

News Release

ASET opens doors to foreign-trained engineering technology professionals

EDMONTON, Dec. 3, 2019 – When Divyesh Patel, an industrial engineer, left his home in Gujarat, India over four years ago to join his wife in Edmonton, he knew that the biggest challenge he would face - other than learning to drive on snow - would be finding work in his own profession.

He'd heard the sobering stories about highly qualified professionals from other countries being unsuccessful in securing gainful employment in their field. This was usually due to a lack of recognition of the overseas universities from which they earned their degrees, as well as the fact that these well-educated professionals had no Canadian work experience.

“For anyone coming here, finding the work you were trained for is the main issue. You send out your CV but don't get called for interviews. It is tough across the board. However, if you have licenses, certification, it will help,” said Patel.

Patel remained undeterred as he had not only a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Veer Narmad South Gujarat University, but had also worked for several years at Larson & Toubro in India, a major technology, engineering, construction, manufacturing and financial services conglomerate with global operations.

He immediately began looking for a job as well as professional certification to reinforce his efforts, and eventually learned about the Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta (ASET) through a web search and referrals from fellow professionals. ASET is the professional self-regulatory organization for engineering technologists and technicians in Alberta, representing approximately 18,000 members.

He reached out to ASET and began the process to apply for certification. “My feeling was that whatever path I chose, it would be right. I'll do whatever is necessary to work in my field,” he said.

With ASET's help, he was able to pursue an alternate route to employment related to his field. While working as a production operator for a leading pet food manufacturer, he applied to ASET for certification, providing the requisite documentation and completing professional practice exams (PPE).

Within six months of starting that process, he achieved his ASET designation of certified engineering technologist (CET). Half a year later - and as a direct result of having that designation - he was

promoted to industrial engineer. Most recently, he accepted a position as an operations manager for another company.

None of this would have been possible were it not for ASET's commitment to creating a level playing field for foreign-trained professionals. Its competency-based assessment model, formally launched in 2016, enables engineering technology professionals from other countries to gain purchase in their career fields without having to return to school full-time. ASET also eliminated the Canadian work experience requirement for foreign-trained professionals, making ASET one of the few regulatory bodies in Alberta to do this.

Foreign-trained professionals seeking certification and an ASET designation (CET or C.Tech.) now undergo a competency assessment. This includes submitting work experience documents - such as CV, job descriptions, and references - confirming their work experience locally and abroad. They then complete a single competency exam to validate their technical knowledge at the technologist level, as well as an ethics and law exam.

"If Divyesh had moved to Alberta prior to 2013, he would have received an associate membership and been instructed to go back to school full-time. Thankfully, the timing of his arrival worked to his advantage and he was able to establish a solid footing in the engineering technology profession - one that often works on the same projects, even side by side with professional engineers," said ASET CEO Barry Cavanaugh.

In some cases, foreign-trained professionals are not able to access academic documents. For example, if they are refugees from a war zone, their academic institution may have been destroyed. ASET's prior learning assessment (PLAR) model allows foreign-trained professionals who are unable to produce academic transcripts to complete a work portfolio to demonstrate equivalency to the academic requirements. Skills and knowledge obtained outside of an academic program are evaluated for the purpose of recognizing professional competence, and certification exams test for the educational standard.

About ASET

[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.

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