



By the Hon. CHRIS BENTLEY
Attorney General

A PROVINCIAL PRIORITY

ONTARIO HELPS INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED PROFESSIONALS PUT THEIR SKILLS TO WORK

In the global race for qualified, talented professionals, Ontario is making sure that its internationally trained professionals are the best.

The public needs to know that the accountants, lawyers, engineers and other professionals they hire are properly qualified. That is the role of regulated professions. These professions have the authority to set their own standards of practice to protect the public. They set their own entry and training requirements, assess qualifications and credentials, and register qualified applicants.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario has been among the leaders in evaluating the professional credentials of those trained outside Canada, and in ensuring timely access to their profession.

The Institute has helped set the benchmark for best practices in the regulated professions, and that speaks volumes about the accounting profession's commitment to investing in skilled international graduates.

The Ontario government is also committed to helping internationally trained professionals gain the skills and recognition they need to increase their opportunity to work in their chosen field here in Ontario.

Last year, the McGuinty government brought in the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act to make sure those with qualifications from outside Canada can use their talents here as quickly as possible.

The law, which is the first of its kind in Canada, requires the regulated professions to ensure their registration processes are fair, clear, open and timely. It makes sure that everyone gets fair treatment when they apply to practise their profession, regardless of where they were educated. It also creates a one-stop information and resource centre to help people who want to enter regulated professions.

Government, working together with groups like the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario, can increase opportunities for internationally trained professionals and help to ensure a higher quality of life for all Ontarians. □



By the Hon. MICHAEL CHAN
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration

TAPPING NEWCOMER SKILLS: A KEY TO ONTARIO'S PROSPERITY

Newcomers are essential to Ontario's economic development. By 2011, Ontario's labour market growth is projected to flatline due to an aging population and declining birth rate. As all western nations experience this challenge, and fewer people feel the need to immigrate as emerging economies become more prosperous, Ontario is in stiff competition to attract and retain highly skilled newcomers.

Too often, immigrants experience difficulty in getting jobs reflecting their qualifications. The McGuinty government invests in a range of programs and services to remove barriers, create opportunities and get the newly arrived off to a good start.

Annually, more than 100,000 adults learn or improve their language skills – the foundation for success. And Ontario is increasing emphasis on job-specific language training to help newcomers land jobs that reflect their previous careers and training, or help them function more effectively in their current jobs.

Through bridge training programs, skilled newcomers can bridge their international training and experience to Ontario requirements. These programs are proving highly effective in helping immigrants get a start in their fields.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario is contributing to two of these programs offered by the Halton Multicultural Council and Ryerson University. In all, our province invests \$85 million in 145 bridge training projects to help thousands of newcomers enter more than 100 professions or trades.

Accountancy and 34 other professions, such as pharmacy and engineering, are self-regulated in Ontario. Last year, Bill 124, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, became law. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario was one of the earliest supporters of the bill, which helps level the playing field for internationally trained individuals wanting to get licensed in a regulated profession by ensuring that registration processes are transparent, objective and fair.

The legislation also created Global Experience Ontario, a one-stop information and resource centre on licensing and registration in our province.

We must continue to work together to create opportunities. Only then can Ontario employers meet the challenge of competing in a global economy.

Our future prosperity depends on it. □

casforchange.ca

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- The Honourable Chris Bentley, Attorney General of the Province of Ontario

CA's MUST COMPLETE A RIGOROUS PROCESS BECAUSE ...

PROTECTING THE PUBLIC INTEREST IS JOB ONE

Due to the global nature of business, major accounting firms are constantly looking for CAs who have practised in a foreign country or economy. It is an aspect of the profession that spells opportunity for some. But it also means challenges for the officials charged with meeting Canada's need for internationally trained accountants while protecting the public interest.

Before being authorized to practise as CAs in Ontario, internationally trained accountants must demonstrate that their education and professional experience are in compliance with Canadian professional standards.

To do that, they may be required to appear before the Institute's Applications Committee, which interviews candidates and reviews their qualifications. The process usually takes between three and six months, but can take longer depending on the thoroughness of the applicant's documentation. The committee includes full participation by public representatives (non-CAs) as voting members, to ensure independent perspectives are brought to bear, as well as internationally trained CAs who have undergone the process.

"We want to ensure that a person coming to Ontario has the competencies necessary to practise within the Canadian economy and business environment," said Tom Warner, vice president and registrar of the Ontario Institute.

But before making a decision on an applicant's suitability, Canadian CA institutes look to the International Qualifications Appraisals Board (IQAB) for advice. IQAB assesses admission standards of accounting bodies outside Canada and makes recommendations to Canada's provincial CA institutes as to whether, and under what conditions, members of these bodies may be admitted to the Canadian CA profession.

Essentially, IQAB recommendations are designed to determine whether the education, experience and professional requirements of a non-Canadian accounting body match those of Canadian provincial CA institutes.

Applications to the Ontario CA Institute generally fit into three categories:

1. Members of non-Canadian accounting bodies recognized in Canada as having substantially equivalent standards and requirements in terms of education and experience.

2. Members of non-Canadian accounting bodies, which are not recognized in Canada as having equivalent standards.
3. Members of non-Canadian accounting bodies, which have not been assessed by IQAB.

"Applicants in the first category are granted reciprocity through a mutual recognition agreement, which means they don't have to complete the full qualification requirement that normally applies to anyone seeking to become a CA in Ontario," Mr. Warner explained. "They also are exempt from writing the Uniform Evaluation (UFE), which all Canadian students in the profession's qualifications program must complete."

Instead, applicants must write a reciprocity examination to confirm their understanding of Canadian accounting and auditing standards, tax and business law, and rules of professional conduct.

"Then we run an assessment of their accounting experience to determine whether the experience they have had in accounting over the years would either equal or exceed the competence and skills of a fully qualified Canadian Chartered Accountant in Ontario," Mr. Warner added.

Applicants who fit into the second category must write the UFE. Each provincial CA institute may set other requirements, including an assessment of the applicant's previous experience, to determine what they would need to qualify as a CA. Based on that assessment, they might gain an advanced level entry into the Institute's qualifications program.

Applicants who arrive in Ontario from countries where the accounting body has not been assessed by IQAB have their qualifications determined by the Institute's registrar. After that, the candidate can apply to appear before the applications committee.

"This merit-based approach balances the need to protect the public interest by safeguarding the standards of professional excellence, while at the same time providing access to the profession for all deserving candidates," said Naresh Agarwal, a human resources professor at DeGroote School of Business, McMaster University, in Hamilton. □