

News Release

For Immediate Release
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ASET achieves Canadian first by enabling foreign-trained professionals to work without academic upgrading **Competency-based approach provides professional pathway for immigrants**

Starting this fall, Alberta technology professionals who are foreign-trained or senior practitioners will be the first in Canada to be able to work in their profession without academic upgrading.

Unlike the case with professions such as medicine and engineering, technicians and technologists who arrive in Alberta from other countries won't have to transition into other kinds of employment with lower remuneration.

This new development is part of the competency-based assessment approach which was adopted by the Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta (ASET) in 2013.

“Despite cyclical economic challenges, Alberta has always been a pioneer in the professional arena, and the engineering technology and applied science technology profession is no exception. As a nation we open our doors to new Canadians from around the globe. But it's also important to create a pathway for foreign-trained professionals to enter the job market within the profession for which they trained and worked,” said ASET CEO Barry Cavanaugh.

In accordance with this approach, ASET has revised its certification model to protect the public interest by ensuring applicant qualifications meet the requisite professional standards while also removing artificial barriers which prevent qualified applicants from achieving certification and entering the workforce.

“As an organization that supports the successful and integrative settlement of new Canadians in the Edmonton area, we are delighted that ASET is stepping up and working to remove employment barriers for foreign-trained technology professionals,” said Laurie Hauer, manager of employment, bridging & training programs for the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers.

ASET's former certification model required academic upgrading for applicants from non-

accredited education programs and, therefore, qualified international applicants and senior practitioners could not achieve certification without completing a full-time academic retraining program.

Within the new process, senior practitioners who never completed a post-secondary training program can also obtain certification, provided they can demonstrate through work experience that they meet the academic and competency standards.

ASET's former focus on academic assessment provided limited information on the professional competency of all applicants, domestic and international.

Under some circumstances, workplace documents needed for certification may be difficult to produce. International applicants and senior practitioners will first need to complete the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Portfolio which requires them to provide evidence of their skills and knowledge by either submitting workplace documentation or preparing new documentation, such as a technical report.

The ASET board will evaluate these applicants on a case-by-case basis to determine if they meet the proficiency requirements through their other documentation.

What do engineering technology and applied science technology professionals do?

Technicians 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 and 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.

The Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta (ASET) is the professional self-regulatory organization for engineering technologists and technicians in Alberta. ASET currently represents over 18,000 members, including full-time technology students, recent graduates and fully certified members in 21 disciplines and some 124 occupations across a multitude of industries. | aset.ab.ca

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