

News Release

For Immediate Release
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ASET's contribution to new, national accreditation model helps ensure public safety **Bar raised for profession which impacts every aspect of daily life**

Daily life in Alberta is about to become a little safer thanks to the Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta's (ASET) stake in a new, national accreditation model for the engineering technology and applied science profession: Technology Accreditation Canada (TAC).

As a member of Technology Professionals Canada (TPC) and one of TAC's four founding provincial partners, ASET has helped raise the bar on accreditation standards for the thousands of professionals in Alberta who every day perform important tasks that impact public safety – from water to electricity to transportation. ASET's peer provincial professional associations (PPAs) in British Columbia, Ontario and Saskatchewan were also involved in the establishment of TAC.

Technicians, for example, install cable and phone, monitor traffic, work in labs, and do drafting design and construction supervision. Technologists own or manage businesses, manage projects, return well sites properly to nature, and facilitate the development, design, construction, inspection and repair of commercial buildings. They ensure fast-acting telephone networks, smart bus connections, perfectly clean water to drink, reliable natural gas service and electrical power, smooth roads on which to drive, and responsible oil and gas exploration/production/processing/and distribution.

Some professionals work for governments in intelligence agencies while others literally blow things up – designing the charges and managing sophisticated controlled blasts. Many own and/or manage large, successful engineering enterprises, and even work in non-traditional areas such as biomedical and geomatics.

“We thought it was important for ASET to be involved in spearheading a national accreditation program that meets the highest possible standards. Voluntary membership is a hallmark of ASET and, if a professional isn't a member, there's no way to ensure they are meeting ASET's standards. TAC national accreditation offers a vital safety net for that,” said Barry Cavanaugh, ASET CEO.

Three years in development and now officially launched, TAC is the direct result of a report commissioned by TPC from the Canadian Standards Association (CSA). Following research and feedback from stakeholder consultations, CSA identified opportunities for enhancement in the accreditation system, including clear, auditable processes and documentation, standards development, and training of auditors.

TAC takes the accreditation process to the next level through objective documentation, competency definition/measurement and quality assessment, and ensures auditor competency through specialized training, testing and monitoring. Accreditation decisions are based on the program

meeting clearly defined criteria and not on the subjective approval of a board of directors. Second-level process and annual reviews by TAC's governance and audit council guarantee consistency and integrity in TAC's national accreditation process.

"What this means is unprecedented quality assurance in the accreditation process for engineering technology and applied science programs at educational institutions in Alberta and the rest of Canada. We are delighted to have the support of ASET and its provincial peers in this significant undertaking," said Sam DiGiandomenico, TAC executive director.

TAC recently wrapped up work on its pilot project with Georgian College in Barrie, Ontario and awarded its inaugural accreditation to the college's electrical engineering technology program.

"Georgian College is proud to have the first TAC-accredited program in Canada. We were impressed with TAC's effective and efficient approach to the audit process. While we have enjoyed excellent relationships with other accrediting bodies, TAC exceeded our expectations. We would have no hesitation referring TAC to our college colleagues across the system," said Kevin Weaver, dean, technology and visual arts, Georgian College.

"TAC offers our top-drawer institutes and colleges an objective, thorough tool for quality control. It also makes it easier for graduates who -- without solid national accreditation -- must currently complete certification exams. The advent of TAC also reflects the pioneering culture in Alberta, including in excellence in education," added Cavanaugh.

Representing approximately 18,000 technicians and technologists across Alberta, ASET provides its members the certification that top employers demand. ASET members play an integral role in driving the Alberta economy and their innovation is one reason why the province maintains its competitive advantage. ASET members represent a wide range of sectors including avionics, biomedical, chemical, computers, electrical, environmental, geological, instrumentation, oil and gas, and telecommunications. www.aset.ab.ca.

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