

Fair Registration in the Professions: Regulators Make Improvements

Regulatory bodies are committed to fairer, faster licensing in their professions. Many have been improving their practices for years. They are modernizing programs, revisiting requirements and rewriting regulations about licensing in the regulated professions.

Here are some examples of recent improvements.

The Ontario Association of **Architects** no longer requires its interns to complete the required 940 hours of **work experience** within specific architectural categories. Instead, the hours may be in any category.

The College of **Chiropractors** of Ontario uses a national board to run exams for internationally trained chiropractors. In November, 2009, this board decided to exempt some candidates with more than three years of **work experience** from the exam about chiropractic knowledge, and it rescheduled exams to make them more convenient.

The Royal College of **Dental Surgeons** of Ontario worked on a national process to streamline the **assessment** of internationally trained general dentists. Starting in spring 2010, such dentists have two routes—not just one—to get their licences. The second (new) route is to prove competency through a series of exams and assessments. This path requires only a few weeks over a one-year period and costs less than the existing two-year program.

The Council of the College of **Dental Technologists** of Ontario proposed amendment to its **registration regulation** to the Ontario government in December 2009. The amendment would remove the need for Canadian experience, which is often difficult for internationally trained individuals to get.

The College of **Dietitians** of Ontario has proposed a new **class of certificate** that allows applicants to work in areas of demonstrated competence while completing further training. It is also looking into ways to better acknowledge dietitians' previous education and work experience.

The Association of **Engineering Technicians and Technologists** posts extensive **frequently asked questions** for applicants about requirements, the application process, timelines, costs and appeals.

Applicants to the Association of Professional **Geoscientists** of Ontario can now complete the registration application and pay all application fees online. **Online services** help streamline the licensing process.

The **Law** Society of Upper Canada no longer makes internationally trained lawyers go through a mandatory **articling** program if they were called to the bar in a common law jurisdiction and have 10 months or more of legal experience that addresses its articling competencies.

The College of **Medical Laboratory Technologists** of Ontario signed a **formal agreement** with the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science, stating that the society's work will comply with Ontario's fair access law. The society assesses learning and administers exams for the college.

The College of **Medical Radiation Technologists** of Ontario, like most regulatory bodies, requires competence in English or French. The college evaluated its language proficiency requirements for internationally trained applicants, to ensure that the requirements correspond to the language level that is actually needed to practise the profession. As a result, it increased the number of tests it accepts to demonstrate proficiency from one to three, and it confirmed the scores applicants must get.

The College of **Midwives** of Ontario has drafted a formal agreement with the International Midwifery Program to ensure assessments comply with the fair access law.

The College of **Nurses** of Ontario gives **detailed reasons** to internationally trained applicants who are denied a licence because their program is not deemed equivalent to a Bachelor of Nursing degree.

The College of **Occupational Therapists** of Ontario signed **agreements** with two key bodies that do assessments — the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists and World Education Services — to ensure that their assessments are fair.

The College of **Opticians** of Ontario created separate registration and **appeals** committees and provides orientation and training for committee members every year.

The College of **Optometrists** of Ontario revised its **website** to ensure that registration information, application packages and frequently asked questions are complete, easy to find and easy to understand.

The College of **Physicians and Surgeons** of Ontario recognizes the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) as the body that offers national exams, certifies family doctors and accredits training programs. The CFPC will no longer require medical graduates with **family medicine certification** from Australia, the U.S., and Ireland to write the CFPC exam. Candidates must still meet provincial licensure requirements or be practising in Canada. The CFPC is reviewing the training and certification programs in other countries.

The College of **Physiotherapists** of Ontario and Ryerson University launched a **bridging program** for internationally educated physiotherapists in January 2009.

The Ontario College of **Teachers** launched a **web-based application system** that enables individuals from all jurisdictions and programs to apply online for certification. It uses telephone caller ID so that, when an applicant calls, the staff person has the necessary info at hand.

More information: www.fairnesscommissioner.ca

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The Office of the Fairness Commissioner is an arm's-length agency of the Ontario government, established under the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006. Its mandate is to ensure that certain regulated professions have registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair.

