

CNNAR
Canadian Network of National Associations of Regulators



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Réseau canadien des associations nationales d'organismes
de réglementation

**Canadian Network of National Associations of Regulators Presentation
to the
House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration**

30 March 2004

Agricultural Institute of Canada

Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations

Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators

Canadian Council of Practical Nurse Regulators

Canadian Council of Professional Engineers

Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists

Canadian Federation of Chiropractic Regulatory Boards

Canadian Nurses Association

Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science

Canadian Veterinary Medical Association

Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada

National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities

**Canadian Network of National Associations of Regulators to the House of
Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration
March 30, 2004**

Good afternoon. CNNAR welcomes this opportunity to discuss the important issue of recognition of international credentials with the Standing Committee. My name is Louise Sweatman and I am the Chair of CNNAR.

CNNAR

CNNAR stands for the Canadian Network of National Associations of Regulators. It is a network of national associations that are composed of provincial/ territorial organizations whose members are responsible for the self-regulation of a profession or an occupation. CNNAR members represented in this presentation include: Agriculture Institute of Canada, Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations, Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators, Canadian Council of Practical Nurse Regulators, Canadian Council of Professional Engineers, Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists, Canadian Federation of Chiropractic Regulatory Boards, Canadian Nurses Association, Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science, Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada, National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities.

CNNAR's mandate is to support the understanding of self-regulation of professions and occupations. CNNAR facilitates this through collaborative projects and information exchanges amongst our members, with federal government agencies and other national and international groups. It also monitors and responds to proposed federal legislation and policy changes and serves as an information clearing house on these public policy initiatives. Importantly, CNNAR also develops and shares resources with respect to regulation. CNNAR addresses regulation from a national perspective.

INTERNATIONAL CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION

CNNAR members acknowledge the importance of recognizing the credentials, competencies and experiences of internationally educated professionals. Regulators are charged via the provincial governments with the statutory responsibility of regulating professions and occupations. This responsibility is mandated through the lens of public protection. Based on the collective experience of its members and with the objective of ensuring the safety of the public, CNNAR has identified six principles of foreign credential review. The six principles are:

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| (1) focus | (4) competencies and credentials |
| (2) consistency | (5) disclosure and, |
| (3) fairness and access | (6) multiple responsibilities and collaboration. |

We will now describe each of these principles in more detail:

Principle #1 - Focus: *We respectfully submit that the primary objective for recognition of internationally educated professionals' qualifications should be to ensure that the needs of the Canadian public are met through a workforce that has the appropriate skills and knowledge.*

Canada is relying more and more on immigrants to fill domestic work demands. Along with the global workforce becoming increasingly mobile, a greater number of skilled workers are seeking to work in Canada. This means that qualifications must be fairly reviewed to promote the entry of safe, ethical and competent workers.

Principle #2 - Consistency: *Recognition of immigrants' qualifications should be consistent across Canada for each professional or occupational group of workers.*

The development of a consistent approach and standards is necessary to ensure the stability of the work force. Substantial consistency promotes the achievement of a unified approach to the mobility of immigrants into Canada. This principle of consistency allows for consideration of world-wide endeavours, for example, seeking guidance and alignment with international standards and strategies.

Principle #3 - Fairness and Access: *The process of recognition should be fair, timely, predictable, and transparent. The processes must provide and must be seen to provide just treatment for those seeking recognition. Applicants are entitled to information as to the status of their application and the basis for decisions related to the qualifications in the immigration and regulatory/licensure process.*

An honest and open process requires that objective measurements are used and that all applicants are fairly treated in a timely fashion. Methods of evaluation for eligibility for entry into a profession or occupation should be fair, transparent and accessible. There ought to be encouragement of communication and an opportunity to appeal decisions.

Principle #4 - Competencies and credentials: *Recognition of internationally educated professionals' qualifications should include recognition of competencies and experience as well as educational credentials.*

Assessment of educational training is one criterion to be used to determine entry into a regulated profession or occupation. There are other factors. One factor is the competencies of the applicant. Competencies reflect the knowledge, skills, judgment and personal attributes. Canadian regulatory agencies prescribe the competencies required of a professional to practice safely, ethically and competently in a designated role. The public must have confidence in the ability of each professional licensed to practice in Canada – whether they were educated in Canada or elsewhere – to perform work safely.

Principle #5 - Disclosure: *Internationally educated professionals seeking work within Canada are entitled to information on Canada's employment policies and practices, as well as on applicable regulatory requirements they need to meet. This information should be available to them prior to coming to Canada.*

Under the *Canadian Constitution Act, 1867* the provincial/territorial governments have the exclusive power to regulate professional groups. These governments in turn have under statute delegated this work to regulatory bodies. Under the *Canadian Constitution Act, 1867*, the federal government has the exclusive legislative power over immigration. The immigrating professional, who is not trained in Canadian constitutional law and its distribution of powers must therefore meet two classes of entry standards, one designed by the Federal government and one designed by the provincial/territorial regulatory authority. Governments have expressed a commitment to bringing in immigrants. They must also ensure that individuals seeking to immigrate and work in a regulated profession are informed of the regulatory requirements, including costs and licensure processes in Canada. Potential immigrants need to be informed of what will be required for them to practice their profession or occupation **before** coming to Canada. CNNAR believes that governments and the regulated professions have roles to play in this. And who should bear the cost?

Principle #6 - Multiple responsibilities and collaboration: *The successful integration of internationally educated workers into Canada requires collaboration amongst numerous parties – the immigrant, federal/provincial/territorial governments (and departments within), employers, educators, regulatory bodies and the public (including immigrant agencies).*

Regulators must have frameworks in place that maintain public protection. At the same time, internationally educated professionals must be provided with the best opportunity to achieve their full potential in terms of practicing their chosen profession in this country. That is why it is essential that new immigrants have access to tools and resources to assist them through the regulatory process and integration into the Canadian workforce. Governments, the public, regulators, employers, immigrants and educators need to collaborate to provide the infrastructure necessary to facilitate this integration process. We all need to make a sustained commitment to assist these individuals when they arrive in Canada. They will need support to attain professional/occupational recognition and to make a successful transition into the Canadian workforce.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Many of our member organizations are evaluating their processes and also attempting to take a more pan-Canadian approach to regulation. The next speaker, the Canadian Nurses Association, will be providing you with information about some initiatives that are occurring within the nursing profession. Over the coming weeks, you will hear from other CNNAR members such as the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers, the Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists and the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada. These organizations will provide information about their profession's initiatives.

Provincial/territorial and federal governments are encouraging regulators to carry out reviews of regulatory processes and the federal government has provided financial support for this work for the larger professions, e.g., medicine, nursing and engineering. Support for the smaller professions is also sought as their needs are similar. CNNAR respectfully urges the federal government to continue to collaborate with regulators and provide ongoing support for ensuring a principled approach that is focused, consistent, fair and accessible, considers competencies, discloses appropriate information, and respects the multiple responsibilities and need for collaboration.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, CNNAR is committed to supporting the self-regulation of professions and occupations. In doing so, we are also committed to identifying and promoting best practices with respect to the regulation of international applicants. We are pleased to see the standing committee's interest in this area and we look forward to discussing this further with the committee during the question and answer period. Thank you.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

APPENDIX

SIX PRINCIPLES FOR THE RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN EXPERIENCE AND CREDENTIALS SUBMITTED BY THE CANADIAN NETWORK OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF REGULATORS 30 MARCH 2004

FOCUS: The primary objective for recognition of internationally educated professionals' qualifications should be to ensure that the needs of the Canadian public are met through a workforce that has the appropriate skills and knowledge.

CONSISTENCY: Recognition of immigrants' qualifications should be consistent across Canada for each professional or occupational group of workers.

FAIRNESS AND ACCESS: The process of recognition should be fair, timely, predictable, and transparent. The processes must provide and must be seen to provide just treatment for those seeking recognition. Applicants are entitled to information as to the status of their application and the basis for decisions related to the qualifications in the immigration and regulatory/licensure process.

COMPETENCIES AND CREDENTIALS: Recognition of internationally educated professionals' qualifications should include recognition of competencies and experience as well as educational credentials.

DISCLOSURE: Internationally educated professionals seeking work within Canada are entitled to information on Canada's employment policies and practices, as well as on applicable regulatory requirements they need to meet. This information should be available to them prior to coming to Canada.

MULTIPLE RESPONSIBILITIES AND COLLABORATION: The successful integration of internationally educated workers into Canada requires collaboration amongst numerous parties – the immigrant, federal/provincial/territorial governments (and departments within), employers, educators, regulatory bodies and the public (including immigrant agencies).