

Generating Solutions Review of Foreign Credential Recognition in Canada's Electricity Sector

February 2008





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About the electricity sector council

Approximately 100,000 Canadians are involved in the generation, transmission and distribution of one of our country's essential utilities: electricity. Their work powers homes and businesses across the country, fuelling everything from light bulbs, cell phones and refrigerators to water treatment plants and road vehicle assembly lines.

The Electricity Sector Council provides support to this dedicated team by working with industry employers and other stakeholders to research and resolve human resource and workplace development issues.

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Glossary

Foreign credential recognition –	Process of assessment, verification and recognition of academic credentials and work experience obtained outside of Canada to ensure comparability with Canadian standards.
Foreign Credential Referral Office (FCRO) –	The federal Foreign Credential Referral Office (FCRO) was launched in May 2007. The FCRO is designed to help internationally trained individuals who plan to work in Canada get their credentials assessed and recognized more quickly.
Internationally Educated Engineering Qualifications (IEEQ) Program –	One-year program of University of Manitoba engineering courses and co-op work experience by which eligible internationally educated engineers can be considered "academically qualified" by the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Manitoba (APEGM), as part of the process of achieving a Professional Engineering (P.Eng.) licence in Manitoba.
Internationally trained worker –	Individual who received formal education and occupation specific training outside of Canada.
Licensure or certification process –	Obtaining the required licence or certificate to legally work in a regulated profession in Canada.
Skilled immigrants –	Individuals immigrating to Canada in the economic class and sub-category “skilled worker and professionals.”



Preamble

The Electricity Sector Council (ESC) is the hub for research into human resources trends and sector-specific solutions to Canada's skilled-labour shortage. ESC was founded in 2005 as a not-for-profit partnership between business, labour, education and government. Its mandate is to address the need—demonstrated in an exhaustive report commissioned in 2004 by the Canadian Electricity Association and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)—for sector-wide recruitment and retention strategies.

This study addresses the need to recruit and retain internationally trained workers into the sector. This review was undertaken to provide the Electricity Sector Council with the information it needs to develop a strategy to facilitate the integration of internationally trained workers into the electricity sector. Throughout this report, reference to the electricity sector includes all functions (generation, transmission and distribution) and all markets (crown corporations, municipal utilities, investor owned utilities, industrial own-use establishments and non-utility generators).

Executive Summary

Key Findings

An insufficient number of internationally trained tradespeople are immigrating to Canada relative to expected labour demands.

A comparison of recent immigration statistics provided by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and labour supply and demand in Canada's electricity sector reported in the 2004 Human Resources Sector Study reveals a sharp disaccord: in trades and other non-support occupations, significantly fewer immigrants enter the country than would be needed to address the supply-demand gap in these occupations in the electricity sector.¹ Overall, the number of tradespeople entering Canada as skilled immigrants has declined since 1998. This represents a significant challenge for the sector in responding to anticipated future labour demands in trades fields in the electricity sector caused by retirements.

Findings also indicate that there are too few programs and resources available for tradespeople who received their training outside of Canada. Insufficient programs and resources make it difficult for tradespeople to successfully enter and integrate into the electricity sector workforce.

Strategies of employers, provincial governments, immigrant serving agencies and other stakeholders with regard to foreign credential recognition and the recruitment and integration of internationally trained workers vary significantly by region.

Regional differences in labour demand and resulting efforts to recruit and integrate internationally trained workers in the electricity sector need to be taken into account in an analysis of current practices in foreign credential recognition. The following regional differences were found in the current study:

- British Columbia and Alberta have experienced high labour demand and labour shortages. Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) currently lists 170 occupations as “occupations under pressure” in Alberta and 129 occupations in B.C.² These shortages are a strong motivation for companies to develop formal strategies for recruitment of internationally trained workers. Several employers have developed programs in partnership with the provincial government, regulatory bodies, and immigrant serving agencies.
- Saskatchewan and Manitoba are experiencing emerging labour shortages. However, employers are only in the early stages of developing policies to attract internationally trained workers, and have only recently begun to understand the challenges associated with foreign credential recognition and the process of hiring internationally trained new Canadians.

¹ The “supply-demand” gap was presented in the 2004 Canadian Electricity Sector Study.

² HRSDC Regional Occupations Under Pressure List Alberta: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/epb/lmd/fw/AB_ROL_200611_e.pdf; Regional Occupations Under Pressure List B.C.: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/epb/lmd/fw/BC_ROL_200611_e.pdf (retrieved on September 4, 2007)

- Limited labour demand in other provinces such as Ontario and Quebec can be linked to a lack of interest in and limited coordination of efforts designed to assist internationally trained workers during the transition and credential recognition process. Current demand for internationally trained workers is limited.
- Provinces in Atlantic Canada were found to be in the process of establishing formal policies and programs to recruit and assist internationally trained workers. However, provincial economies in the Atlantic provinces are generally smaller, and labour shortages have arisen only in specific sectors and occupations. Demand for internationally trained workers in the electricity sector was described as limited.

Although regions such as Ontario and Atlantic Canada may be currently experiencing lower demand for internationally trained workers, retirement eligibility data from the 2004 Electricity Sector Study indicates that future retirements in regions such as Ontario and Atlantic Canada are expected to markedly increase over the next five years. As a result, employers in provinces currently experiencing lower demand for internationally trained workers will still need to be prepared for the impact of future retirements.

Internationally trained workers and employers in the electricity sector face a number of challenges related to foreign credential recognition.

Although immigrants entering Canada today are more highly skilled and educated than ever before, the length of time between arriving in Canada and becoming self-sufficient in the Canadian workforce is lengthening. In 2001, the unemployment rate among recent immigrants stood at 29.7%, significantly higher than the unemployment rate of 17.4% among recent immigrants twenty years earlier. Twenty years ago, it took about five years in Canada for the unemployment rate of immigrants to drop to the level of Canadian-born individuals. Today, it takes approximately 10 years.

Immigrants to Canada face the following challenges when looking for work in Canada's electricity sector:

1. Processing times

The foreign credential recognition and occupational licensure or certification process can be quite lengthy, depending on the complexity of the case, the extent of required additional training, whether or not the applicant had sufficient and correct information about the process and the experience of the regulatory body with applicants from a specific source country. Internationally trained workers reported that in many cases it takes many months and up to several years to receive the required licence or certification. In the meantime, immigrants are often confronted with the challenge of not being able to work in their occupation and having to take on low-income jobs in order to financially survive. Incidents of low-income work and poverty therefore are significantly more common among recent immigrants than among Canadian citizens. In the meantime, employers in the industry (particularly in Western Canada) are not able to fill vacancies in a timely manner or have to find a slightly different position for the internationally trained workers as long as the licensure process is not completed.

Employers active in nuclear energy production reported that security screening procedures for internationally trained workers in the field require additional time, adding to processing times related to credential recognition and licensure.

2. Lack of information or misinformation

Employers and internationally trained workers reported significant difficulties in navigating the credential recognition and licensure process. Recent immigrants often rely on information they received from the embassy in their home country, the internet, or family and friends, as well as immigrant serving agencies, once they arrive in Canada. The quality of information available through these sources varies significantly. Several immigrants reported that they did not receive any information on having to undergo a credential recognition and licensure process in Canada. Similarly, several immigrant serving agencies mentioned that while they provide their clients with contact information for regulatory bodies if the chosen occupation is regulated in Canada, they do not inform clients with foreign credentials about the specific requirements and steps in the credential recognition and licensure process.

Further, many immigrants do not understand the difference between the immigration and licensure/certification process. The current system used by CIC to determine eligibility of applicants to enter the country as skilled immigrants entails a point ranking of applicants based on their education, occupational background and language skills, among other criteria. Immigrants receiving approval by CIC after passing the immigration requirements based on their skills and occupational background reported a lack of information about regulatory requirements in their occupation. Immigrants often interpret the approval to mean that they are now eligible to work in their stated occupation in Canada. Immigrants often only find out later that they have to undergo specific licensure/certification procedures before they are eligible to work in their occupation.

Employers in the electricity sector reported that it takes time to understand the credential recognition process and that efforts are further complicated by regional differences in processing times and experience of the regulatory body with the process. Provinces where labour shortages have only recently begun to be addressed clearly lagged behind in terms of processing times due to limited experience of the regulatory bodies, as well as in terms of establishing support and bridging programs to assist internationally trained workers in entering the Canadian labour market.

3. Language skills

Key difficulties in navigating the credential recognition process also include language barriers. Employers, government officials, educators and immigrant service representatives all reported language skills as the key barrier for internationally trained workers in entering the Canadian labour market. Limited language proficiency is not only problematic with regard to finding employment in general and mastering steps such as job search, job interviews and adequate communication on the job, but is also a significant obstacle in trying to understand and find appropriate information about the credential recognition process. Further, safety concerns have been raised within the electricity industry with regard to allowing individuals to enter the workplace without having the language skills to safely and appropriately communicate with coworkers and supervisors.

4. Cultural integration

In addition to language challenges, immigrants have also identified cultural challenges with regard to finding employment in Canada. A lack of knowledge of Canadian norms and values, as well as a lack of understanding of Canadian workplace practices, prevents many immigrants from effectively entering or adequately adapting in the labour market. It has generally been acknowledged that cultural norms influence perceptions in terms of what constitutes a strong résumé or a good job interview, as well as what constitutes appropriate interactions with colleagues in the workplace. Several of the internationally trained workers and stakeholder informants consulted in focus group discussions and interviews confirmed these findings. Cultural norms affecting communication and interpersonal behaviour result in difficulties during job search and interviews as well as in adapting to workplace practices.

5. Financial problems

Credential recognition can be a lengthy process, depending on the occupation, the complexity of the case and the amount of preparation the applicant put into his or her application to the appropriate regulatory body. During this process, applicants are often not employed, or employed in a low-paying job outside of their field of expertise. A recent study by Statistics Canada reported that 19% of immigrants entering the country between 1992 and 2000 found themselves in a chronic low-income position, 2.5 times higher than observed among the Canadian-born population. Added to these fundamental financial struggles are fees that need to be paid during the credential recognition process, including processing fees, fees for skill and language upgrading and fees to obtain and translate required documents. As a result, many new immigrants are forced to find employment in a non-regulated occupation outside of their field of expertise, either temporarily or permanently.

Case studies of existing programs and initiatives identified a number of promising approaches to addressing the issues and challenges related to foreign credential recognition and the recruitment and integration of internationally trained workers.

Several programs and initiatives launched by employers, governments, immigrant serving agencies and education institutions were identified as best practices and promising approaches. Profiled programs and initiatives are:

- The Internationally Educated Engineering Qualifications (IEEQ) Program at the University of Manitoba and similar initiatives at Ryerson University, McMaster University and Mohawk College
- The partnership of S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (Sino United Chinese Community Enrichment Social Service) and Spectra Energy in British Columbia
- The federal Foreign Credential Referral Office
- The Skills Connect for Immigrants Program in British Columbia
- Employer initiatives in Alberta – ENMAX and FortisAlberta

These case studies are profiled in the current report.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the current study as well as results of the first Electricity Sector Council conference, *Bright Futures in Canada: Integrating Internationally Trained New Canadians in the Energy Industry*, held in Ottawa on November 7 and 8, 2007, three main recommendations and eight strategies have been developed in consultation with the sector council's Foreign Credential Recognition Steering Committee to address the challenge of recruiting and retaining internationally trained workers in the electricity sector. As a component of the sector council's overall workforce development strategy, the overall goal of the sector is to develop a strategy to attract a sufficient number of well-qualified internationally trained workers from in-demand occupation groups, particularly from key trade occupations where shortages are being experienced or are expected. The following three recommendations will support this overall goal.

1) Work with government agencies and other stakeholders to develop credential assessment and recognition support tools, programs and policies that address the labour needs of the sector.

Initiatives:

1. Work with government agencies and regulatory bodies to expand availability of information on licensure/certification requirements to immigrants once they are in Canada and before they arrive.
2. Promote increased standardization of occupational qualifications within Canada, to enable increased labour mobility for both Canadian and internationally trained workers, particularly in occupations where shortages are being experienced.
3. Work to ensure that internationally trained workers have access to financial support in the form of government grants and/or loans while they are taking bridging programs.

2) Research, develop and provide resources to assist stakeholders in the sector to attract, recruit, retain and integrate internationally trained workers.

Initiatives:

1. Establish a clearinghouse of existing resources for stakeholders in the sector. Resources could include best practices in recruiting and retaining internationally trained workers, links to existing bridging programs (and curricula) and information on the licensure/certification process for electricity-related occupations, etc.
2. Create resources such as process maps to detail the processes and procedures required to meet licensing/certification requirements and secure employment in the sector for new Canadians. Also, an inventory of available programs and services could be made available to those in the sector.
3. Support the development of a peer support network and/or mentorship network for internationally trained workers. This could include developing an online discussion forum for internationally trained workers in the sector and employers.

4. Build partnerships and communication supports with occupational organizations, including regulators and trainers to implement the initiatives supporting this recommendation.
- 3) **Develop strategies to increase the level of communication and coordination among other sector councils, educators, employers, regulators, labour organizations, governments and immigrant serving agencies.**

Initiative:

1. Develop a process model to support stakeholder collaboration through best practice workshops, conferences, or online forums that include aspects such as:
 - i. Addressing the fragmentation in programs serving internationally trained workers
 - ii. Encouraging partnership development
 - iii. Identifying systems, processes or tools that support internationally trained workers integration
 - iv. Documenting and publicizing effective human resource strategies

Source of Findings

The technical report on *Foreign Credential Recognition in Canada's Electricity Sector* was prepared for the Electricity Sector Council of Canada and summarizes findings of a national review of current practices in foreign credential recognition and the recruitment and integration of internationally trained workers in the sector. The report provides an overview of current immigration trends, occupational licensure/certification requirements and key barriers for internationally trained workers wishing to enter the Canadian labour market. The report also profiles available support and bridging programs as well as government and employer practices in the sector that have been identified as best practices with regard to foreign credential recognition and recruitment and support strategies. In addition, the report presents findings of literature and document reviews, cross-national stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions with recent immigrants in the form of regional profiles, placing findings in a distinctly regional economic and sectoral context. A more detailed description of the research methodology employed can be found in Appendix A.

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SECTION 1: Background to the Project and the Technical Report

The Electricity Sector Council of Canada is a not-for-profit corporation that was established in order to address the human resource training and development needs of the Canadian electricity industry. The Council is currently conducting a *Review of Foreign Credential Recognition in Canada's Electricity Sector* that will provide information and understanding in the following key areas:

- Current industry practices in foreign credential assessment and recognition and the recruitment and integration of internationally trained workers
- Practices and barriers in foreign credential recognition
- Challenges facing the electricity sector that might be specific to individual Canadian provinces and territories
- Relevant bridging and training programs and initiatives to assist internationally trained workers in entering the Canadian labour market

An important part of this project includes developing a comprehensive understanding of the electricity industry workforce in Canada and identifying options for streamlining foreign credential assessment and recognition policies, processes and practices. Also important is identifying best practices among employers and other stakeholder groups with respect to foreign credential recognition and the integration of internationally trained workers.

This technical report, *Generating Solutions: Review of the Foreign Credential Recognition in Canada's Electricity Sector* presents a brief overview of:

- Immigration trends
- The process of foreign credential recognition in the electricity sector
- Key obstacles faced by internationally trained workers in Canada, including regional profiles to identify differences
- Best practices in Canada to help internationally trained workers overcome these obstacles
- Recommendations based on the findings of the research

The *Review of the Foreign Credential Recognition in Canada's Electricity Sector* is intended to help the Electricity Sector Council in any potential future development of a strategy to facilitate the integration of internationally trained workers into the electricity sector in order to respond to expected retirements in the sector.

The following information is based on an extensive Internet search and literature review, as well as information obtained through consultations with key stakeholders such as representatives from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), companies in the electricity sector, internationally trained workers, immigrant serving agencies and several education/training institutions.

SECTION 2: Immigration to Canada: An Overview

As a result of Canada's low birth rates and aging population, immigration is becoming integral to maintaining the country's workforce and economic prosperity. According to Statistics Canada, immigration accounted for two-thirds of Canada's total population growth from 2001 to 2006.³ It also represented approximately 70% of Canada's labour force growth from 1991 to 2001 and is likely to account for *all* labour force growth in Canada within the coming decade.⁴ A recent report by the Conference Board of Canada noted that immigration already accounts for all growth (and even maintenance of the present size) of the workforce in several regions of the country:

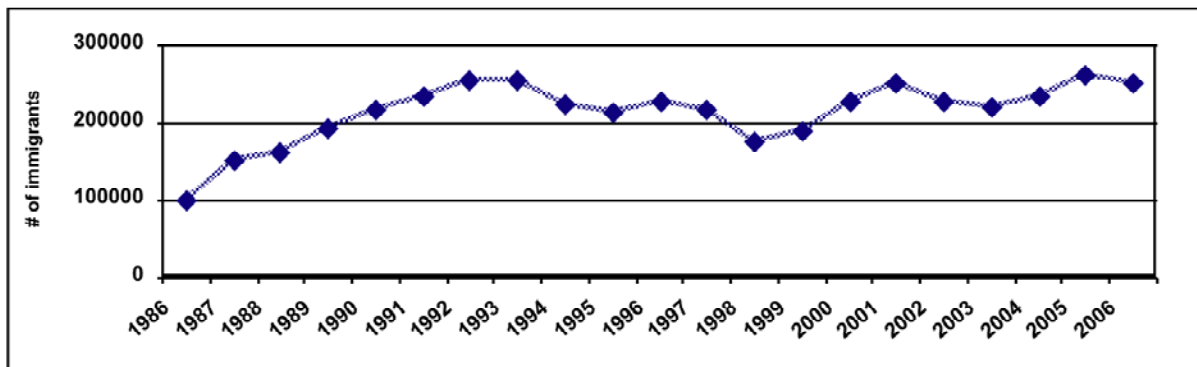
"Were it not for immigration, Nova Scotia and to a lesser extent Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and Canada's two most populous cities, Toronto and Montreal, would actually have suffered a drop in workforce population."⁵

This section briefly reviews Canada's recent immigration trends.

2.1 Total Immigration

Over the past couple of decades, there has been an overall increase in the annual number of immigrants coming to Canada. In 1986, the total number of immigrants entering the country stood at 99,351.⁶ Twenty years later, this figure had increased to 251,649, which represents a growth in immigration of 153% over the period. Figure 2-1 below illustrates this increase in Canada's immigration over the 1986 to 2006 period.

Figure 2-1
Total Immigration to Canada (1986-2006)



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada. "Facts and Figures 200: Immigration Overview." <http://www.cic.gc.ca>

Currently, CIC's immigration target per year is between 225,000 and 250,000 immigrants annually.⁷

³ Statistics Canada. "Portrait of the Canadian Population in 2006: National Portrait." Viewed at <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/popdwell/NatlPortrait1.cfm> on August 9, 2007.

⁴ Statistics Canada. "The changing profile of Canada's labour force." 2001 Census Analysis Series. Catalogue 96F0030XIE2001009. p.5.

⁵ Pedro Antunes, Judith I. Macbride-King, Julie Swettenham. "Making a Visible Difference: The Contribution of Visible Minorities to Canadian Economic Growth." Conference Board of Canada. 2004. p.3.

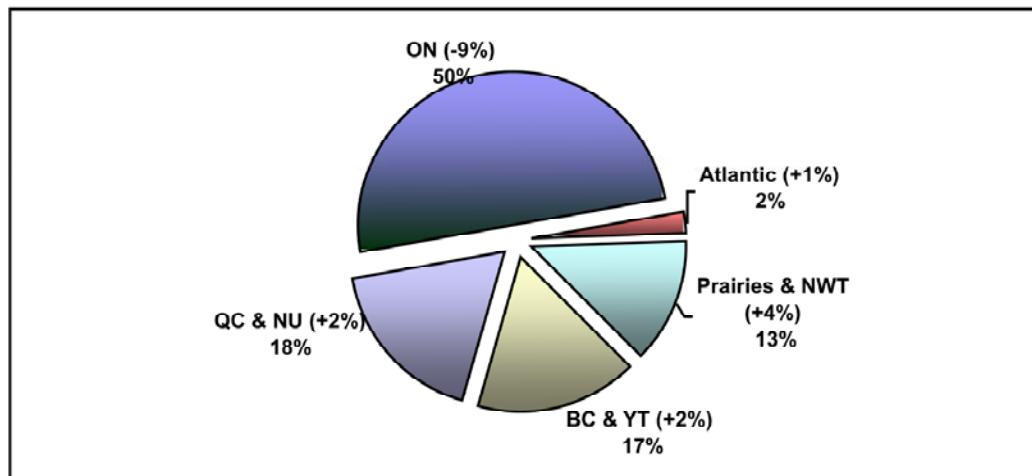
⁶ Citizenship and Immigration Canada. "Facts and Figures 2006: Immigration Overview." <http://www.cic.gc.ca>

⁷ Citizenship and Immigration Canada. "Facts and Figures 2006: Immigration Overview." <http://www.cic.gc.ca>

2.2 Immigration by Province/Territory

In 2006, most (50%) immigrants entering Canada landed in the province of Ontario. A significant proportion of immigrants also chose to immigrate to Quebec and Nunavut (18%) and British Columbia and the Yukon (17%). The Prairies and the Northwest Territories (13%) and the Atlantic provinces (2%), on the other hand, were less popular destinations for immigrants. The Prairies showed the most significant growth (up 4%) with regard to immigrants entering the region compared to 2002.⁸ Figure 2-2 below provides an illustration of the proportion of immigrants by Canadian province/region in 2006 and increases or decreases per province compared to 2002.

Figure 2-2
Proportion of Immigrants by Province (2006)



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada. "Facts and Figures 2002: Immigration Overview." <http://www.cic.gc.ca>

Almost 40% of all immigrants who came to Canada in 2006 chose to live in Toronto. Montreal (15.3%), Vancouver (14.4%), and Calgary (4.7%) were also top destination cities of immigrants in 2006.⁹

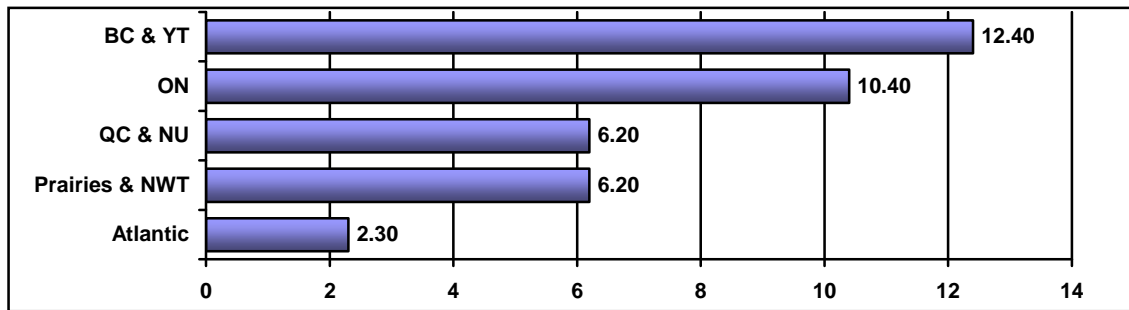
It should be noted that relative to their share of the national population, Ontario and British Columbia attract a disproportionately high number of immigrants, with B.C. replacing Ontario as the number one province with regard to attracting immigrants. Quebec, Atlantic Canada, and the Prairies attract a disproportionately low share. Figure 2-3 illustrates the number of immigrants per 1000 persons by province/territory.

It should also be noted that there is limited information as to the mobility of immigrants after landing in Canada. There is no available data on the extent to which immigrants remain in the province in which they land.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Figure 2-3
Number of Immigrants per 1,000 Population by Province/Territory (2006)



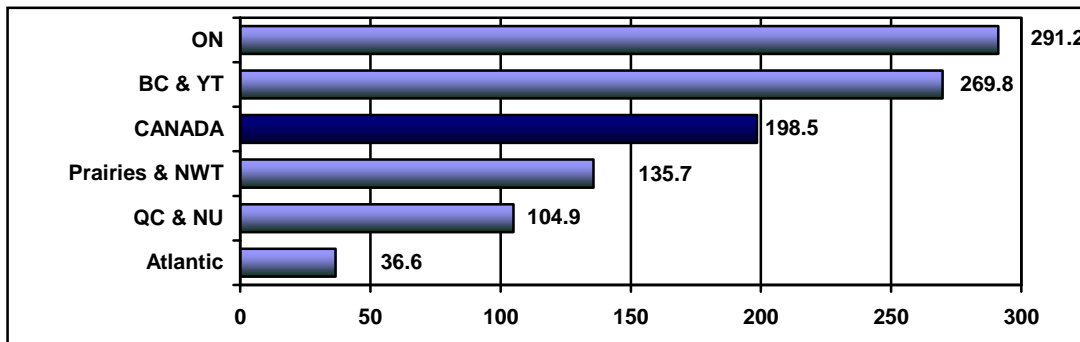
Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada. "Facts and Figures 2006: Immigration Overview." <http://www.cic.gc.ca> & Statistics Canada 2006 Census.

2.3 Immigrants in the Labour Force¹⁰

2.3.1 Immigrants in the Labour Force by Province/Territory

Ontario, the province receiving the largest proportion of Canada's immigrants, also has the greatest representation of immigrants in its labour force. Immigrants represented approximately 291 out of 1000 workers in Ontario's labour force in 2001. As seen in Figure 2-4, other provinces/territories in which immigrants represented a significant proportion of the labour force include British Columbia (269.8 immigrants/1,000 workers), and the Prairies and N.W.T. (135.7 immigrants/1,000 workers).¹¹ Although Quebec is the second most popular destination for immigrants, the representation of immigrants in the labour force is relatively low, with about 105 immigrant workers per 1,000 workers in the labour force.

Figure 2-4
Number of Immigrants in the Labour Force per 1,000 Workers by Province/Territory (2002)



Source: Statistics Canada. "The changing profile of Canada's labour force." 2001 Census: analysis series. 2003. Catalogue no. 96F0030XIE2001009

¹⁰ Note: New census data on immigration and labour force for the 2006 census will be released on December 4, 2007.

¹¹ Statistics Canada. "The changing profile of Canada's labour force." 2001 Census: Analysis Series. 2003. Catalogue no. 96F0030XIE2001009. p.31

2.3.2 Immigrants in the Electricity Sector

Of special interest to the Electricity Sector Council is the fact that immigrants are under-represented in the Canadian electricity sector. According to Statistics Canada (2001 Census data), immigrants represent 13% of the total labour force in Canada's utilities industry, well below the national average of 19% of immigrants employed in all industries.¹² The 2004 Sector Study, published by the Canadian Electricity Association, underlines this finding. According to the report, visible minorities represent only about 7% of the workers in the sector, well below the total Canadian workforce average of 12.6%.¹³

2.4 Immigration by Country of Origin

In 2006, the top five countries from which Canada received a significant proportion of its immigrants included China (13.2%), India (12.2%), the Philippines (7.0%), Pakistan (4.9%), and the United States (4.4%). These countries have represented growing sources of immigration (in terms of overall proportion of immigration to Canada) since 1998.

2.5 Immigration to Canada by Class

Immigrants entering Canada are classified by Citizenship and Immigration Canada into three broad categories. These include:

- **Economic:** This category consists of skilled workers, business immigrants (i.e., immigrants who can start up their own business or invest in Canada), live-in caregivers, and provincial/territorial nominees.¹⁴
- **Family:** This category includes spouses, parents/grandparents, and other relatives of Canadian citizens and permanent residents over the age of 18.
- **Refugee:** This category consists of government-assisted refugees, privately-sponsored refugees, refugees landed in Canada, and dependents (of a refugee landed in Canada) who live abroad.¹⁵

Recently, most (55%) of the immigrants arriving in Canada have been within the economic category. Of the remaining immigrants, 28% were in the family category, while 13% were in the refugee category.

As seen in Figure 2-5, the skilled immigrant class (within the economic category) represents an increasing proportion of immigrants, with peak periods of immigration between 2000 and

¹² Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001, to be viewed at <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/standard/themes/RetrieveProductTable.cfm?Temporal=2001&PID=68537&APATH=3&GID=517770&METH=1&PTYPE=55496&THEME=43&FOCUS=0&AID=0&PLACENAME=0&PROVINCE=0&SEARCH=0&GC=99&GK=NA&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=&FL=0&RL=0&FREE=0>

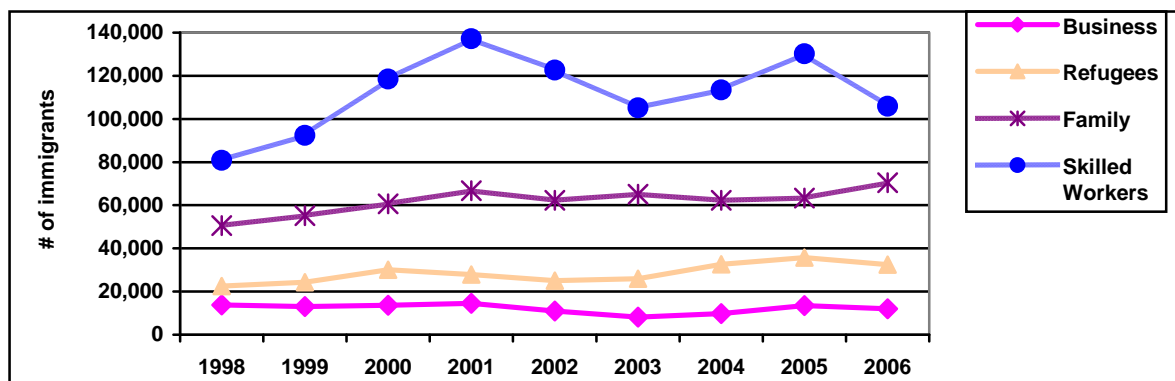
¹³ Keeping the Future Bright. 2004 Canadian Electricity Human Resource Sector Study.

¹⁴ Immigrants in the provincial/territorial nominee class must apply to the province in which they wish to settle. The province considers the application of an immigrant based on provincial immigration needs and on the immigrant's genuine intention to settle there.

¹⁵ Citizenship and Immigration Canada. <http://www.cic.gc.ca>

2002 and again between 2004 and 2005. From 1998 to 2006, over one million skilled workers were attracted to Canada. In 2006, immigrants under this classification accounted for approximately 42% of all immigration to Canada.¹⁶ These statistics are a reflection of Canada's growing reliance on internationally trained workers.

Figure 2-5
Immigration to Canada by Class (1998-2006)



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada. "Facts and Figures 2002: Immigration Overview" & "Facts and Figures 1999: Immigration Overview." <http://www.cic.gc.ca>

For the Canadian electricity sector, immigrants in the skilled worker class are the most likely source of immigrant labour. However, family class and refugee class immigrants could also be potential sources of labour for the sector, as they do not have to face the Canadian rating system for entry into the country. In addition, temporary residents with time-limited work permits have become an important resource for many companies, not just in the electricity sector. However, the substantial backlog in the processing of applications for a Labour Market Opinion from Service Canada, which is a prerequisite for the actual work permit, is increasingly turning the pool of temporary residents into a resource of limited use to employers, particularly in provinces with high demand of temporary foreign workers such as Alberta and British Columbia.¹⁷

2.6 Level of Education of Immigrants

Recently, Canada has had a great deal of success in attracting highly educated or trained immigrants to Canada. Approximately 59% of working-age immigrants landing in Canada in 2006 had a post-secondary degree, a figure considerably higher than Canada's national average of 43%.¹⁸

Figure 2-6 portrays the increase in the level of educational attainment of immigrants entering Canada from 1998 to 2006. As seen in this chart, immigrants possessing bachelor's, master's or doctorate degrees have been increasing in numbers since 1998. The number of

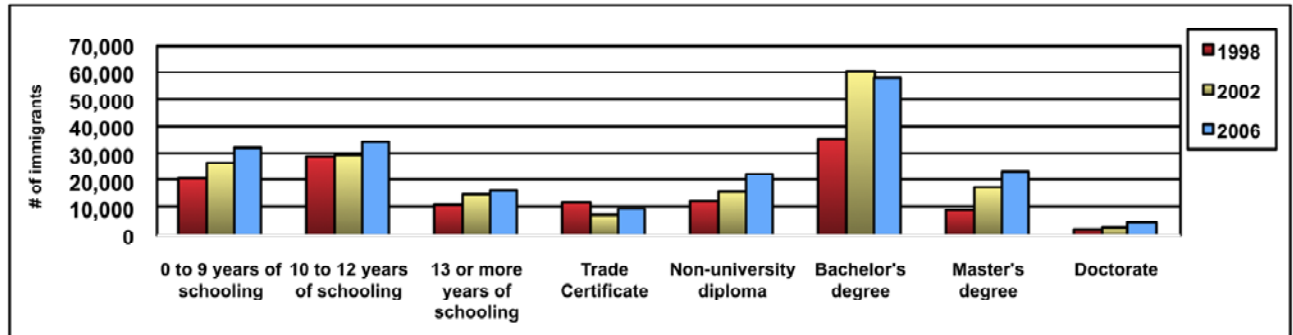
¹⁶ Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada. "Facts and Figures 2002: Immigration Overview" & "Facts and Figures 1999: Immigration Overview." <http://www.cic.gc.ca>

¹⁷ Business Council of British Columbia. Labour Market Needs, Immigration Programs, Foreign Credential Recognition and Employment. http://www.bcbc.com/Documents/LE_20070412_Submission_LIFE.pdf

¹⁸ Social Development Canada. "Skills and Learning for Canadians." <http://www11.sdc.gc.ca/sl-ca/doc/report.shtml>. Hull, QC. 2002. p.51

immigrants with trades certificates, however, has been gradually declining over the same period of time. In 1998, the total number of immigrants with trade certificates upon landing stood at 12,201 (or 9.1% of total immigration). By 2002, this figure stood at 7,706 (only 4.3% of total immigration). While the figure slightly increased to 9,953 (or 5% of total immigration) in 2006, the overall numbers still indicate a trend that has significant implications for sectors such as the electricity sector, already experiencing shortages in trades-related occupations.

Figure 2-6
Level of Education of Immigrants Aged 15 Years and Older (1998, 2002, 2006)



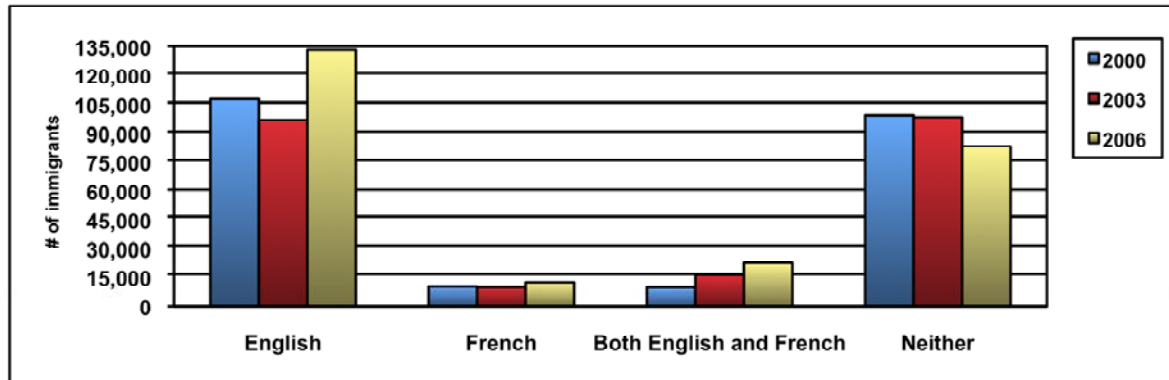
Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada. "Facts and Figures 2006: Immigration Overview" & "Facts and Figures 2002: Immigration Overview." <http://www.cic.gc.ca>

2.7 Language Skills of Immigrants

Most immigrants coming to Canada speak English. In 2006, 53% had English language skills, 5% had French language skills, 9% had both English and French language skills, while 33% did not have language skills in either of Canada's official languages.

As seen in Figure 2-7, the total number of immigrants speaking English has increased since 2000 (with a slight decline from 2000 to 2003), as has the number of immigrants able to communicate in French and the number of immigrants able to communicate in both English and French. However, the total number of immigrants who are unable to communicate in either of Canada's official languages is still very high, indicating that language skills are a key issue and challenge with regard to the integration of skilled immigrants into the Canadian workforce.

Figure 2-7
Language Skills of Immigrants 2000-2006



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada. "Facts and Figures 2006: Immigration Overview." <http://www.cic.gc.ca>

2.8 Immigration by Skill Level

As a result of the increase in the number of immigrants entering Canada in the skilled worker class, there has been a general increase in the skill levels of immigrants landing in the country. Figure 2-8 on the following page portrays the immigration to Canada by National Occupational Classification (NOC) Skill Level from 1998 to 2006.

The NOC classification system groups occupations in the Canadian economy by skills, talents, duties, and work settings. Occupations are classified into five groups of skill levels. These include:

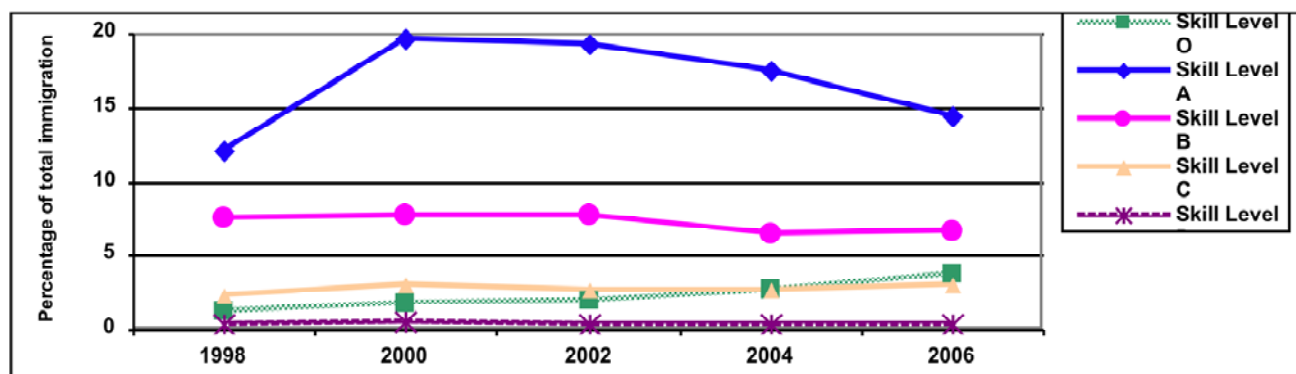
- **Skill Level O:** This group includes management-level occupations (e.g., senior management occupations; managers in financial and business administration; managers in construction and transportation).
- **Skill Level A:** This group includes occupations that usually require a university education (e.g., auditors, accountants and investment professionals; physical science professionals; physicians, dentists, veterinarians, etc.).
- **Skill Level B:** Occupations in this group usually require college education or apprenticeship training (e.g., clerical supervisors; technical occupations in physical sciences; medical technologists and technicians; automotive service technicians).
- **Skill Level C:** This group includes occupations that usually require secondary school and/or occupation-specific training (e.g., clerical occupations, general office skills; assisting occupations in support of health services; sales representatives, wholesale trade; motor vehicle and transit drivers).
- **Skill Level D:** Occupations in this group usually require on-the-job training (e.g., cashiers; cleaners; trades helpers and labourers; primary production labourers).¹⁹

Of particular interest for the electricity sector is the fact that the majority of occupations in the electricity industry fall into two categories: engineers, which are classified under Skill

¹⁹ Human Resources Development Canada. "National Occupational Classification Matrix 2001." <http://www23.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/2001/e/generic/matrix.pdf>

Level A, and trades or related occupations, which are classified under Skill Level B. As seen in Figure 2-8, immigrants classified under Skill Level A account for a declining proportion of the total immigrants landing in Canada, and immigrants classified under Skill Level B represent a generally small group (only around 7%) of immigrants landing in Canada.

Figure 2-8
Immigration to Canada by NOC Skill Level (1998-2006) - Proportion



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada. "Facts and Figures 2006: Immigration Overview." <http://www.cic.gc.ca>

2.9 Immigration by Occupation – Electricity Sector

In the electricity sector occupations, most immigrants arriving in Canada are engineers (Mechanical Engineers; Electrical and Electronics Engineers; and Metallurgical and Materials Engineers). In fact, Electrical and Electronics Engineers, as well as Mechanical Engineers, are listed among the top ten common occupations of skilled immigrants entering Canada.²⁰ Fewer immigrants can be categorized into technicians and technologists, and very few immigrants arriving in Canada are trained in electrical trades and other related non-support occupations in the sector. As seen in Figure 2-9, in addition to the already low level of immigration in the categories of technicians/technologists and trades, immigration numbers for all three occupation categories in the electricity sector are declining.

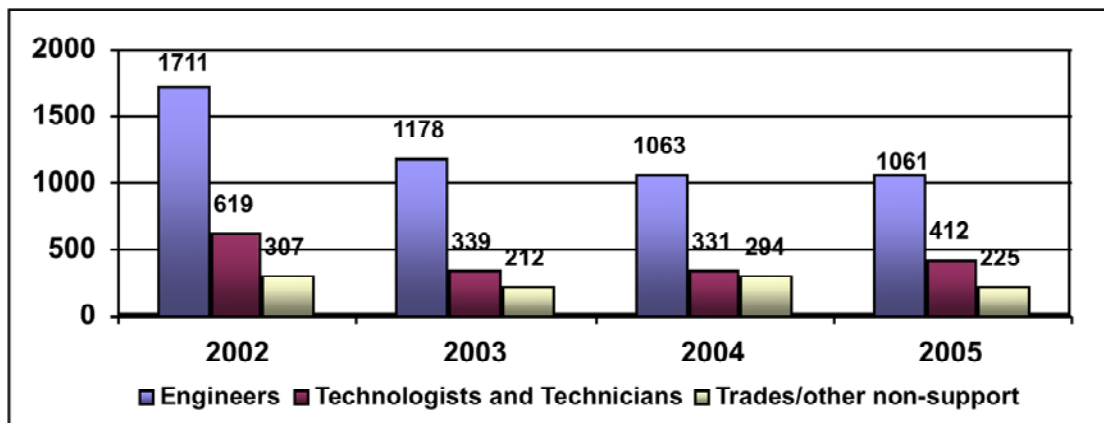
It should be noted that the figures provided by Citizenship and Immigration Canada are based on information disclosed by the immigrants themselves. It is not known whether immigrants stating a specific training and/or occupation are actually qualified and trained to work in the stated occupation. Differences in training and educational standards in their country of origin as well as translational aspects of supplying information about one's occupation title may lead to a new classification of the stated occupation some time after arrival in Canada. In addition, many countries do not clearly distinguish engineering and technologist/technician occupations, resulting in the fact that immigrants reporting engineer as their profession in fact are in many cases only qualified to work as technologists and technicians in Canada, but might expect to find employment as an engineer simply because that was the title they had in their home country.²¹ Indicative of a mismatch of self-reported occupation titles and skill requirements for the reported occupation are statistics reported by

²⁰ Citizenship and Immigration Canada. "Immigrant Occupations: Recent Trends and Issues." Ottawa, ON, Canada. 2003

²¹ Immigrants in focus groups and several informants from regulatory bodies stressed that the clear distinction of engineers and technologists that is common in Canada is not as pronounced or nonexistent in countries like China, Germany, Austria, France and other countries.

the engineering regulatory body in Ontario, Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO). For 2006, the Academic Requirements Committee reported that of 2,258 applications for assessment of academic credentials received outside of Canada, only 517 applicants or 23% were deemed to have met PEO's academic requirements for licensure. The other applicants were assigned additional exams to provide proof of the academic qualification for the engineering profession.²² With regard to work experience assessment, the statistics indicate that about two-thirds of the applicants who received their technical training and work experience outside of Canada had their technical exams waived as a result of their assessment by the Experience Requirements Committee.²³ While these statistics were only available for Ontario, they indicate that, in fact, internationally trained engineers do not always possess the necessary qualifications and experience required to enter the engineering occupation in Canada. Nonetheless, a significant share of internationally trained engineers is eligible to receive the licence without having to undergo extensive examination programs.

Figure 2-9
Number of Immigrants in Electricity Sector Occupations by Category (2000-2005)



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

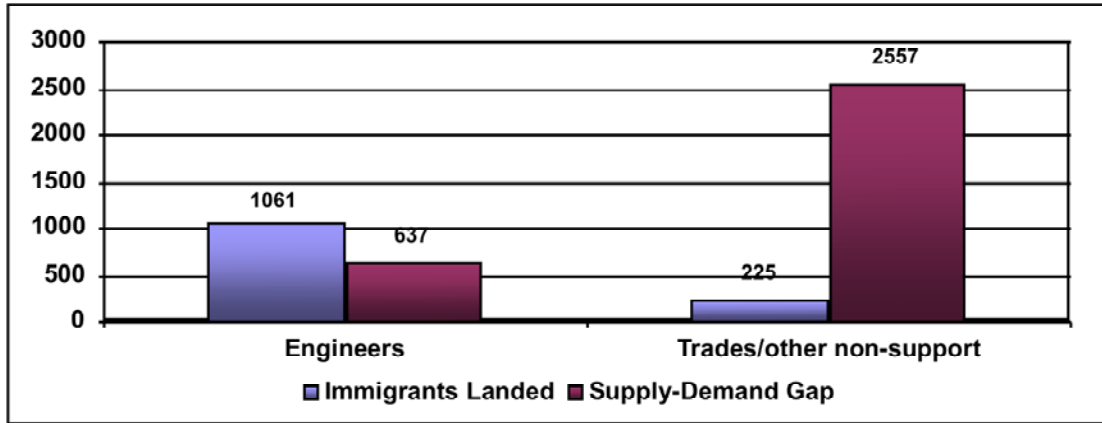
2.9.1 Supply and Demand in the Electricity Sector

The 2004 *Human Resource Sector Study*, published by the Canadian Electricity Association, summarized comprehensive findings on the current skill shortages and expected retirement waves creating supply-demand gaps now and in the near to intermediate future. According to the report, the supply-demand gap for engineers in the sector is and will be much lower than the gap estimated for trades and other non-support occupations in the sector. However, the figures on landed immigrants indicate that the supply of internationally trained tradesworkers is much lower than the supply of internationally trained engineers in key sector occupations. As shown in Figure 2-10, the current immigration statistics are in sharp disaccord with the projected supply-demand gap, which could have a possible negative impact on the health of the electricity sector in Canada.

²² 2007. Association of Professional Engineers of Ontario. 2006 Committee and Task Force Reports.

²³ Ibid.

Figure 2-10
Number of Immigrants Landed and Supply-Demand Gap (based on projected high for 2005-2009)



Source: 2004 Human Resources Sector Study & Citizenship and Immigration

SECTION 3: Foreign Credential Recognition in Canada's Electricity Sector

The issue of foreign credential recognition has continued to gain public and professional attention due to increasing skill shortages in many industry sectors and provinces, and resulting strategies to address skill shortages by tapping into non-traditional labour pools such as immigrants. Current practices in foreign credential recognition, particularly in regulated occupations, do not always allow for the appropriate and sufficient use of skills of internationally trained workers and therefore do not always correspond with industries' needs to fill vacancies and address critical skill shortages. In light of pressing human resources challenges in the electricity sector, it has become essential to re-evaluate current practices in order to make use of the knowledge and skills that highly qualified immigrants bring to the country.

The following section analyzes the challenges in entering the Canadian labour market.

3.1 Foreign Credential Recognition in Electricity Sector Occupations

Foreign credential recognition is the process of verifying that the education and job experience obtained in another country are equal to the standards established for Canadian professionals. This procedure is necessary to ensure equivalency in qualifications and detect cases where the self-identification of professions and titles reported by internationally trained workers during the immigration process do not correspond with Canadian standards. Depending on whether or not an occupation is regulated, the process of verifying and recognizing credentials obtained in another country can be quite complex and lengthy. Credentials such as foreign degrees and proof of work experience are assessed vis-à-vis existing Canadian and provincial standards or regulations. In unregulated occupations, the responsibility for the assessment lies with the employer who may or may not decide to use external services in the process.²⁴ In regulated professions, credential assessment and recognition is a provincial responsibility that has been delegated to regulatory bodies. The complexity of the process depends on the actual licensure requirements for the specific occupation, as well as on the quality of documents provided by the applicant.

Internationally trained workers entering Canada are often unable to find employment in their field of work due to a lack of recognition of their foreign credentials and prior work experience. According to a report published by the Canadian Career Development Foundation, a "consensus now appears to be emerging that a lack of prior learning assessment²⁵ and recognition poses the main barrier to employment for highly skilled workers trained abroad."²⁶

²⁴ Some employers consulted during the review noted that they rely on external services such as World Education Services (WES) or university assessment services. Other employers reported that they completed assessments internally.

²⁵ Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is defined as "the process of identifying, assessing and recognizing skills, knowledge, or competencies that have been acquired through work experience, unrecognized training, independent study, volunteer activities, and hobbies. PLA may be applied toward academic credit, toward requirement of a training program, or for occupational certification." [Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC). "Prior Learning Assessment Newsletter." Ottawa, Ontario. Human Resource Development Canada. May, 1995].

²⁶ François Lamontagne. "Workers Educated Abroad: Seduction and Abandonment." Canadian Career Development Foundation. Ottawa, ON, Canada. 2003. <http://www.crccanada.org/symposium>

Statistics Canada's *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada* likewise identified the most critical challenges faced by immigrants as the transferability of foreign qualifications, as well as the lack of experience in the Canadian workforce (i.e., the lack of "recognizable" work experience).²⁷ According to this survey, 76% of immigrants that arrived in Canada in 2001 had at least one type of foreign credential, and 26% of these immigrants experienced some sort of difficulty in having their credential(s) recognized when trying to enter the labour force.²⁸ In 2002, more than 340,000 Canadians had non-recognized international credentials.²⁹

3.1.1 Regulated Professions

Several of the key occupations in Canada's electricity sector are fully or partially regulated, requiring internationally trained workers (and Canadians) to supply proof of their educational and practical qualifications for the job. Requirements range from passing professional practice and ethics exams to providing proof of Canadian work experience. Table 3-1 summarizes the licensure and/or certification requirements for engineers, technicians and technologists, and trades occupations that are relevant in the electricity sector.

Table 3-1
Licensure/Certification Requirements in Regulated Electricity Sector Occupations

OCCUPATION	ELEMENTS REQUIRED TO OBTAIN LICENCE OR CERTIFICATE	TRANSFERABILITY OF ASSESSMENT
Engineers (Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Mechanical Engineers, Metallurgical Engineers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident • Post-secondary degree • Pass professional practice exam • Have 3-4 years work experience with a minimum of 1 year Canadian work experience • Be proficient in at least one of the two official languages 	<p>Mobility agreement among the provinces and territories regarding the transfer of the final licence</p> <p>Assessment of post-secondary degrees must be obtained from the regional regulatory office</p>
Technologists and Technicians (Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technologists and Technicians)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires certification and membership in the appropriate provincial association ▪ Must have the appropriate educational degree (diploma or certificate) 	Membership in provincial association

²⁷ Statistics Canada. "Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada." *The Daily*, September 4, 2003. <http://www.statcan.ca/DailyEnglish030904/d030904a.htm>

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Naomi Alboim & the Maytree Foundation. "Fulfilling the Promise: Integrating Immigrant Skills into the Canadian Economy." Caledon Institute of Social Policy." Ottawa, ON, Canada. 2002. p.11

OCCUPATION	ELEMENTS REQUIRED TO OBTAIN LICENCE OR CERTIFICATE	TRANSFERABILITY OF ASSESSMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A minimum of two years progressive technical experience ▪ Pass professional practice and ethics exam 	
Red Seal Trades (e.g., Industrial Instrument Technicians and Mechanics, Construction Electricians)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a recognized provincial or territorial apprenticeship training program or obtain a Journeyman level certificate from a province or territory • <i>Pass the Interprovincial Standards Examination for the trade</i> 	Final certification is valid nationwide
Trades that require certification in some provinces (Industrial Mechanics, Electricians, Electrical Powerline and Cable Workers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Industrial mechanic trade certification is compulsory in some provinces and available, but voluntary, in all other provinces and territories. ▪ Red Seal certification is available 	Certification is valid in the jurisdiction where it was issued Some provincial certifications are valid nationwide Red Seal Certification allows interprovincial mobility

Depending on the occupation, regulatory standards are either set and applied provincially, as is true for engineers, or provincially and nationally as for Red Seal Trade occupations. Provincial or territorial licensing bodies or apprenticeship offices issue the required licences after assessing the documentation and qualifications provided by the internationally trained worker.

3.1.2 Unregulated Professions

In contrast to highly regulated professions such as engineering, several key trades occupations in the electricity sector are not or only partially regulated. Trades certifications may be available but voluntary or not available at all. Unregulated occupations in the electricity sector include Construction Millwrights, Electrical Mechanics and Power System Electricians.

Foreign credential recognition in these occupations is left to the individual employers. The company will assess foreign degrees and work experience based on internal regulations. In some cases, employers simply take documents at face value because they do not have the time or resources to verify the credentials;³⁰ in others, employers rely on practical skill tests

³⁰ 2001. Assessing and Recognizing Foreign Credentials in Canada – Employers’ Views. CIC and HRSDC funded study of the Canadian Labour and Business Centre. 2001.

instead of the actual verification of presented credentials.³¹ Some employers have established internal policies and procedures with regard to the assessment and verification of credentials, others rely on external services of universities or established commercial services. Still others use informal networks of individuals from the source country of the applicant to gather information on the presented degrees and diplomas.³² In general, foreign credential recognition in unregulated occupations is much less formalized and organized and largely depends on the individual employer's internal practices. While the formal barriers to entering the Canadian labour market are much lower, the process is less transparent and it is more difficult for internationally trained workers to identify potential problems with their documents and to properly prepare for a credential and skill assessment undertaken by the employer.

3.2 Key Difficulties in Foreign Credential Recognition

Most difficulties arising out of foreign credential recognition practices in Canada are connected to regulated professions. While the process and procedures in unregulated professions may be less transparent, in general internationally trained workers can demonstrate their qualification for the job through practical tests and during the interview process. Employers have options to hire a candidate on a probationary basis to test abilities and qualification in practice as well as options to utilize external services or networks to verify credentials and obtain information about their equivalency to Canadian standards. Internationally trained workers in unregulated occupations have more points of access and better chances to immediately demonstrate their qualification for the job. In regulated professions, the credential verification and recognition process is much more complex, leading to a more thorough assessment and guarantee of compliance with Canadian occupational standards, but also to a number of difficulties for internationally trained workers with regard to entering the Canadian labour market and for employers with regard to the timely filling of vacancies.

3.2.1 Processing Times

The credential recognition process undertaken by regulatory bodies can be lengthy, depending on the quality of the documentation provided as well as on the complexity of requirements that need to be fulfilled for a specific occupation. An additional factor is the extent of experience of the regulatory authority with the process. Several informants in the electricity sector and internationally trained workers mentioned during consultations that some provinces have more experience with applicants and documentation from specific source countries, resulting in faster processing times than would be possible in provinces where the regulatory body has less experience in processing applications from those source countries. Due to the mobility agreement among the provinces and territories for the final license, employers in the sector who want to hire internationally trained engineers have utilized this variation in processing times to their benefit. Applications do not have to be made in the province where the candidate will work, but can be filed with the regulatory body that has the most experience with handling applications from the specific source country to improve processing times. It was noted that APEGBC, the regulatory body in British Columbia, has extensive experience with applications from China and India, whereas

³¹ 2004. Foreign Credential Recognition; An Overview of Practice in Canada. Alliance of Education and Training Organizations.

³² 2001. Assessing and Recognizing Foreign Credentials in Canada – Employers' Views. CIC and HRSDC funded study of the Canadian Labour and Business Centre. 2001.

Professional Engineers Ontario has a proven record of processing many applications of immigrants trained in Eastern European countries.

Another factor resulting in prolonged processing times is the fact that required additional exams, such as the Professional Practice Exam (PPE) for engineers, are offered on certain dates, often only twice or three times a year. In addition, depending on the occupation and regulatory body, candidates cannot write certain exams at any time during the recognition process but have to follow a specific order of exams and other steps in the process.

There is little information on average processing times of credential recognition applications in the different occupations; however, several internationally trained workers reported that it took several months up to a year, in some cases several years, to obtain the final licence or certificate.

3.2.2 Canadian Work Experience

One of the most commonly cited difficulties that internationally trained workers face is the requirement by engineering regulatory bodies throughout Canada to provide proof of a minimum of one year Canadian work experience. Many employers will hire internationally trained engineers only if they already have the Professional Engineer (P.Eng.) licence in order to take full advantage of the new employee's skills and qualifications. Without the licence, the engineer would have to be supervised by a licensed engineer, a step that particularly small companies may not be able to afford. In addition, many employers see the P.Eng. as a guarantee for specific educational and professional qualifications that are necessary requirements for the position they need to fill and thus hesitate to hire internationally trained engineers who do not have the licence yet. Internationally trained engineers often find themselves in a dilemma where they need Canadian work experience in order to receive the licence, but are required to have the licence before they are considered for a job in the field.

Recent developments, particularly in light of more pressing skill shortages, have led some employers to reconsider their practices with regard to hiring internationally trained engineers without the Professional Engineer licence. Several representatives of small and medium sized companies in the sector have indicated that they are well aware of the difficulties that internationally trained engineers face in obtaining the required Canadian work experience and have adjusted their human resources policies accordingly to allow internationally trained engineers to work in a supervised position until they have completed the licensure process. In addition, several educational models targeting international engineering graduates have incorporated work placements and internships in order to allow internationally trained engineers to gather Canadian work experience while upgrading their educational qualifications. Examples of such models are profiled in Section 5.

In addition, some regulatory authorities now offer a provisional licence for candidates who fulfill the academic requirements for licensure but do not have sufficient Canadian work experience yet. Employers can hire these candidates as engineers in training until they have obtained the required amount of Canadian work experience and thus are eligible to receive the final licence.

3.2.3 Lack of Information or Misinformation

Foreign credential recognition in Canada is a complex process involving several national and provincial players and varying requirements depending on the occupation, destination province and source country. While internationally trained workers wishing to enter the Canadian labour market have several options to find information on immigration and foreign credential recognition procedures, the complexity and provincial nature of the process has resulted in a vast array of different and not always consistent sources of information.³³ Sources include numerous websites from public and private sector organizations, Canadian embassies or consulates in the source country, immigrant serving agencies, job search agencies, and the regulatory bodies themselves. The majority of internationally trained workers that participated in focus group discussions across Canada listed these options as sources of information they used, but clearly stated that their information about the actual credential recognition and licensure process was limited when they entered Canada. Due to the large number of different available sources, it is not always easy to navigate through complex information of different quality and quantity. In addition, insufficient English language skills further complicate the process of finding the appropriate information and authority that is responsible for the licensure or certification process in a specific case. As a result, many licensing problems that internationally trained workers encounter are often due to lack of information, or misinformation.³⁴

Several internationally trained workers also identified another key problem with regard to finding information about the credential recognition and licensure process: a perceived disconnect between immigration procedures and the regulatory system.³⁵ Immigrating to Canada in the Skilled Worker/Economic Class is linked to a rating system used by Citizenship and Immigration Canada to test the eligibility of an applicant for immigration. Points are given based on the educational background and qualifications of the applicant. The current pass mark is 67 points, with 25 points given for a master's degree or doctorate, points given for language skills and connections to Canada through family, and up to 21 points for work experience in a profession classified under skill level A or B or skill type 0.³⁶ After having successfully been admitted as a Skilled Worker, internationally trained workers mentioned that they often thought that the approval from CIC meant they were qualified and eligible to start working in their profession immediately.

Similarly, internationally trained workers mentioned that they were somewhat aware of having to produce a document showing equivalency of their education with a Canadian degree and had submitted their credentials, including processing fee, to a commercial credential assessment service. While they did receive a translation and assessment of their degree, they were not informed that in order to legally enter a regulated profession they would have to undergo the credential verification process again and that regulatory bodies will not accept the assessment document from the commercial service. Informants from a commercial credential assessment service confirmed this finding. While they might provide the client with contact information for the appropriate provincial regulatory body, they often

³³ For examples of the variety of sources that foreign trained workers can use to find information on credential recognition, please refer to page 5 and 6 of 2004. Foreign Credential Recognition; An Overview of Practice in Canada. Alliance of Education and Training Organizations.

³⁴ 2004. From Consideration to Integration: Recommendations to help integrate International Engineering Graduates into the Canadian engineering profession and workforce. Canadian Council of Professional Engineers.

³⁵ 2007. Simon Fraser University – Economic Security Project. The Experience of Filipino Professionals: Overcoming Economic Disadvantage by Looking into Professional Accreditation and its Connections to the Filipino Community's Economic Marginalization and Lack of Economic Opportunity. Retrieved on August 24, 2007 from <http://www.sfu.ca/economicsecurityproject/2007%20Conference%20Documents/A2-DBisnar-PWC.pdf>

³⁶ See the self-assessment test on the CIC website <http://www.cic.gc.ca/EnGLISH/immigrate/skilled/assess/index.asp>

do not provide any information about the regulatory requirements in the client's profession. The disconnect between ratings and services that recent immigrants receive and actual regulatory requirements further contributes to misunderstandings and frustrations with respect to the credential recognition and licensure process.

3.2.4 Language

Key difficulties in navigating the credential recognition process also include language barriers. Many internationally trained workers have limited language abilities in one of the two official languages in Canada. Even though the percentage of Economic Class immigrants who cannot communicate in either of the two official languages is significantly lower than the overall average of all immigrants entering Canada in 2006 (10.9% and 33%, respectively³⁷), employers, government officials, educators and immigrant service representatives all reported language skills as a key barrier for internationally trained workers in entering the Canadian labour market. Limited language proficiency is not only problematic with regard to finding employment in general and mastering steps such as job search, job interviews and adequate communication on the job, but is also a significant obstacle in trying to understand and find appropriate information about the credential recognition process. Also, additional exams that need to be completed during the licensure process require a certain level of technical language proficiency and several representatives of immigrant serving agencies were of the opinion that the current language level of exams and tests in some provinces is too complex and not consistent with language level demands within the specific profession. It was noted that some apprenticeship branches use a test for electrical trades that has not been changed since the 1940s and is based on very densely formulated questions that even many Canadians fail to understand. On the other hand, union representatives noted that several regulatory bodies had adopted rules allowing internationally trained workers to use dictionaries and interpreters during the exams, which raised work safety concerns related to allowing individuals to enter the workplace without having the language skills to safely and appropriately communicate with coworkers and supervisors.

3.2.5 Financial

Credential recognition can be a lengthy process, depending on the occupation, the complexity of the case and the amount of preparation the applicant put into his or her application to the appropriate regulatory body. During this process, applicants are often not employed or employed in a low-paying job outside of their field of expertise. A recent study by Statistics Canada reported that 19% of immigrants entering the country between 1992 and 2000 found themselves in a chronic low-income position,³⁸ 2.5 times higher than observed among the Canadian-born population.³⁹ Up to 46% of recent immigrants were found to enter a low income situation during their first year in Canada, and about 65% of immigrants enter low income jobs at some point during the first ten years in Canada.⁴⁰ Many of the internationally trained workers consulted for the current review of practices in foreign credential recognition reported significant financial struggles due to their inability and ineligibility to find employment in their field of training. Added to these fundamental financial struggles are fees that need to be paid during the credential recognition process, including

³⁷ Citizenship and Immigration. Facts & Figures 2006.

³⁸ The study defined chronic low-income position as being in low income at least four out of the first five years.

³⁹ 2007. Picot, Garnett et. al. Chronic Low Income and Low income Dynamics Among Recent Immigrants. Study produced by Statistics Canada. Retrieved on August 24, 2007 from

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/research/11F0019MIE/11F0019MIE2007294.htm>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

processing fees, fees for skill and language upgrading, and fees to obtain and translate required documents. As a result, many new immigrants are forced to find employment in a non-regulated occupation outside of their field of expertise, either temporarily or permanently. Statistics Canada reported that six out of ten new immigrants do not work in the same occupational field as they did before entering Canada.⁴¹

3.3 Additional Barriers to Entering the Canadian Labour Market

Although immigrants entering Canada today are more highly skilled and educated than ever before, they still face several obstacles/barriers when trying to enter the Canadian labour force. According to a recent report by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre, the transition period⁴² for recent immigrants (also referred to by the author as the “transition penalty”) is lengthening.⁴³

Evidence of this lengthening “transition penalty” can be found in the growing rate of unemployment among recent immigrants. In 2001, the unemployment rate among recent immigrants stood at 29.7%, significantly higher than the unemployment rate of 17.4% among recent immigrants twenty years earlier. Twenty years ago, it took about five years in Canada for the unemployment rate of immigrants to drop to the level found with the Canadian-born population. Today, it takes approximately 10 years.⁴⁴

The following section briefly reviews the commonly cited challenges that are faced by immigrants trying to enter the Canadian labour force, and that are thought to prolong their “transition penalty.”

3.3.1 Cultural Integration

In addition to problems associated with insufficient language skills, immigrants have also identified cultural challenges to finding employment in Canada. A lack of knowledge of Canadian norms and values, as well as a lack of understanding of Canadian workplace practices, prevents many immigrants from effectively entering or adequately adapting in the labour market. It has generally been acknowledged that cultural norms influence perceptions in terms of what constitutes a strong résumé or a good job interview, as well as what constitutes appropriate interactions with colleagues and superiors in the workplace.⁴⁵ Several of the internationally trained workers and stakeholder informants consulted in focus group discussions and interviews confirmed these findings. Cultural norms affecting communication and interpersonal behaviour were identified as reasons for difficulties during job searches and interviews, as well as with regard to adapting to workplace practices. As an example, a recent immigrant from China reported that making eye contact during a conversation such as in a job interview would be considered rude and inappropriate in China, and that he had to learn that avoiding eye contact, which would be considered respectful and appropriate in his home country, can easily be interpreted as lack of

⁴¹ Statistics Canada – The Daily, September 2003. Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada. Retrieved on August 24, 2007 from <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/030904/d030904a.htm>

⁴² That is, the period of time in which immigrants must become integrated/self-sufficient within the Canadian social structure.

⁴³ Clarence Lochhead. “The Transition Penalty: Unemployment Among Recent Immigrants to Canada.” Canadian Labour and Business Centre. Ottawa, ON, Canada. 2003. <http://www.clbc.ca/>

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Backlid, Bente, “The Voice of Visible Minorities: Speaking Out on Breaking Down Barriers.” The Conference Board of Canada. Ottawa, ON, Canada. 2004. p.4

confidence or even dishonesty in a Canadian context. Several employer representatives and representatives of immigrant serving agencies articulated a need for cultural training for both the company and future coworkers, as well as the internationally trained workers, to enhance intercultural understanding on both sides. One company reported that they had arranged for intercultural training workshops for their employees and supervisors; most others had identified a demand in this area but had not actively pursued setting up such training workshops.

3.3.2 Poor Access to Information and to Programs and Services

Poor knowledge of programs, and sources of financial assistance or training, has been cited in various studies as a key barrier to the labour force entry of immigrants. According to Statistics Canada's *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants in Canada*, for example, as much as 40% of immigrants who tried to pursue further education or training were faced with at least one hurdle (e.g., financial). Educational institutions consulted during the research indicated that internationally trained workers had difficulties financing courses offered as part of bridging programs due to ineligibility for student loans. In addition, it is believed that many immigrants do not have sufficient labour market information prior to their departure for Canada. Information sources most commonly used by internationally trained workers prior to entering Canada include the internet, family and friends, or Canadian embassies or consulates in the source countries. Particularly with regard to obtaining information from the internet, it can be difficult to navigate the vast variety of websites that offer information on the Canadian labour market and finding a job in specific regions and professions. The same is true for finding information on programs and financial assistance available to newcomers to Canada. Several immigrants consulted for the current review reported that they did not know about any programs designed to assist them in finding employment in Canada. Others were aware of some organizations or programs, but did not know of initiatives specifically designed for their occupations with regard to transition assistance and strategies to quickly and successfully complete the foreign credential recognition process.

3.4 Programs Designed to Assist Internationally Trained Workers

Difficulties regarding the recruitment and integration of internationally trained workers into the Canadian labour market have been known for some time. Federal and provincial governments as well as educators, employers and immigrant serving agencies have launched several key programs and initiatives designed to assist both internationally trained workers in finding employment in their field and the electricity sector in addressing skill shortages by tapping into this labour pool.

Programs are often occupation specific, addressing the specific difficulties related to regulatory requirements, foreign credential recognition and sector specific issues regarding recruitment and integration strategies. The following section will present an overview of programs that are of specific interest to the electricity sector.

3.4.1 Programs for Internationally Trained Engineers and Engineering Technicians and Technologists

There are a number of programs available across Canada that focus on assisting internationally trained engineers during the transition phase with regard to licensure in Canada and finding employment in their field. Programs are offered through immigrant serving agencies, educational institutions or the regulatory bodies themselves. Table 3-2 presents an overview of available programs by institution and profile.

Table 3-2
Programs for Internationally Trained Engineers, Technologists, Technicians

PROGRAM NAME	INSTITUTION	PROGRAM PROFILE
Internationally Educated Engineering Qualifications (IEEQ) Program	University of Manitoba	One-year program of university engineering courses and co-op work experience by which eligible internationally educated engineers can be considered "academically qualified" by APEGM, as part of the process of achieving a P.Eng. licence in Manitoba.
Internationally-Educated Engineers Qualification Bridging (IEEQB) Program	Ryerson University Ontario	IEEQ-Manitoba spin-off program. Program specifically for international engineering graduates (IEGs) to provide them with an opportunity to meet the academic requirements for professional engineering licensure in Ontario. Includes 4-month work co-op.
McMaster-Mohawk Bachelor of Technology Program	McMaster University, Mohawk College Ontario	McMaster University's Faculty of Engineering and Mohawk College's School of Engineering Technology are partners collaborating to provide a new and innovative pathway to both a three year college diploma and a four year university degree; designed for working technologists, internationally trained workers, and secondary school graduates.
Engineering your Future	Skills for Change Ontario	Engineering-specific training modules, employment counselling and support, mentoring matches, and job development services.
International Engineer Bridging Program	Bredin Institute Alberta	18 week program with an additional eight weeks of job search and case manager support if required. Incorporated within the program is classroom theory, computerized training, ESL training, TOEFL iBT preparation, role playing exercises, skill upgrading, internship, case management and follow-up support.

PROGRAM NAME	INSTITUTION	PROGRAM PROFILE
Engineering Intern Training Financial Credit Program (FCP)	Professional Engineers Ontario	International Engineering Graduates with a Bachelor of Engineering or Applied Science Degree can apply for PEO's professional engineer licence at no cost. They may also be registered in the Engineering Intern Training program for the first year at no cost.
Engineering Connections	Accessible Community Counselling & Employment Services (ACCES) Ontario	Six-week program; participants learn and practise effective job search strategies, develop an understanding of workplace communication and employer expectations, learn about the engineering labour market in the province and the country at large, and gain important insights on professional engineering standards and professional licensing in Ontario.
The Immigrant Engineering Orientation Program (IEOP)	S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (Sino United Chinese Community Enrichment Social Service) B.C.	A partnership program with Spectra Energy and the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. The program offers 10 weeks of workplace culture and language preparation, 6 weeks of Canadian Engineering work experience, and employment opportunities in the energy sector.
Projet d'accès rapide à l'Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec	CAMO (Comité d'adaptation de la main-d'œuvre) Quebec	Program designed to fast-track the credential recognition and licensure process for engineers in Quebec.

This non-exhaustive list highlights some of the best known and most successful programs designed to assist internationally trained engineers and technologists and technicians. It is indicative of the abundance of available programs and resources for engineers and technologists. Almost every province in Canada offers one or more programs targeting internationally trained engineers. In interviews with employers, educators, regulatory bodies and immigrant serving agencies, many informants were aware of at least one of the available programs for engineers. However, the majority of internationally trained engineers that were consulted in focus group discussions did not report that they had heard about these programs. The discussion participants also stressed that, due to the fragmentation of programs and the vast array of different initiatives, it is difficult to find one agency that would provide assistance in all areas that they identified as barriers to entering the Canadian labour market.

Of the available programs, the initiatives offered at the University of Manitoba, Ryerson University, McMaster University and Mohawk College are the most comprehensive programs with regard to offering internationally trained engineers an option to upgrade their education as well as gather Canadian work experience. However, the connection to additional post-secondary courses could be problematic, as several internationally trained

engineers stressed that they saw no need to re-enter post-secondary schooling after having completed their post-secondary education in their home countries. Time and tuition fees needed to complete these programs constitute significant barriers for internationally trained engineers. In addition, the work experience offered through these programs is limited to a few months and thus falls short of the required one year work experience that candidates have to have when applying for the engineering licence. Other initiatives that focus more on providing participants with employment opportunities in the industry, like the initiative offered by S.U.C.C.E.S.S. in British Columbia, present fewer entry barriers and faster success for internationally trained engineers. Of particular importance for the success of all above-mentioned programs is an approach that combines the efforts of various stakeholders and is built on effective partnerships with the industry and the regulatory community. This was confirmed in interviews with key informants who reported that the collaboration of all stakeholder groups in this process is the key to successful programs and initiatives.

A more detailed description of some of the listed programs can be found in Section 5 of this report.

3.4.2 Other Programs

Compared to the abundance of available programs for engineers, and technologists and technicians, programs designed to specifically assist internationally trained tradespeople are relatively rare and not well known among employers and other key stakeholders in the industry. Table 3-3 presents an overview of available programs relevant to the electricity sector by organization and profile.

Table 3-3
Overview of Available Programs Relevant to the Electricity Sector

PROGRAM NAME	INSTITUTION	PROGRAM PROFILE
Newcomers Connecting to Trades Apprenticeship Resources (NeCTAR)	Ontario Centre for Internationally Trained Professionals and Tradespeople (CITPT)	Information kit for internationally trained tradespeople and immigrant serving agencies offering assistance to them
Preparation for Apprenticeship, Trades and Technology (PATT)	Fanshawe College Ontario	44-week Construction or Manufacturing Trades program for internationally-trained tradespeople; the program includes training in Ontario occupational health and safety practices and laws, building, electrical and/or other relevant codes and standards, and other technical areas. This segment of the program is 20 weeks in length. PATT includes an additional 16 weeks of Advanced English language training, with occupation-specific vocabulary, portfolio development, career planning and job search techniques. PATT also includes an 8-week work placement with area employers.

PROGRAM NAME	INSTITUTION	PROGRAM PROFILE
ESL Trades	NorQuest College Alberta	The program is designed to help participants develop pre-trade skills, find work in their trade or occupation and become qualified in their chosen field. In this program, participants also improve their English, and learn job search skills such as researching potential employers and writing résumés.
B.C. Skills Connect for Immigrants Program	B.C. Ministry of Economic Development – delivered through a number of external service providers	Focuses on occupations in sectors that have, or are expected to have, skill shortages (including construction, transportation, energy, tourism/hospitality and health); provides flexible programming based on individual client need, including career assessment and planning, skills enhancement and workplace orientation and practice.

Other, more general programs such as ESL programs and initiatives assisting with job search skills exist, but do not focus on trades or focus on trades not relevant to the electricity industry. The shorter list indicates that fewer programs are available specifically for internationally trained tradespeople with a background in the electricity sector. Newer initiatives are focussing on construction and some electrical trades. In general, the network of programs and services for tradespeople coming to Canada is not as developed as the network for internationally trained engineers. This may be due to fewer regulatory requirements with regard to entering the Canadian labour market or the option to enter a related but unregulated trade. However, as the analysis of the supply-demand gap in the electricity industry presented in Section 2.9 suggests, the demand for skilled tradespeople is particularly high in the electricity sector, indicating that issues and barriers preventing internationally trained tradespeople from entering the Canadian labour market need to be addressed more comprehensively in order to ensure that employers can tap into the already small but existing pool of skilled internationally trained tradespeople.

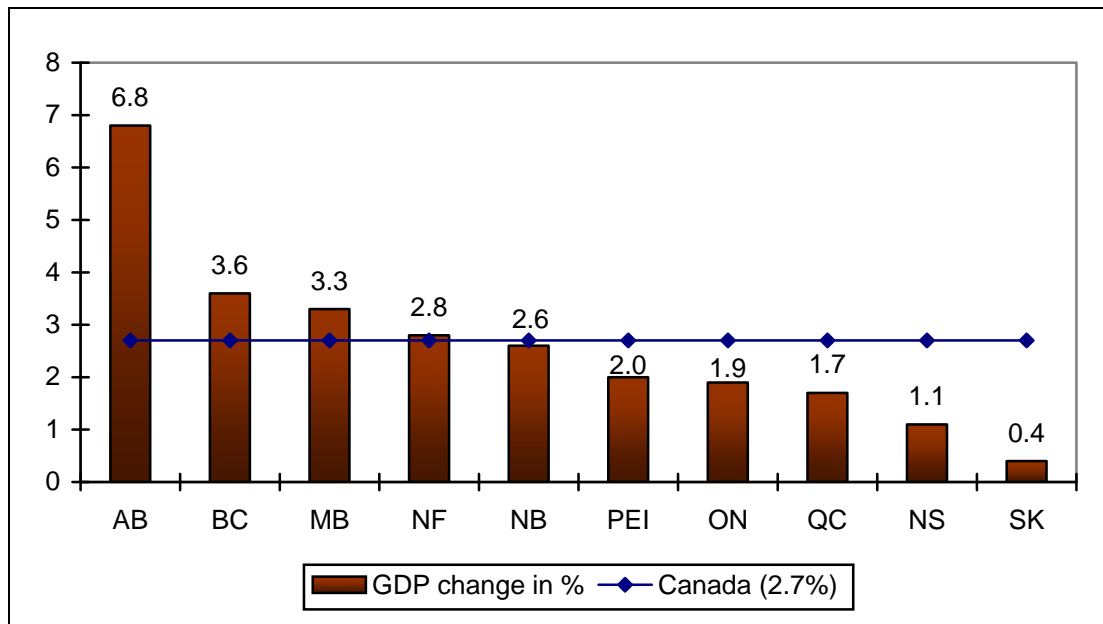
SECTION 4: Regional Profiles

The current review of practices in foreign credential recognition and the recruitment and integration of internationally trained workers in Canada’s electricity sector revealed substantial differences between regions. Based on economic need, the extent to which skill shortages have been identified as key issues in the provincial or regional economies and the companies’ abilities to tap into more traditional labour pools from other industries, the demand for internationally trained workers varies significantly. Varying demand results in varying strategies with respect to recruitment and foreign credential recognition procedures. The following section will summarize regional characteristics and differences drawn from consultations with key industry representatives and other stakeholders as well as secondary sources such as regional economic data from Statistics Canada and other sources.

4.1 British Columbia and Alberta

The provincial economies in British Columbia and Alberta have experienced significant growth in past years. With economic growth of 6.8% in Alberta in 2006 and 3.7% in B.C. in the same year, both provinces continue to outperform all other provinces as well as the national economic growth of 2.7% in 2006.⁴⁶

Figure 4-1
GDP at Market Prices, % Change in 2006 – National Comparison



Source: B.C. Stats

⁴⁶ Based on economic profiles and data provided by B.C. Stats at <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/bcbi/bcbi0704.pdf> and the Canada West Foundation at http://www.cwf.ca/V2/cnt/publication_200706051516.php (retrieved on September 4, 2007)

In addition to economic growth in both provinces, the national phenomenon of a rapidly aging workforce and projected or already beginning retirement waves have created significant labour shortages in both provinces. Labour shortages affect all industries in the region, but are particularly apparent for specific industries and occupations. HRSDC currently lists a total of 183 occupations as “occupations under pressure” in Alberta and 226 occupations in B.C.⁴⁷ One third of the occupations under pressure in both provinces are trades occupations, indicating that labour shortages in industries relying on skilled tradespeople, including the electricity industry, have been identified as significant problems in the region.

Key informant interviews with electricity sector employers in the region confirmed that identified and anticipated skill shortages were a strong motivation for companies to develop formal strategies and plans to tap into non-traditional labour pools, including skills of recent immigrants to Canada. Overall, the efforts of employers in the region were organized and involved a high degree of stakeholder participation. Several employers had developed programs and initiatives in partnership with the provincial government, regulatory bodies, immigrant serving agencies and education institutions designed to facilitate the entry of internationally trained workers into the labour market. Initiatives range from recruiting overseas to specific programs for internationally trained workers within the company. These programs include the development of cross-cultural training programs for Canadian and internationally trained employees to improve communication and cross-cultural understanding, as well as social and financial support for internationally trained workers prior to and during the foreign credential recognition and licensure process. The extent of efforts did not vary substantially by company size, indicating that regardless of company size, employers in the region have identified a need to develop comprehensive strategies and policies to attract internationally trained workers and assist them during the transition into the Canadian labour market.

Similarly comprehensive efforts were reported in interviews with government officials. Provincial ministries such as the B.C. Ministry of Economic Development have launched several programs and initiatives designed to assist internationally trained workers in finding employment commensurate with their pre-arrival experience. Programs include the International Qualifications Program and the Skills Connect Program, as well as the immigration related Provincial Nominee Program. Government representatives reported partnerships with regulatory bodies, the federal government, employers and immigrant serving agencies in developing and delivering the programs. Similarly, the government of Alberta, including the Training and Apprenticeship Branch, has developed partnerships with employers and immigrant serving agencies designed to identify and address skill and licensure requirement gaps of internationally trained workers wishing to enter the labour market in Alberta.

Education institutions and immigrant serving agencies in the region offer numerous programs to internationally trained workers looking for employment. Programs range from language and cultural training to job search assistance and specific assistance with licensure/certification requirements. However, several internationally trained workers consulted during four focus group discussions in the region noted that the number and diversity of available programs in B.C. and Alberta are difficult to navigate and appear

⁴⁷ HRSDC Regional Occupations Under Pressure List Alberta:
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/oup/aboutlist.shtml;
Regional Occupations Under Pressure List B.C.:
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/oup/BC_ROL_200709_e.pdf (retrieved on October 26, 2007)

fragmented. Discussion participants were only aware of a few of the available programs and mentioned that finding appropriate support and information during the transition and licensure process was one of the key difficulties they encountered. In addition, despite the numerous attempts of employers, governments, education institutions and immigrant serving agencies, internationally trained workers reported the same struggles and frustrations with the credential recognition and job search process that was reported in other provinces.

4.2 Saskatchewan and Manitoba

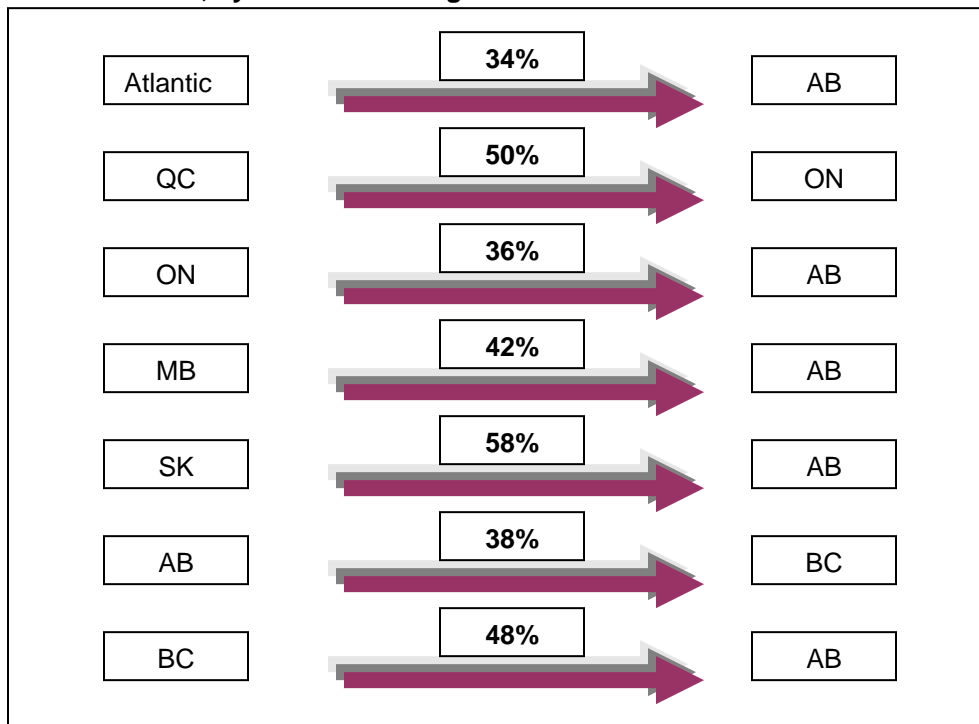
As indicated above in Figure 4-1, Manitoba experienced the third largest economic growth in Canada in 2006, and while Saskatchewan clearly lagged behind in 2006, the Canada West Foundation recently released a report indicating new economic realities in the province. Saskatchewan is projected to develop into one of Canada's fastest growing economies, facilitated by "plentiful job opportunities, the rising wages, the improved tax situation, and the relatively low cost of living in the province."⁴⁸ Due to the economic growth, both provinces are beginning to experience labour shortages in specific industries and occupations. HRSDC has not yet released a regional list of occupations under pressure, indicating that skill shortages have not yet been identified as significant problems for the regional economies. However, several sources, including the provincial governments and business councils report significant labour shortages particularly for trades occupations.⁴⁹

Skill shortages are complicated by the fact that the booming economies in Alberta and B.C. have drawn qualified workers away from Saskatchewan and Manitoba and that the employers in Saskatchewan close to the Alberta border, in particular, continue to compete with companies in Alberta who are able to pay significantly higher wages. Recent estimates by Statistics Canada on interprovincial migration show that Alberta ranks as the top destination province for the majority of interprovincial migrants throughout Canada. As shown in Figure 4-2, all other provinces, and particularly those in close geographic proximity are in clear competition with Alberta with regard to the attraction and retention of interprovincial migrants, including skilled workers.

⁴⁸ 2007. The Canada West Foundation. Reasons for Optimism: Saskatchewan Economic Profile and Forecast. Retrieved on September 4, 2007 from http://www.cwf.ca/V2/cnt/release_200703261052.php

⁴⁹ For Saskatchewan, see [http://www.aee.gov.sk.ca/adx.aspx/adxGetMedia.aspx?DocID=627,718,222,94,88,Documents&MediaID=430&Filename=Labor-Market-Conditions-for-the-Apprenticeship-Trades-in-Saskatchewan-\(2006+to+2009\)-ES.pdf](http://www.aee.gov.sk.ca/adx.aspx/adxGetMedia.aspx?DocID=627,718,222,94,88,Documents&MediaID=430&Filename=Labor-Market-Conditions-for-the-Apprenticeship-Trades-in-Saskatchewan-(2006+to+2009)-ES.pdf) and <http://www.labour.gov.sk.ca/commission/downloads/saskbusinesscouncil.pdf>; for Manitoba, see <http://www.businesscouncilmb.ca/Publications/columns-timetofix.pdf> and <http://www.cme-mec.ca/mb/media.asp?id=895>

Figure 4-2
Interprovincial Migration Quarterly Estimates 2007 – Percentage of Out-Migrants Lost to Top Destination Province, by Province of Origin



Source: Statistics Canada, Quarterly Demographic Estimates 2007

Key informant interviews with electricity sector employers in the region confirmed that economic growth and emerging labour shortages have been identified as important factors with regard to developing policies and strategies to tap into non-traditional labour pools. However, employers indicated that they were in the early stages of developing such policies and strategies and have only recently begun to understand the challenges associated with foreign credential recognition and the process of hiring internationally trained workers. Company representatives reported that they were in the process of establishing information sharing relationships on licensure/certification procedures for internationally trained workers with employers in other regions that have had more experience with hiring workers who received their education and training outside of Canada.

Similarly, interviews with government officials in the region indicated that recently, effective partnerships with employers, educators and regulatory bodies have been developed, but that the primary role of the provincial government was seen in providing funding for pilot projects developed by education institutions, such as the Internationally Educated Engineering Qualifications Program (IEEQ) at the University of Manitoba, which clearly stood out with regard to program design and success and is currently funded as a pilot project by the government of Manitoba as a partnership between the University, the provincial regulatory body, the provincial government and Manitoba Hydro.

Apart from the successful IEEQ Program in Manitoba, a few other programs and initiatives have been developed in the region by educators and immigrant serving agencies. However, the number and extent of existing programs is limited and currently focuses mainly on

language skills and job search strategies. Few comprehensive programs have been developed outside of the IEEQ initiative. This finding was confirmed in focus group discussions with internationally qualified workers. Discussion participants noted that the prairie provinces lag behind in providing comprehensive support to recent immigrants and that more initiatives targeting the difficulties of the licensure/certification process are needed.

4.3 Ontario

According to Statistics Canada, Ontario's economic growth has trailed the national average for the fourth consecutive year in 2006, due to a contraction in manufacturing industries, which account for about 20% of the province's economy.⁵⁰ Since 2004, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth has been slowing, from 3.2% in 2004 to only 1.9% in 2006. However, despite the slowing trend, labour shortages nevertheless exist in Ontario. This is due to the aging workforce and loss of skilled workers to Alberta, but not as much to economic growth and thus is not as widespread as in other provinces and varies intraprovincially. HRSDC's regional list of occupations under pressure for Ontario lists only 25 occupations in total, 11 of them in the Health Services Sector and only one occupation related to the electricity sector (Mechanical Engineer).⁵¹ This compares to 15 electricity sector related occupations on the occupations under pressure list for B.C. and 20 related occupations on the list for Alberta.

This finding was confirmed in key informant interviews with electricity sector employers in Ontario. While all informants indicated that they had identified anticipated labour shortages due to projected retirements in the industry, it was reported that the demand for internationally trained workers was limited. Many companies noted that they do not have any formal policies or strategies regarding the recruitment or licensure/certification of internationally trained workers and assess credentials or the need for assistance during the foreign credential recognition process on a case-by-case basis. In addition, employers reported that they were not actively looking for internationally trained workers and had restricted themselves to hiring individuals who are already in the country and preferably already accredited. Employers involved in nuclear energy production and distribution reported that their key problems were not necessarily associated with credential recognition and licensure, but with security screening requirements and processing times. It was stressed that bureaucratic procedures as well as federal watchlists for candidates from countries such as Iran and North Korea further complicated the already challenging security screening requirements that include a minimum of five years traceable (employment) history which was reported to be difficult to obtain in many cases. These security screening requirements and associated difficulties have prompted some employers to only consider internationally trained workers in the nuclear field if they have been in Canada for three, preferably five, years. This ensures that the recent personal and employment history of the candidate is Canadian and therefore more easily traceable.

Due to limited demand for internationally trained workers on the one hand, but increasing supply of skilled immigrants particularly in areas surrounding Toronto (one of the most popular destinations for immigrants entering Canada), immigrant serving agencies and educators are faced with higher numbers of clients and fewer possibilities for job placements and strategic partnerships with employers in the region.

⁵⁰ Statistics Canada. Provincial and Territorial Economic Accounts Review. Retrieved on September 4, 2007 from <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/13-016-XIE/2007001/high.htm>

⁵¹ Regional List of Occupations Under Pressure Ontario: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/epb/lmd/fw/ON_ROL_200611_e.pdf

4.4 Quebec

An economic development similar to that in Ontario is descriptive of Quebec in 2006. Third last in a national comparison of economic growth, Quebec's primary industries – mining, forestry, logging and fishing – declined for the second consecutive year. This resulted in struggles for manufacturers tied to these industries and produced an overall GDP growth of only 1.7%.⁵² Despite the slower economic growth, Quebec currently experiences labour shortages, particularly in the tourism, construction and retail industries. These shortages in the province are mainly due to a declining birth rate, projected retirements of baby boomers and the fact that Quebecers tend to retire at a younger age than their counterparts in other provinces.⁵³ However, despite reported labour shortages and resulting economic concern, labour shortages are less pronounced than in other regions in Canada. HRSDC has not released an occupations under pressure list for the province and there are no indications of labour shortages in Quebec's electricity sector.

Despite numerous attempts to speak with several electricity sector employers in the region, no informant was willing to contribute to the current review. Given the economic situation, this could be the result of a generally limited demand for internationally trained workers in the sector and a resulting limited interest in the topic of foreign credential recognition.

This conclusion is further confirmed by an analysis of key informant interviews with government officials as well as secondary sources summarizing existing programs for internationally trained engineers. The representative of the provincial government indicated that while there are currently efforts underway to establish programs to assist internationally trained workers during their transition into the Canadian society and labour market, only a limited number of projects already exist.

4.5 Atlantic Canada

Taken together, the Atlantic provinces of Canada have seen moderate to significant economic growth in 2006, with Newfoundland leading the way with a GDP growth of 2.8%, slightly above the Canadian average. With the exception of Nova Scotia, which experienced a slight drop in GDP growth from 1.5% in 2005 to 1.1% in 2006, all other Atlantic provinces reported increased economic growth. Due to economic growth, a retiring workforce and competition for skilled labour with high-wage provinces such as Alberta, the Atlantic provinces are beginning to experience acute labour shortages, which are projected to worsen in the near future.⁵⁴

⁵² Statistics Canada. Provincial and Territorial Economic Accounts Review. Retrieved on September 4, 2007 from <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/13-016-XIE/2007001/high.htm>

⁵³ 2007. Montreal Economic Institute. The Retirement Age in Quebec: A Worrying Situation. Retrieved on September 4, 2007 from http://www.iedm.org/uploaded/pdf/juin07_en.pdf

⁵⁴ 2005. Ruggeri, Joe and Yang Zou. From Labour Surpluses to Labour Constraints in Atlantic Canada. Policy Studies Centre at the University of New Brunswick.

However, the provincial economies in the Atlantic provinces are generally smaller and labour shortages have arisen only in specific sectors and occupations.⁵⁵ Key informants in electricity sector companies, education institutions and immigrant serving agencies indicated that so far the demand for internationally trained workers is limited due to the size of the labour market. Consequently, companies have not yet developed any formal policies with regard to recruitment and foreign credential recognition and licensure of internationally trained workers in the industry. Decisions on recruitment and providing support during the licensure/certification process are made on a case-by-case basis.

Educators and immigrant serving agencies reported a recent trend towards attracting more skilled immigrants as part of aggressive immigration strategies developed by the federal and provincial governments. Informants voiced concerns that the smaller economies in the Atlantic provinces might not be able to accommodate fast growing numbers of skilled immigrants. Lengthy foreign credential recognition procedures were mentioned as potentially further complicating the situation for newly arrived immigrants in Eastern Canada.

Internationally trained workers confirmed these observations in focus group discussions in the region. It was stressed that in addition to the difficulties of having foreign degrees and work experience recognized and obtaining the relevant Canadian licence/certificate, finding a job in general was found to be a key difficulty for many discussion participants. Several participants mentioned that they were currently looking into options to relocate to Alberta or return to their home countries due to a lack of available job opportunities in the Atlantic provinces.

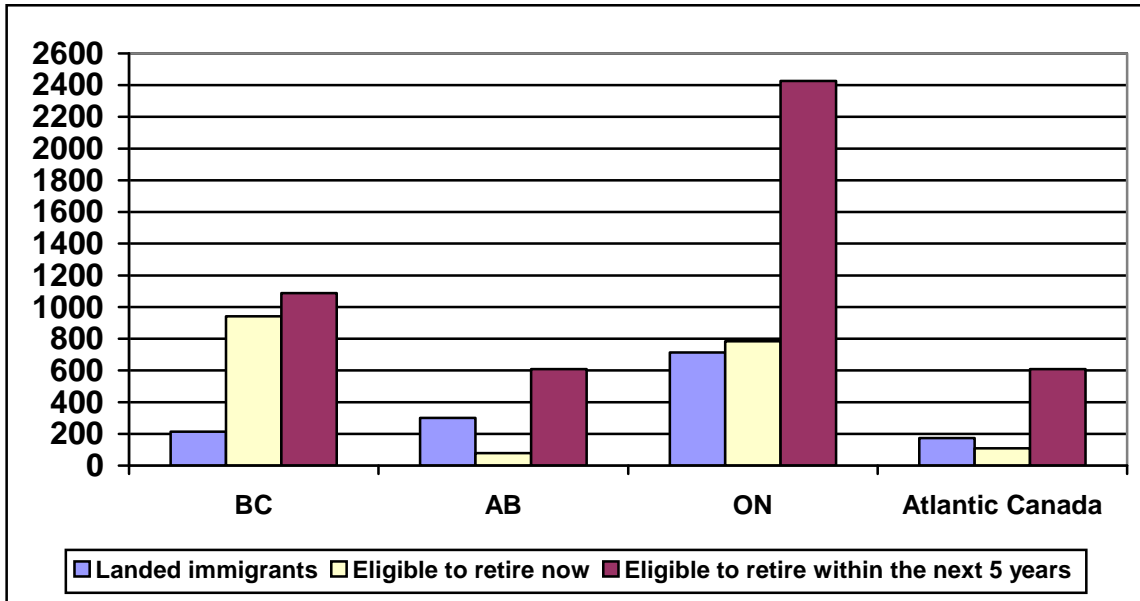
4.6 Number of Immigrants by Region Compared to Expected Future Retirements in the Electricity Sector

Although regions such as Ontario and Atlantic Canada may be currently experiencing lower demand for internationally trained workers, retirement eligibility data from the 2004 Electricity Sector Study indicates that future retirements in regions such as Ontario and Atlantic Canada are expected to markedly increase over the next five years. As a result, employers in provinces currently experiencing lower demand for internationally trained workers will still need to be prepared for the impact of future retirements.

Figure 4-2 presents the estimated number of eligible employees projected to retire in the electricity sector based on the 2004 sector study, compared to the number of landed immigrants by region. Although there is no guarantee that immigrants will remain in the same province in which they landed, Figure 4-2 suggests that even regions with low current levels of demand for internationally trained workers will need to respond to retirements in the labour force in the future through a variety of means, including possible use of internationally trained workers.

⁵⁵ It should be noted that due to the generally smaller size of the economies, the establishment of large-scale projects in oil and gas mining significantly affect labour demand in the provinces and have a more pronounced effect than similar projects in provinces with larger regional economies.

Figure 4-2
**Number of Employees in the Sector Who are Eligible and Expected to Retire
 And Number of Landed Immigrants by Region**



Source: Citizenship and Immigration – Annual Flow (landed immigrants) & 2004 HR Sector Study (expected retirements)

SECTION 5: Case Study Profiles

The review of current practices in foreign credential recognition and the recruitment and integration of internationally trained workers in Canada's electricity industry has identified a number of case studies that will be described in this section. Practices include successful bridging programs, government initiatives, stakeholder partnerships and employer efforts. Profiles are based on information collected through literature and document reviews, the review on websites and key informant interviews. The selection of the best practices was based on several criteria, including relevance to the electricity sector, comprehensiveness of the program or initiative, relevance with regard to identified barriers for internationally trained workers and success in addressing skill shortages in the industry.

5.1 Bridging Programs: Internationally Educated Engineering Qualifications (IEEQ)

“With our program, we move people from having no recognition to having 100% recognition within just one year. In addition, through the co-op term, we enable participants to gather Canadian work experience and establish contacts with employers in the industry.”

*IEEQ Program Director at the
University of Manitoba*

The IEEQ Program developed at the University of Manitoba in partnership with APEGM, the engineering regulatory body in Manitoba, has been a success extending beyond provincial boundaries. The one-year program is offered to international engineering graduates who have been assigned five or fewer exams in the assessment of their qualifications by APEGM. Program participants receive a combination of academic, cross-cultural and practical training, including a four month paid internship in the industry. At the end of the program, APEGM considers participants academically qualified for licensure and graduates have four months of the one-year Canadian work experience required for full P.Eng. licensure.

The program at the University of Manitoba has had significant success. Even though it is a relatively small program, accommodating around 10 participants per year, according to the program director approximately 90% of participants complete the program and become licensed. APEGM has never refused to license any graduates of the program. Out of the 15 graduates completing the program in the first two years of its existence, 14 found employment in the industry immediately or shortly after completing the program.⁵⁶

The holistic approach, incorporating academic, cultural and practical training in partnership with the regulatory body has contributed significantly to the success of the program. In fact, program graduates are beginning to be considered qualified for licensure even outside of Manitoba. Program officials reported that APEGGA (Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists, and Geophysicists of Alberta) has accepted IEEQ graduates on a case-by-case basis for licensure in Alberta, indicating interprovincial recognition of the quality and success

⁵⁶ 2006. CCPE document. “Pilot Program Offers International Engineering Graduates Canadian Education.” Retrieved on August 30, 2007 from http://www.ccpe.ca/fc2i/e/documents/FC2I%20IEEQ%20Article%20_final%20_060113.pdf

of the program. Another indicator of the program's success is the fact that several other jurisdictions across Canada are looking into or have established a similar program in their province. The IEEQB Program at Ryerson University in Ontario is an example of an already established spin-off initiative modelled after the IEEQ Program in Manitoba. In addition, IEEQ officials reported that they have been talking to post-secondary education institutions in British Columbia and other provinces and are currently developing workshops and presentations as well as documentation that can be provided to institutions that are interested in establishing a similar program.

In interviews with industry representatives, regulatory bodies and engineering organizations as well as immigrant serving agencies and other educational institutions, the IEEQ Program was identified as a well-known initiative that is viewed as a highly successful approach by many key players in the electricity industry as well as within the immigrant serving communities. The Canadian Council of Professional Engineers, now Engineers Canada, has recognized the IEEQ Program through publications and by providing funding to enable APEGM and IEEQ Program staff to share their experiences with other jurisdictions.⁵⁷

5.1.1 Programs Similar to the Manitoba IEEQ Program

Two programs currently active in Canada are similar to the IEEQ model developed in Manitoba: the IEEQB Program at Ryerson University and the McMaster-Mohawk Bachelor of Technology Program. The IEEQB Program at Ryerson University is very similar to the model developed at the University of Manitoba. The program is an individually-tailored undergraduate academic bridging program that covers the confirmatory examination requirements as determined by PEO and combines academic training with a four-month paid co-op work placement in the industry. Program graduates are recognized by PEO as having met the academic requirements for licensure. In addition, the IEEQB Program offers an additional stream to candidates who have been offered a Specific Examination Program that consists of not more than nine specific examinations. It also is available for IEGs with the Confirmatory Examination Program who may wish to pursue an accredited Bachelor of Engineering degree from Ryerson University. This component of the program may offer participants an advanced-standing admission to the third-year level of the relevant engineering program at Ryerson University based on a course by course equivalency evaluation.

The McMaster-Mohawk Bachelor of Technology Program is set up slightly differently. The program is designed for working technologists, internationally trained workers and high school graduates to earn both a college diploma and university degree in technology (Bachelor of Technology). The program is unique in combining an engineering technology education with management studies. The Bachelor of Technology degree offers a two-year degree-completion option to college graduates with a three-year technology diploma and to internationally trained workers who require Canadian credentials and experience. The program includes co-op work placements that count towards the Canadian work experience requirement. With its focus on technology and offering a full Canadian degree, the program is not designed as a bridging program, but instead offers internationally trained workers a fast-track option to obtain a Canadian degree and work experience. While not strictly modeled after the IEEQ Program in Manitoba, the overall design of the McMaster-Mohawk Bachelor of Technology Program is similar to the ideas behind IEEQ .

⁵⁷ Ibid.

5.2 Stakeholder Partnerships: S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and Spectra Energy

The immigrant serving agency S.U.C.C.E.S.S. “is one of the largest immigration and social service agencies in British Columbia. Its mandate is to promote the well being of Canadians and immigrants, and to encourage their participation in the community. This is accomplished through delivering social services, employment services, business and economic development services, training and education services, health services (under the auspices of S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Multi-Level Care Society incorporated in 1995) and advocacy.”⁵⁸

In partnership with Spectra Energy and British Columbia’s Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. has developed the Immigrant Engineering Orientation Program, a first time B.C. initiative for internationally trained engineers. The program combines workplace culture and communication soft skills training along with safety certification provided through S.U.C.C.E.S.S. with a six week practicum opportunity arranged through Spectra Energy. Participants are trained strictly according to demand at Spectra, providing them with the opportunity to find employment with the company once they have completed the program. Program elements include upgrading and training based on regulatory requirements as well as social and cultural training to enable program participants to not only enter the Canadian labour market but to successfully integrate into a company and their community in B.C.

This holistic approach has proven to be a key success for similar collaborative programs at S.U.C.C.E.S.S. where 100% of program graduates have found employment and close to 80% are able to maintain a position in the industry. Approximately two thirds of program graduates stay with the company that first hired them after completing the program, indicating that the training they received through the program enabled them to successfully integrate into the company.

5.3 Government Initiatives: Foreign Credentials Referral Office and B.C. Skills Connect for Immigrants

There are several government initiatives and programs designed to assist internationally trained workers in the process of credential recognition and licensure/certification as well as in finding employment in Canada. Initiatives range from providing funding to existing bridging programs to developing pilot programs and establishing separate offices and departments dealing specifically with matters of foreign credential recognition. The newly established Foreign Credential Referral Office and the B.C. Skills Connect for Immigrants Program are two examples where the federal and a provincial government have developed different approaches to addressing identified difficulties that internationally trained workers face in entering the Canadian labour market.

⁵⁸ Description at <http://www.successbc.ca/eng/content/view/5/30/>

5.3.1 Foreign Credential Referral Office

The federal Foreign Credential Referral Office (FCRO) was launched in May 2007. The FCRO is designed to help internationally trained individuals who plan to work in Canada get their credentials assessed and recognized more quickly. As outlined in Budget 2007, \$32.2 million has been set aside for the first five years of the FCRO's operation.⁵⁹ The FCRO's services will include:

- In-person and a dedicated phone service operated by Service Canada at 320 outlets across the country by fall 2007
- An expanded online service that will help individuals identify occupations in Canada for which they may be qualified, provide them with detailed labour market information, and refer them to the appropriate regulatory body
- Increasing employer awareness of the processes for, and benefits of hiring internationally trained and educated workers

The overall goals of the office are to streamline information about foreign credential recognition and improve the transparency of the process. The newly established office is designed to address difficulties related to a lack of information or misinformation of all parties involved in the credential recognition process. For the future, plans include overseas pilot projects to inform immigrants about occupations and labour market situations in Canada prior to their arrival.

Due to the short lifespan of the office, it is not clear whether this initiative will bring the desired success with regard to streamlining information and providing immigrants with a central source of information to turn to in matters of foreign credential recognition. In addition, it is unclear what measures are planned to make immigrants and employers aware of the office and its services. If the FCRO can manage to act as a central voice in foreign credential recognition in Canada and if it is recognized by immigrants, employers and other stakeholders as a key source of information, the initiative will help address several of the identified key difficulties of the current foreign credential recognition process in Canada.

5.3.2 Skills Connect for Immigrants Program – British Columbia

The Skills Connect for Immigrants Program was launched in 2006 by the B.C. Ministry of Economic Development. The pilot initiative was designed to address the perceived gap in the programming for newly arrived skilled immigrants and has been implemented in four targeted sectors: construction, energy, tourism/hospitality, and transportation. Programs and services for the health sector were added in September 2007. The program is delivered by six service providers throughout the province and focuses on providing individually-tailored skills updating and training for recent immigrants looking for employment in B.C. in a field related to their pre-arrival experience. The program includes assistance with credential recognition procedures, technical training (if necessary), language and cultural training as well as work placements and contacts with regional employers. In providing individualized plans and services to the clients, the program aims to address all necessary aspects in order to ensure that clients have the skills, qualifications and required licences/certificates to enter the British Columbian labour market in a profession related to their pre-arrival experience.

⁵⁹ See FCRO website at <http://www.credentials.gc.ca/media/releases/2007-05-24.asp>

5.4 Employer Initiatives: ENMAX and FortisAlberta

In addition to established programs and pilot initiatives, the review of current practices in foreign credential recognition and the recruitment and integration of internationally trained workers in Canada's electricity sector revealed that several employers have initiated special efforts and programs designed to recruit skilled immigrants and/or provide extensive assistance through the credential recognition and licensure process. ENMAX and FortisAlberta are two examples of companies that have developed very different strategies in addressing skill shortages and the issues related to hiring skilled workers who have received their education and work qualification outside of Canada.

5.4.1 ENMAX Corporation, Alberta

"I was sceptical at first, but after going to Manila and seeing them face to face and asking them technical questions, I was pleasantly surprised to see how qualified they are."

Manager of Operations and Maintenance, ENMAX Corporation

ENMAX Corporation is an energy distribution, supply and service company. ENMAX is a wholly owned subsidiary of The City of Calgary, headquartered in Calgary, Alberta. ENMAX operates and competes in Alberta's restructured electricity industry. In 2006, the company had shareholder's equity of \$1.703 billion and net earnings of \$130.1 million.⁶⁰ ENMAX serves a total of 500,000 customers throughout Alberta and employs around 1,200 people in the region.

In addition to the company's efforts to assist recent engineering graduates in gathering Canadian work experience through the Engineers-in-Training Program, which can also accommodate internationally trained engineers, in 2006, ENMAX initiated a project designed to address skill shortages in trades occupations that are relevant to the company. In cooperation with the government of Alberta, the Alberta Apprenticeship Board, union representatives and a manpower agency with international offices, ENMAX went to the Philippines to recruit skilled tradespeople as temporary foreign workers. The company successfully hired eight power linemen who were expected to arrive in Alberta in the summer of 2007. ENMAX worked with the provincial government, Service Canada, CIC and the union to provide the necessary paperwork to enable the recruited workers to receive a temporary work permit, certification by the Apprenticeship Board and full eligibility to legally work in their profession for ENMAX. Company officials who were involved in this process reported that this is a pilot initiative that has proven to be successful with regard to specifically addressing skill shortages.

The recruited workers were found to be well qualified and it is expected that ENMAX will assist those who are successful in the program and willing to stay permanently in Canada by supporting an application to the Provincial Nominee Program in Alberta. It was noted that if the current initiative proves to be successful with regard to the integration and permanent

⁶⁰ ENMAX Corporation website, retrieved on August 30, 2007 from <http://www.enmax.com/Corporation/Default.htm>

retention of the hired linemen, ENMAX will consider recruiting internationally trained workers as a viable pool of qualified tradespeople in the future. This is dependant on economic and operational feasibility of such an approach. It is expected that lessons learned from the current initiative will help shorten the process of obtaining the necessary permits and certifications, which was reported to have taken just under one year in the current case. Officials involved in the process reported that the most amount of time was needed to obtain the Labour Market Opinion that is a prerequisite to applying for the actual work permit for selected new hires from the Canadian Embassy in Manila. However, the company received the Labour Market Opinion for more people than they actually hired; thus they have approval to hire additional workers from the Philippines should they decide to repeat the overseas recruitment process.

In addition to hiring the power linemen and providing them with an option to legally work, and if desired, remain in Canada, ENMAX has arranged for cross-cultural training workshops for its employees and the supervisors who will work with the new employees from abroad to limit the extent to which cultural misunderstandings could jeopardize the successful integration of the new employees.

Overall, the company went to great lengths in order to recruit internationally trained workers in target occupations that are in high demand. However, company officials stressed that the costs related to this type of recruitment were only minimally higher than recruiting and relocating workers within Canada.

5.4.2 FortisAlberta

“We look at foreign trained people in the same light that we look at any new potential hire: we hire them at the allowable level and provide support where it is needed. With foreign trained people, we support them through the accreditation process. We end up with more loyal employees – something we may not necessarily get from all newly employed Canadians.”

Manager of Employee Development, FortisAlberta

FortisAlberta, subsidiary of Fortis Inc., is an investor-owned utility serving over 440,000 customers in communities across Alberta. The company provides close to 60% of Alberta’s low-voltage distribution system and employs around 950 people in the region.

Compared to the efforts of ENMAX described above, FortisAlberta has opted for a different approach with regard to the recruitment and integration of internationally trained workers. FortisAlberta does not actively recruit overseas, and instead, relies on internationally trained workers who are already in Canada and looking for employment in the sector. The company has had a few internationally trained workers from the Philippines, Mexico, Romania and Bulgaria join the group of 950 FortisAlberta employees. A company representative stressed that so far, there has not been a need to hire internationally trained workers or to develop specific formal policies with regard to assisting internationally trained workers in the licensure/certification process. However, the company has developed case-by-case guidelines to provide extensive support to new employees. In addition to being open to hiring candidates as engineers if they were accepted as engineers in training by APEGA, FortisAlberta hires internationally trained new Canadians at a level at which the individual is



eligible to work in order to provide the new employee with the opportunity to gather Canadian work experience. In addition, the company provides reimbursements for course fees, exams and other extraordinary costs connected to the licensure process. The Manager of Employee Development stressed that through this approach, the company has clearly benefited from hiring internationally trained workers while keeping recruitment costs low.

Benefits of hiring internationally trained workers include hiring highly qualified candidates with fresh eyes and an outside perspective that was reported to work very well for the company. Another benefit is having more motivated and loyal employees through providing support and enabling people to earn a living in a position related to their pre-arrival to Canada work experience. It was also stressed that even though the company currently has no formal policies regarding internationally trained workers, it would clearly develop such policies in the future should the demand for professionals trained outside of Canada increase in the region and company.

Overall, while the strategies at FortisAlberta are clearly different from the strategies at ENMAX, the company's approach of providing extensive support to those international workers who are already in Canada, facing the difficulties of foreign credential recognition and finding employment in their occupation, has been beneficial for both the company and the internationally trained workers that were hired. Several success stories of individuals starting as technologists and receiving support to pursue their P.Eng. while working at FortisAlberta were stressed in an interview with a company representative. Success stories for the company include filling vacancies with highly qualified individuals and benefiting from a higher level of loyalty toward the company than sometimes encountered from Canadian new employees.

SECTION 6: Recommendations and Strategies

Based on the research conducted as part of the current study, three main recommendations and eight strategies have been developed in consultation with the FCR Steering Committee to address the challenge of recruiting and retaining internationally trained workers in the electricity sector. The recommendations were informed by discussions at the *Integrating Internationally Trained New Canadians in the Energy Industry* Conference held on November 7 and 8, 2007, in Ottawa, Ontario.

As a component of the sector council's overall workforce development strategy, the overall goal of the sector is to develop a strategy to attract a sufficient number of well-qualified internationally trained workers from in-demand occupation groups, particularly from key trade occupations where shortages are being experienced or are expected. The following three recommendations will support this overall goal.

Recommendations

- 1) **Work with government agencies and other stakeholders to develop credential assessment and recognition support tools, programs and policies that address the labour needs of the sector.**

Initiatives:

1. Work with government agencies and regulatory bodies to expand availability of information on licensure/certification requirements to immigrants once they are in Canada and before they arrive.
2. Promote increased standardization of occupational qualifications within Canada, to enable increased labour mobility for both Canadian and internationally trained workers, particularly in occupations where shortages are being experienced.
3. Work to ensure that internationally trained workers have access to financial support in the form of government grants and/or loans while they are taking bridging programs.

- 2) **Research, develop and provide resources to assist stakeholders in the sector to attract, recruit, retain and integrate internationally trained workers.**

Initiatives:

1. Establish a clearinghouse of already existing resources for stakeholders in the sector. Resources could include best practices in recruiting and retaining internationally trained workers, links to existing bridging programs (and curricula) and information on the licensure/certification process for electricity-related occupations, etc.

2. Create resources such as process maps to detail the routes/processes required to immigrate to Canada, meet licensing/certification requirements and secure employment in the sector for new Canadians. Also, an inventory of available programs and services could be made available to those in the sector.
 3. Support the development of a peer support network and/or mentorship network for internationally trained workers. This could include developing an online discussion forum for internationally trained workers in the sector and employers.
 4. Build partnerships and communication supports with occupational organizations, including regulators and trainers to implement the initiatives supporting this recommendation.
- 3) Develop strategies to increase the level of communication and coordination among other sector councils, educators, employers, regulators, labour organizations, governments and immigrant serving agencies.**

Initiative:

1. Develop a process model to support stakeholder collaboration through best practice workshops, conferences, or online forums that include aspects such as:
 - i. Addressing the fragmentation in programs serving internationally trained workers
 - ii. Encouraging partnership development
 - iii. Identifying systems, processes or tools that support internationally trained workers integration
 - iv. Documentation and publicity of effective human resource strategies.

Next Steps

As an organization established to address the human resource needs of the Canadian electricity industry, the Electricity Sector Council will continue to have a significant role in responding to the challenges faced with recruiting internationally trained workers to meet labour demands in the Canadian electricity sector. The Electricity Sector Council will not be able to address each of the recommendations and strategies identified alone. It is expected that partnerships between educators, employers, regulators, labour organizations, government and immigrant serving agencies will be needed to address the challenges of recruiting and integrating internationally trained workers into the electricity sector.

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APPENDIX A: Research Methodology

Research Methodology

The results presented in the current report are based on a number of research activities undertaken by the Consultant. The following provides an overview of the methodology used to obtain the presented findings.

Literature and Document Review

The challenges around the successful integration of recent immigrants into the Canadian labour market have been researched extensively in recent years. A number of studies produced in this context focus on foreign credential recognition as it is recognized as one of the key barriers internationally trained workers face when trying to find employment in Canada.

The Consultant's research team reviewed key studies addressing foreign credential recognition, the overall integration of recent immigrants into the Canadian labour market and studies focusing specifically on Human Resources challenges in the electricity sector. A list of studies that were reviewed in this context is compiled in the bibliography of this report; however, the Consultant also reviewed a number of studies that were not directly cited in the report and therefore not included in the bibliography. These include:

- 2006. Riffell, Margaret for Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA). Recognizing the Prior Learning of Immigrants to Canada: Moving Towards Consistency and Excellence.
- 2006. Reitz, Jeffrey. Recent Trends in the Integration of Immigrants in the Canadian Labour Market.
- 2006. Fernandez, Sharon for Association of Sector Councils. Who Does What in Foreign Credential Recognition.
- 2005. Canadian Labour and Business Centre. Engagement with Regional Stakeholders on Integrating Internationally-Trained Workers into the Workforce.
- 2001. Canadian Labour and Business Centre. Assessing and Recognizing Foreign Credentials in Canada.
- 2003. Caledon Institute of Social Policy. Fulfilling the Promise: Integrating Immigrant Skills into the Canadian Economy.

In addition to existing studies on foreign credential recognition and the recruitment and integration of internationally trained workers, secondary data from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Statistics Canada and HRSDC was reviewed and included in the analysis for the current review.

Key Informant Interviews

An integral part of the research conducted for the current review were semi-structured interviews conducted with 40 key informants representing various stakeholder groups across Canada. Key informants included:

- Employers
- Government representatives
- Representatives of post-secondary education/training programs and institutions
- Immigrant serving agencies
- Unions
- Regulators

Interviews were conducted by phone using a pre-approved interview guide. Informants located in all provinces and the Yukon were interviewed for the review. The following table summarizes interview completions by stakeholder type and region.

Interview Completions by Stakeholder Group and Region

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	COMPLETIONS IN WESTERN CANADA (BC, YK AND AB)	COMPLETIONS IN SK AND MB	COMPLETIONS IN CENTRAL CANADA (ON AND QC)	COMPLETIONS IN ATLANTIC CANADA	TOTAL
Employers	7	2	3	--	12
Government	2	1	2	--	5
Post-Secondary Education	3	3	4	1	11
Immigrant Serving Agencies	2	1	3	1	7
Unions and Regulators	3	--	2	--	5
Total	17	7	14	2	40

Focus Groups

In addition to key informant interviews with stakeholders, a number of focus groups were held across the country between June and September of 2007 to gather in-depth information from internationally trained workers themselves. Focus groups were moderated to structure the two-hour discussions based on a moderator guide. Focus groups were held in the following cities across Canada:

- Vancouver (2 groups; total of 17 participants)
- Calgary (6 participants)
- Regina (6 participants)
- Saskatoon (2 groups; total of 12 participants)
- Toronto (6 participants)
- Ottawa (5 participants)
- Montreal (6 participants)
- Halifax (9 participants)
- Fredericton (11 participants)

Total number of focus group participants across the country: 78

The focus group in Fredericton was conducted with members of the Electricity Sector Council's Foreign Credential Recognition Committee.

Given the cross-national approach to the research activities, findings in the report were presented reflecting the regional cluster approach underpinning all research activities



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