



New provincial plan to address immigrant qualifications

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The provincial government released a new plan in November to improve the recognition of immigrants' foreign qualification and training. Key initiatives include consolidating information on foreign qualification recognition into a single web portal and a \$1 million fund to help professional regulatory organizations and educational institutions better assess qualifications.

Two years ago the Chamber's Human Resources Committee brought together leading credentialing and accrediting bodies such as University of Calgary, Alberta Medical Association, Certified Management Accountants of Alberta and the Certified General Accountants of Alberta to share best practices and raise awareness of this issue.

The Chamber has continued to meet with government staff and in 2008 developed an Alberta Chambers of Commerce resolution on this issue.

"Immigration is an important part of the solution to the challenges businesses face as a result of labour shortages," says Geoff Pradella, Vice-President of Public & Government Affairs with the Calgary Chamber of Commerce. "The Chamber is therefore very committed to continuing its work with government to improve the immigration process, a great example of which is the progress made this year in the temporary foreign workers program."

In a recent survey of skilled immigrants by Alberta Employment and Immigration, about half of respondents stated that they were overqualified for their current job and 64 per cent indicated that their home country education and/or work experience was not recognized.

"Streamlining foreign qualification and recognition is a 'win-win' scenario for newcomers to our province and for Alberta," said Doug Horner, Minister of Advanced Education and Technology during the Nov. 7 release of the plan.

In Alberta, over 50 professional regulatory organizations and 25 educational institutions exist, making it difficult for immigration to understand and navigate the system.