Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications: 2013 Progress Report:* http://flmm-fmmt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/FLMMProgressReport2013.pdf

## Action Plan:

*An Action Plan for Better Foreign Qualification Recognition:* http://flmm-fmmt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/An-Action-Plan-for-Better-Foreign-Qualifications-Recognition.pdf

## Pre-Arrival Supports:

*Improving Pre-Arrival Information Uptake for Internationally Educated Professionals:* http://media.wix.com/ugd/aa01fe_3a4408b9b0814ed4938a389c2ae37538.pdf

*On the Current State of Pre-arrival Supports among Canadian Regulators:* http://flmm-fmmt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Appendix-D-On-the-Current-State-of-Pre-Arrival-Supports.pdf

## Alternative Careers:

*Foreign Qualification Recognition and Alternative Careers:* http://flmm-fmmt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Appendix-C-Foreign-Qualification-Recognition-and-Alternative-Careers.pdf

*Alternative Careers Roundtable – Summary Report:* http://flmm-fmmt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Appendix-E-Summary-Report-Alternative-Careers-Roundtable.pdf

## Other Reports:

*A Guide for Regulatory Authorities: Best Practice Checklist of Website Content for Internationally Trained Individuals:* http://flmm-fmmt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Appendix-A-Best-Practice-Checklist-of-Website-Content.pdf

*Post-Licensure Employment Outcomes for Internationally Trained Individuals:* http://flmm-fmmt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Appendix-B-Post-Licensure-Employment-Outcomes.pdf


## Summary Report of joint conference on FQR:

*Eliminating Barriers to Foreign Qualification Recognition: Emerging and best practices conference:* https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/foreign-credential-recognition/conference-report-emerging-best-practices.html

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- - - *Selected Survey Results: Foreign Qualification Recognition in Canada – 2016 Report*, published 2018

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- - - "Education in Canada: Key results from the 2016 Census", *The Daily*, November 29, 2017

# APPENDIX A– GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The 2009 Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications sets out the following guiding principles.

## Fairness

- The criteria for determining recognition of qualifications are objective, reasonable and do not exhibit bias.

- The methods used for assessing qualifications are both necessary and sufficient for determining whether occupational standards are met.

- Canadians and internationally trained applicants will be treated equally with regards to the requirements that must be demonstrated in order to achieve qualification recognition.

- Communication of assessment results involves clear explanation of the rationale for the decision that has been taken.

- Assessment processes are efficient and avoid duplication, particularly where there are multiple assessments required by different parties during the assessment process of an individual applicant.

## Transparency

- Requirements for applying to a specific occupation, as well as the methods for assessment and criteria for recognition of foreign qualifications, are fully described, easy to understand, and widely accessible to immigrants.

- Where applicable, applicants are informed of all remaining options when full recognition does not occur.

## Timeliness

- The assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications, as well as the communication of assessment decisions, are carried out promptly and efficiently.

## Consistency

- The methods for assessment and criteria used for determining recognition of qualifications for specific regulated occupations are mutually acceptable in each province and territory of Canada so that the results of the assessment process are mutually recognized.

# APPENDIX B– ESDC ACTIVITIES

ESDC's Foreign Credential Recognition Program (FCRP) is key to supporting the Government of Canada's commitment to attract, select and integrate highly skilled newcomers into the Canadian economy. It plays a strategic role, in collaboration with provinces and territories, regulatory bodies, and other stakeholders, to advance these objectives. It provides funding to these stakeholders to improve FQR processes using the Framework's four guiding principles.

Funded activities include the development of websites and portals to provide comprehensive information on labour market integration and licensure requirements for priority occupations to skilled newcomers. Examples include funding to the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities for developing the International Pharmacy Graduates' Gateway to Canada for foreign trained pharmacists and funding to the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada to develop a national website with information related to credential assessment and recognition processes for foreign-trained accountants. These measures help to streamline these processes by simplifying and harmonizing credential recognition processes nationally.

ESDC also works in close collaboration with provincial and territorial governments. Because different jurisdictions have unique needs in terms of integrating skilled newcomers in the labour market, ESDC works with them through bilateral agreements. Jurisdictions that ESDC has established agreements with to support integrating newcomers more quickly into local labour markets include Alberta, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. For example, since 2014 the Government of Alberta has received funding from FCRP to develop trades, mentorship and alternative career initiatives, and to support regulators, employers, and relevant stakeholders implement credential assessment and recognition processes for skilled newcomers.

While enhancing credential recognition processes continues to remain important, the FCRP has recently focused on providing direct supports to newcomers through immigrant-serving agencies to:

- Provide loans to cover the costs of getting foreign credentials recognized (e.g., expenses related to licensing exams, training) and to navigate the recognition processes. There are currently eleven FCR Loans Projects across Canada, helping about 2,000 skilled newcomers annually.

- Test the most effective and efficient ways (e.g., paid internships, mentorship) to help skilled newcomers gain their first Canadian work experience in their profession/field of study. The Canadian Work Experience Pilot funded six projects across three provinces, helping approximately 1,200 skilled newcomers over two years (2017-2019).

The FCRP has invested approximately $213M in total funding, both through direct and indirect measures, over the past ten years. This includes approximately $84M, and approximately $129M to improve FCR processes.

Lastly, ESDC's Minster, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, is the federal co-chair of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers and ESDC officials co-chair the FLMM working group dedicated to mobility and qualification recognition. The objective of this working group is to work with stakeholders to improve qualification recognition for internationally trained individuals across entire pathways to recognition, to facilitate labour market access for workers and increase labour market efficiency across Canada. The Mobility and Qualification Recognition Working Group also collaborates with the Settlement Working Group, which reports to the Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration.

# APPENDIX C– IRCC ACTIVITIES

Through its Settlement Program, IRCC provides funding to service providers who offer employment-related services to assist newcomers in accessing the labour market in both regulated and non-regulated occupations. Services offered through the Settlement Program help newcomers to take action to get their foreign qualifications recognized; begin the path to licensure in regulated occupations; and to find work. These services target specific occupations (for example, nursing) and include loans for the facilitation of career development.

An example of some of these services are bridge training programs. Bridge training programs are for immigrants who have international training and experience. They are intended to help newcomers 'bridge' into their profession or trade in Canada. Activities in bridge training programs for eligible clients can include soft skills training; professional mentoring; networking; and preparation for licensure related to the client's education and work experience. Costs related to technical or academic training delivery is not an eligible expense and would need to be paid through another funder or through tuition costs.

IRCC also funds Pre-Arrival Settlement Services: Since 1998, IRCC has been offering pre-arrival settlement services overseas with the objective to provide select permanent residents with accurate, relevant information and supports, so that they can make informed decisions about their new life in Canada before their arrival. This includes supporting permanent residents to become informed about and start the foreign credential recognition/licensure process early.

Through contribution agreements, IRCC funds service-provider organizations, such as immigrant-serving agencies, industry/employment-specific organizations or educational institutions, to provide the following types of pre-arrival services: needs and assets assessment and referrals, information and orientation services, employment-related services, community connections and indirect services. In 2015, pre-arrival services were expanded dramatically to provide more comprehensive and tailored in-person and online programming for both refugees and economic immigrants – with a focus on employment-related services. In January 2019, IRCC launched a renewed Pre-arrival Services Program with 16 Canadian service provider organizations funded to deliver in-person (China, India, Philippines, and Morocco) and online services to three key client groups: economic and family class immigrants, Francophones, and refugees.

IRCC requires that applicants in certain economic immigration programs obtain an Educational Credential Assessment (ECA) of their foreign credentials. ECA reports are used to authenticate the foreign educational credentials of applicants and determine equivalency to completed Canadian credentials for immigration purposes. Since April 17, 2013, seven organizations have been designated to provide ECA services:

- Five multi-purpose organizations that authenticate and assess foreign educational credentials across a wide range of regulated and non-regulated occupations: Comparative

Education Services (CES) – University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies; International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS); International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES); International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS); and World Education Services Canada (WES).

- Two designated professional bodies that authenticate and assess foreign educational credentials particular to a regulated profession: Physicians – Medical Council of Canada (MCC) and Pharmacists – Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC).

Beyond assessments for immigration purposes, the above designated professional bodies perform credential assessments as part of the licensure process in provinces or territories where that profession is regulated. In these instances, the first step of the licensure process can be completed overseas, following which applicants have a better understanding of the future licensure requirements and their prospects before arriving in Canada. In this case, immigrants benefit from having made first contact with the designated organizations during the immigration ECA process.

Lastly, IRCC is also home to the Secretariat of the federal-provincial/territorial Settlement Working Group (SWG), which is a working group under the Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration (FMRI). The SWG was established to provide an ongoing forum for governments to share information and provide input on policies, programs, research and other issues concerning the settlement and integration of immigrants, including refugees, across Canada. The SWG accomplishes its goal by working collaboratively with several F/P/T working groups, including the FLMM's FQR working group.

# APPENDIX D– HEALTH CANADA ACTIVITIES

Health Canada's ten-year IEHP initiative complemented the work undertaken by the FLMM on foreign qualification recognition. In 2005, the IEHP Initiative was launched by Health Canada to increase the supply of health professionals into the Canadian workforce by expanding the assessment and integration of internationally educated health professionals (e.g. physicians and nurses). The federal government worked with provinces and territories, the health regulatory authorities, post-secondary institutions, and professional associations to help more internationally educated health professionals to put their skills to work in Canada's health system. As part of the Framework, occupational action plans were developed to improve FQR processes. Health Canada contributed towards the development of occupational action plans for the following seven health professions: licenced practical nurses; medical radiation technicians; pharmacists; physicians; physiotherapists and registered nurses.

Significant progress was made for nursing and physicians, building on harmonized approaches for assessment of internationally educated health professionals. For example, Health Canada funded the Medical Council of Canada to streamline the entry-to- practice approach for international medical graduates wishing to practice in Canada. In 2018, international medical graduates accounted for 26.4% of the physician workforce in Canada.