**GETTING YOUR PROFESSIONAL
LICENCE IN ONTARIO:
THE EXPERIENCES OF
INTERNATIONAL AND CANADIAN
APPLICANTS**

Final Report

Prepared for

Office of the Fairness Commissioner

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC) was established in 2007 under the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006. Its mandate is to ensure "transparent, objective, impartial and fair" registration (licensing) practices in most of Ontario's regulated health and non-health professions.1 The OFC has multiple responsibilities including assessing the registration practices of regulated professions and providing advice to regulatory bodies, government ministries and stakeholders.

In December 2008, the OFC initiated a research study called *Getting your Professional License in Ontario: the Experiences of International and Canadian Applicants*.

The objectives of the study were to obtain:
  ➢ A comprehensive picture of domestically and internationally trained individuals, including their demographic profile, countries of origin, and their employment status;
  ➢ An understanding of the information, supports, and programs that are available to applicants, and the perceived effectiveness of these resources;
  ➢ An understanding of applicants' experiences in the registration process; and
  ➢ An understanding of the challenges they face.

The study involved a literature review, an online quantitative survey and five focus groups. The online survey was implemented between April 27 and August 17, 2009, and was supported by an extensive communications campaign targeting people who had applied to the professions in Ontario since 2000. Participation was voluntary. The focus groups were held between July 15 and 22, 2009, in London, Ottawa and Toronto. A total of 3,784 respondents across 37 regulated professions participated in the study.

While it is not possible to draw conclusions about the population as a whole, the study provides unprecedented and valuable insight into applicants' experiences in the licensing process in Ontario.

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1 In Canada, a regulated profession is one that sets its own standards to protect the public. It is governed by a regulatory body, which has legal authority to establish requirements for entry to the profession, membership, and use of the professional designation. In addition, it determines standards of practice and competence. The authority of a regulatory body comes from a provincial statute.

Overall, this study draws the following conclusions:
- ➢ Generally, there appears to be adequate information about the licensing process available from multiple sources. However, it is not always clear to applicants how to access this information and whether it is reliable.
- ➢ Internationally trained participants experience more difficulty finding information about licensing requirements than do domestically trained.
- ➢ The existence and purpose of bridging programs are not well understood.
- ➢ Internationally educated individuals get mixed messages from different levels of government. (An immigrant professional earns points for education and work experience when he or she applies to become a permanent resident of Canada, but faces licensing challenges once here.)
- ➢ Internationally trained applicants need to be better informed, prior to arriving in Canada, about the importance of having all their required documents.
- ➢ The length, complexity and cost of licensing processes are frustrating for both Canadian trained and internationally trained individuals.
- ➢ Financial support in the form of government grants or loans to pay for education appears to be more accessible by domestically trained than by internationally trained candidates.
- ➢ Internationally trained applicants appear to be less prepared for examinations than those educated in Canada.
- ➢ The requirement of some regulatory bodies for Canadian work experience is perceived as a particularly difficult challenge by internationally trained applicants.
- ➢ Appeal processes, where they exist, are poorly understood.

The results of *Getting your Professional License in Ontario: the Experiences of International and Canadian Applicants* indicate a system in which many applicants do not clearly understand the registration process. Commonalities in their experiences provide direction in how to address these challenges:
- ➢ Most of the frustration experienced by both domestically educated and internationally educated candidates can be mitigated by better communication.
- ➢ There is a pressing need for every regulatory body to develop comprehensive information about the time and cost of every step along the path to licensure.
- ➢ The information should be easy to find and easy to understand whether an applicant is inside Canada or overseas.
- ➢ In particular, internationally trained applicants would benefit from consistent communication from federal and provincial governments and from regulatory bodies before they arrive in Canada.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACRONYMS USED IN THE REPORT

CCPE	Canadian Council of Professional Engineers
CPSO	College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
FARPA	Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006
DITIs	Domestically and Internationally Trained Individuals
DTIs	Domestically Trained Individuals
IPGS	The Survey of International Pharmacy Graduates
ITIs	Internationally Trained Individuals
NCA	National Committee on Accreditation
OFC	Office of the Fairness Commissioner
P.Eng	Professional Engineer
PEO	Professional Engineers of Ontario

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1.1   Background

In the past year the Canadian economy has experienced an economic slow down. Despite the current recession, demand in some professions remains very strong. Rising employment needs in some sectors has sparked concerns over the present and future supply of labour in Canada. Discussion about current and projected shortages has been an ongoing topic in Canada for many years. Demographic changes, highlighted by an aging workforce, indicate that the number of persons expected to retire over the next 10 years will exceed the number of new entrants into the workforce.

As a result, 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.[2] 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 by 2030.[3]

Over the past two decades, there has been an overall increase in the annual number of immigrants coming to Canada. In 1999, the total number of immigrants entering the country stood at 189,954.[4] Ten years later, this figure had increased to 247,243, which represents a growth in immigration of 30% over the period. Figure 1-1 below illustrates this increase in Canada's immigration over the 1999 to 2008 period.

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[2] 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.
[3] Citizenship and Immigration Canada. "Facts and Figures 2008: Immigration Overview". http://www.cic.gc.ca
[4] Citizenship and Immigration Canada. "Facts and Figures 2008: Immigration Overview". http://www.cic.gc.ca

Figure 1-1
Total Immigration to Canada (1999-2008)
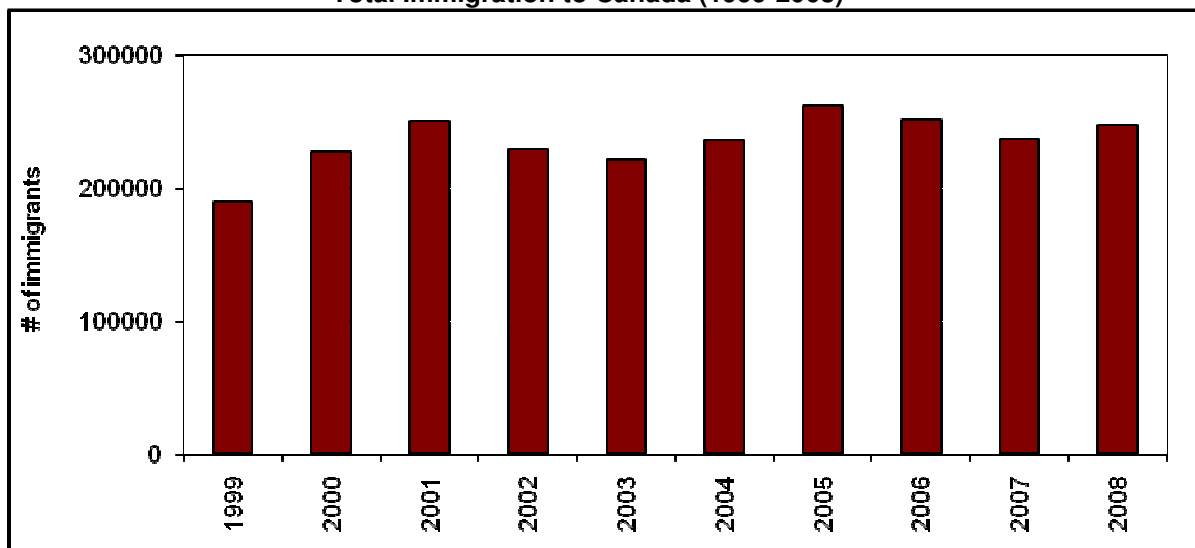
Recent statistics by Citizenship and Immigration Canada indicate that the majority of immigrants entering Canada fall under the Economic Class (64%), which includes skilled professional, business immigrants, provincial and territorial nominees and live-in caregivers.[5] In the context of an aging population, immigration has a crucial role to play in ensuring a highly-skilled workforce.[6] A number of studies show that internationally trained professionals face significant challenges in becoming licensed in a regulated profession, despite their qualifications and skills.

1.2 <u>Office of the Fairness Commissioner</u>

In December 2006, the Ontario Legislature passed the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006 (FARPA). Its purpose was to establish "transparent, objective, impartial and fair" registration practices among Ontario's regulated health and non-health professions. Although the legislation covers all applicants for registration, it was drafted particularly with a view to levelling the playing field for internationally trained applicants.

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[5] Citizenship and Immigration Canada. "Facts and Figures 2008: Immigration Overview". http://www.cic.gc.ca

[6] Paul Anisef, Robert Sweet, and George Frempong, "Labour Market Outcomes of Immigrant and Racial Minority Graduates in Canada," CERIS Working Paper No. 23 (Toronto, ON: Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement – Toronto, 2003), 28, http://ceris.metropolis.net/Virtual%20Library/economic/CWP23_Anisef%20etc.pdf.

As the first legislation of its kind in Canada, FARPA has set a positive example for other Canadian provinces.

FARPA covers Ontario's 14 of non-health regulatory bodies directly and 21 health regulatory bodies indirectly through amendments to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991. It introduced five main instruments geared towards fair registration practices:
- a Fair Registration Practices Code;
- a Fairness Commissioner and an Office of the Fairness Commissioner;
- an Access Centre for internationally trained individuals;
- reporting and auditing requirements for regulated professions; and
- sanctions for non-compliance.

In March 2007, Hon. Jean Augustine, PC, was appointed Ontario's first Fairness Commissioner, and in April 2007, the Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC) was established. The OFC's specific responsibilities are to:
- assess the registration practices of certain regulated professions in Ontario
- monitor third-party agencies that regulated professions rely on for assessment of applicants' qualifications
- set out guidelines for the content and form of the regulatory bodies' yearly reports to the OFC
- consult with the regulated professions about the scope, timing and cost of the audits required by the legislation
- specify the criteria and standards for these audits
- receive and review the audit reports
- assess systemic problems with registration practices by analyzing information in the regulatory bodies' reports to the OFC
- issue compliance orders, where necessary, to the non-health professions
- advise the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration on matters related to FARPA
- provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, including where the OFC has determined that a regulated health profession has failed to comply with the fair registration requirements set out in the Health Professionals Procedure Code.
- advise other government ministries about issues related to the registration practices of the regulated professions that fall under their respective jurisdictions
- advise the regulated professions with respect to matters covered by the legislation; and

> ➢ advise qualifications assessment agencies, colleges and universities, community agencies and other organizations with a stake in the registration practices of the regulated professions about matters related to FARPA and the Health Professionals Procedure Code.[7]

1.3   <u>Purpose and Objectives</u>

Anecdotal evidence has long suggested that internationally trained individuals (ITIs) face challenges in becoming certified/ licensed in their chosen field. The results and findings of this study provide an empirical body of work that will identify and describe the challenges faced by domestically and internationally trained individuals (DITIs) and other information that can be used to address these challenges.

More specifically, the objectives of this project are to provide:
➢ A comprehensive picture of DITIs, including their demographic profile, countries of origin, and their employment status;
➢ An understanding of the information, supports, and programs that are available to DITIs, and the perceived effectiveness of these resources;
➢ An understanding of the experiences of DITIs in the registration process; and
➢ An understanding of the challenges facing DITIs.

1.4   <u>Overview of Report</u>

This report outlines the detailed results and key findings based on the current research. Data was analyzed according to where individuals where trained (domestically vs. internationally trained individuals). In addition and where appropriate, data was analyzed according to the profession (non-health minus engineers, health and engineers). Following a brief overview of the research approach and methodology, the report is structured to follow the sections of the survey.

The first section of findings, **Survey Demographics**, provides a profile of international and domestic professionals in Ontario.

The **Licensing and Registration** section presents findings related to the overall process of domestic and international professionals becoming licensed or registered to practice in Ontario.

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[7] Office of the Fairness Commissioner, "2008-2009 Annual Report." Queen's Printer for Ontario: 2009, pg. 7.

The third section, **Assessment of Qualifications**, summarizes the assessment of qualifications and examination process for domestic and international trained individuals.

The **Requirements for Getting a Licence** section focuses on the educational requirements, work experience and language skills needed to complete the licensing process.

The following section examines the **Bridging Programs** available to applicants.

The next section, **Appeals**, focuses on applicants who have appealed the decisions made by a regulatory body.

The following section, **Resources**, reviews the resources available to applicants and how they used them during the licensing process.

Finally, **Overall Comments** from applicants are provided.

The **Conclusions** and **Recommendations** are outlined in Sections 10 and 11. The report also includes, as Appendices, a literature review as well as data collection instruments for this project.

SECTION 2:   RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

2.1   Research Design

The *Getting your Professional Licence in Ontario: the Experiences of International and Canadian Applicants* is a comprehensive study involving multiple research components. The study examines the issues facing applicants from a variety of sources.

2.1.1   Background Review

Prior to conducting the survey, a background review was undertaken to help inform the development of the research approach and research tools. This background review included:

- ➤ a literature review;
- ➤ The Survey of International Pharmacy Graduates (IPGS) conducted by R.A. Malatest and Associates for the Canadian Pharmacists Association in 2008,
- ➤ Situational Analysis: The Current Systems for Competency Recognition and Immigrant Labour Market Integration in Saskatchewan (Final Report) conducted by R.A. Malatest and Associates in 2008 for the Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment, and Labour,
- ➤ Office of the Fairness Commissioner's Guidelines for Fair Registration Practices Reports,
- ➤ Office of the Fairness Commissioner's Framework for Audits of Registration Practices: Guidance for Regulatory Bodies; and
- ➤ Office of the Fairness Commissioner's Ontario's Regulated Professions: Report on the 2007 Study of Registration Practices.

2.2   Quantitative Research Components

2.2.1   Survey

Surveys were completed with DITIs across Ontario in order to gather data on their experiences with the licensing process. A total of 2,442 individuals completed the entire survey (from beginning to end) online. A total of 3,784 began the survey but did not complete it entirely.

Professionals were contacted about the survey using a variety of methods. This multi-pronged approach was a key component to the overall success of the project. A communication plan divided into three main phases was created.

The first phase of the communication plan began with telephone calls to regulatory bodies, third-party assessors, immigrant serving organizations and bridging programs to notify them of the online-survey. In addition, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Health Force and Global Experience Ontario were contacted.

A communication package was also sent to all interested parties. The package contained the following attachments:
  ➢ a survey ad, in html format;
  ➢ a sample email message that could be sent to potential survey respondents;
  ➢ items for use in newsletters, in a short and longer version; and
  ➢ a postcard that could be handed out at meetings, conferences, etc.

In addition, the Consultant contacted skills training and employment organizations. A database was developed using Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants membership list and the Employment Services listing as part of *Canadian Newcomer Settlement Guide to Ontario 2008*. Almost 500 agencies were contacted in an effort to increase response rate.

The second phase of the communication plan entailed publicizing the survey to an online audience. The Consultant posted short advertisements with the link on popular search engines, such as Craigslist and Kijiji. Craigslist and Kijiji are centralized networks of online communities, featuring advertisements with sections on services, volunteer opportunities and discussion forums. Online ads were also placed in the *Globe and Mail* and the *Canadian Immigrant.* Google Adwords was also used to reach a wider audience.

2.3   Qualitative Research Components

2.3.1   Focus Groups

While the survey was in progress, five focus groups were held with DITIs. Focus groups were conducted in Toronto, London and Ottawa. A total of 40 professionals participated in the focus groups.

Participants were recruited from survey respondents that indicated an interest in taking part in focus groups. The Consultant recruited diverse participants for the focus groups. The first focus group held in Toronto was made up of solely Engineers. The remaining four focus groups were made of individuals applying to various professions who were in the process of becoming licensed/were already licensed/discontinued/dropped out of the process. Both international and domestic participants were involved in each focus group.

2.3.2   Literature Review

Reports and academic literature relevant to the study were reviewed to obtain an understanding of the processes, procedures, and issues associated with access to regulated professions. The literature review is provided in Appendix A.

2.3.3   Research Considerations

Considerable effort was made throughout all stages of the *Getting your Professional Licence in Ontario: the Experiences of International and Canadian Applicants* to gather information that is representative and reliable. However, as with all research endeavours, some considerations should be noted.

The total sample size limits the level of detail in the data analysis. The survey used a sample of convenience – those who were aware of the study and who opted to participate. A total of 3,784 respondents provided input; these respondents were not randomly selected.

Since the data was collected from a non-random sample, there is no margin of sampling error. Furthermore, while the number of respondents is large, an analysis of the sub-groups is not possible with the exception of engineers, health-related professions and non-health-excluding-engineers).

It will not be possible to make statistical inferences about their original populations. As can be seen in Table 3-9 (pg16), the response rate within each of the professions varies dramatically. Overall, ITIs responded to the survey in greater proportions than DTIs. This does not prevent statistical comparisons between groups, nor does it undermine the study's value as a benchmark against which future shifts in experience can be measured; however, these shifts would be in reference to the survey participants and not their professional populations at large.

Statistical comparisons will be made between survey respondents in the health, non-health and engineering professions. The table below outlines the professions by category.

Finally, findings from the five focus groups represent the views of a limited number of domestic and internationally trained individuals. While illuminating, the views of focus groups participants should not be seen as necessarily representative of all DITIs.

The charts and tables in this report often indicate results for three categories of professions, namely health, non-health and engineers. The three categories include the professions as

indicated in Table 1-1 below. Engineers are considered a separate group because of the very high number of respondents.

Table 1-1
Respondents by Health, Non-Health and Engineering Professions

Health Professions	Non-Health Professions	Engineers
Audiologist or Speech-Language Pathologist	Architect	Engineer
Chiropodist	Chartered Accountant	
Chiropractor	Early Childhood Educator	
Dental Hygienist	Engineering Technician or Engineering Technologist	
Dental Surgeon	Forester	
Dental Technologist	General Accountant	
Denturist	Geoscientist	
Dietitian	Land Surveyor	
Massage Therapist	Lawyer	
Medical Laboratory Technologist	Management Accountant	
Medical Radiation Technologist	Massage Therapist	
Midwife	Paralegal	
Nurse	Teacher	
Occupational Therapist	Social Worker	
Optician	Social Service Worker	
Optometrist	Veterinarian	
Pharmacist	Traditional Chinese Medicine	
Physician or Surgeon		
Physiotherapist		
Psychologist		
Respiratory Therapist		

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

SECTION 3:   SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

3.1   Demographics of Respondents

Demographic information was collected from participants to capture baseline information and to gain a better understanding of the composition and characteristics of international and domestic respondents. Detailed in this section are the demographic characteristics of individuals who participated in the survey.

3.1.1   Age

The following figure shows the age distribution of survey respondents. Based on where participants were trained (domestic and international) the majority of domestically trained individuals (DTIs) (60%) fall within the 25 to 34 age category. In comparison, 44% of internationally trained individuals (ITIs) fall within the 35 to 44 age category. ITIs were on average older, presumably because many of them immigrate as already qualified professionals.

Figure 3-1
Age
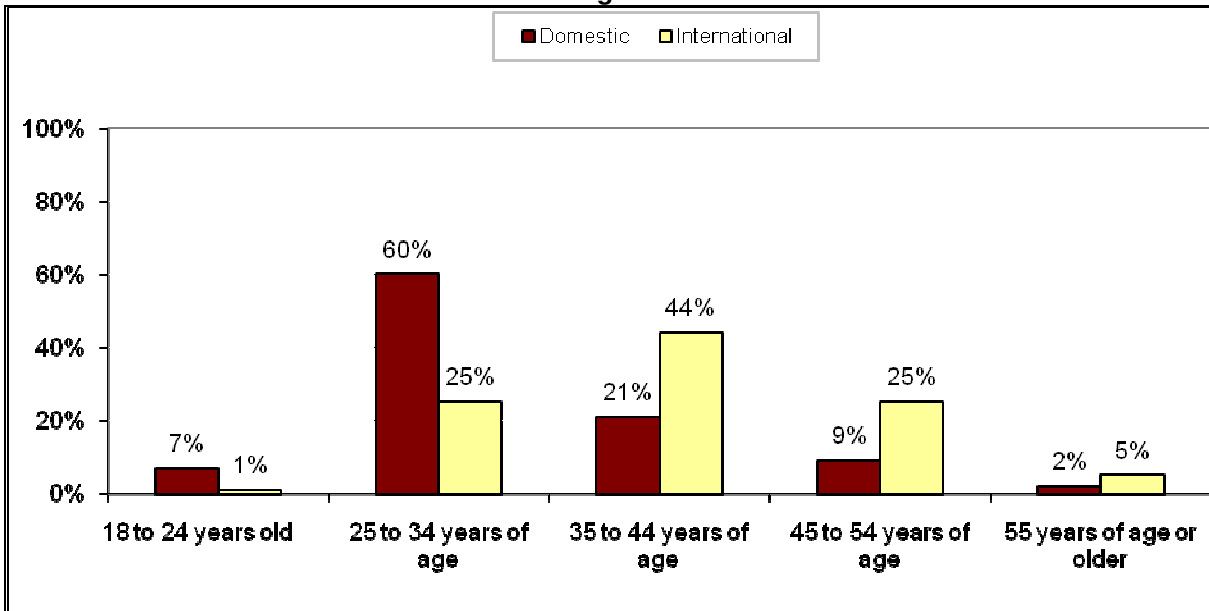
Domestic n=846, International n= 1,662
Source: QH1 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Excludes "I prefer not to answer"

3.1.2 Gender

There were more male professionals who responded to the survey. More than half (53%) of DTIs and 68% of ITIs were male.

3.1.3 Place of Residence

The majority of DTIs (93%) and ITIs (85%) reported living in Ontario.

Of those who reported Ontario as their place of residence, the majority of DTIs stated that they resided in Central Ontario [8](31%) and Greater Toronto Area (24%). As anticipated, a higher percentage of ITIs reported that they resided in Central Ontario (46%) and Greater Toronto Area (35%).

Figure 3-2
Residence within Ontario
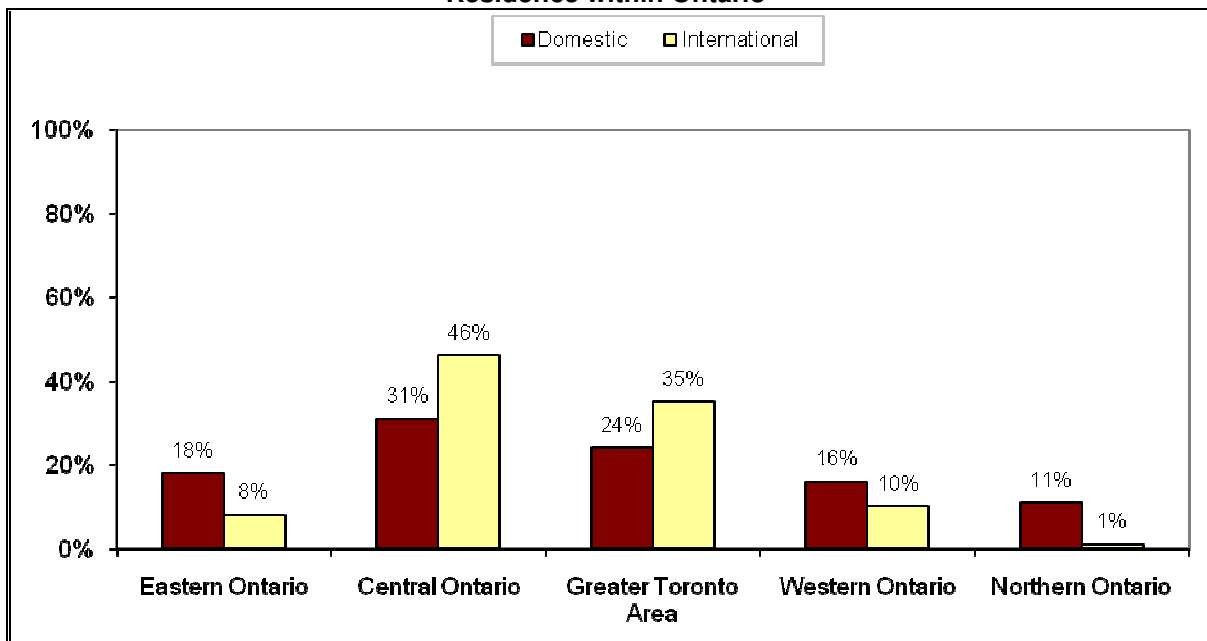
Domestic n=628 International n=1,123
Source: QH4 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

3.2 Arrival in Canada and Immigration Status

Internationally trained respondents were asked to indicate the year they first arrived in Canada. Under half (43%) of internationally trained professionals reported entering Canada

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[8] Eastern Ontario (Postal Code Region K); Central Ontario (Postal Code Region L); Greater Toronto Area (Postal Code Region M); Western Ontario (Postal Code Region N); Northern Ontario (Postal code region P)

after 2005. Forty-two percent of internationally trained professionals arrived in Canada between 2000 and 2005.

Figure 3-3
Arrival in Canada

International n=1,461
Source: QH6 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

With respect to citizenship and immigration status, Figure 3-4 illustrates that approximately 44% of internationally trained respondents were landed immigrants, while 49% were Canadian citizens born outside of Canada.

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Figure 3-4
Citizenship and Immigration Status

International n=1,504
Source: QH5 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Chart excludes respondents who answered 'other'.
Visa includes refugee, work, student, and visitor visa.

3.3 Employment and Salary

Professionals were asked to report their current employment status. A majority of (76%) DTIs were currently employed in their profession, while less than half (44%) of ITIs were employed in their field. Twenty-six percent of ITIs were currently unemployed; three times the number of DTIs who were unemployed. Interestingly, 11% of ITIs and only 2% of DTIs were employed in an unrelated field.

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Figure 3-5
Current Employment
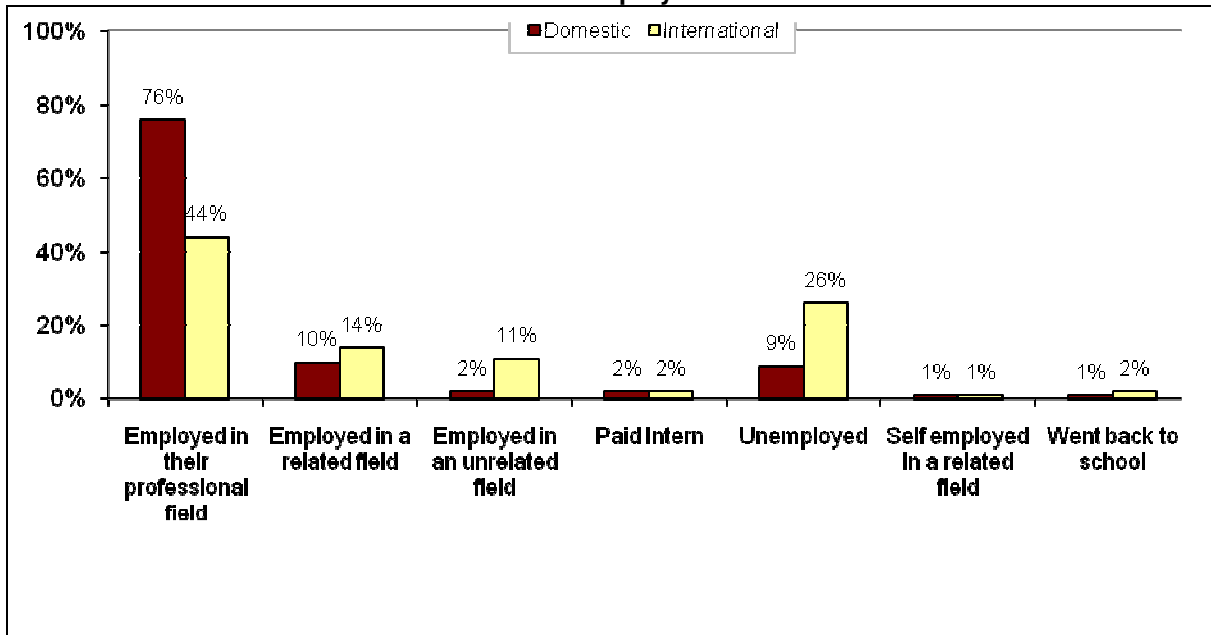
Domestic n= 652, International n=1,663
Source: QH8 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Excludes 'other'.

Respondents were asked to provide information on their salary. Survey results showed a difference between ITIs and DTIs. Almost one-third (28%) of ITIs earned less than $25,000 a year. One-third (33%) of DTIs earned $60,000-$79,999. Interestingly, the difference in incomes between DTIs and ITIs decreased in the higher salary range ($80,000).

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Figure 3-6
Salary
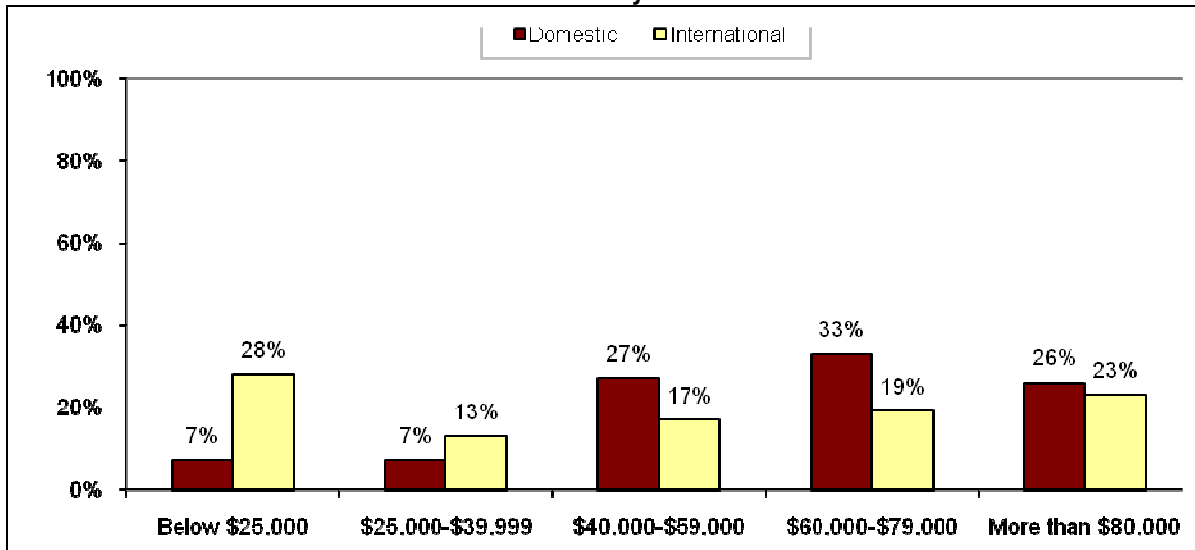
Domestic n=741 International n=1,258
Source: QH9 Getting Your Professional Licence
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

3.4   Primary Language

Professionals were asked the first language they learned and understood. More than one-third (37%) of respondents reported that English was the first language learned at home. This was followed by Arabic, Spanish and Chinese. Thirteen percent of participants spoke and understood a South Asian[9] language.

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[9] South Asian languages includes languages from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Table 3-7
Primary Language

	Survey Respondents
English	37%
Arabic	8%
Spanish	7%
Chinese	7%
Urdu	4%
Farsi	4%
Tagalog	4%
Hindi	3%
Romanian	3%
Gujarati	2%
French	2%
Other	20%*

n=1,859
Source: QH7 Getting Your Professional Licence
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.
* Please see Appendix D for Other Languages

3.5 **Profile of Respondents**

A majority of DTIs (60%) had obtained their license, while a quarter (25%) of ITIs had a license to practice in their chosen profession. More than one in three ITIs (35%) were actively involved in the process to obtain their license. The progress in the licensing process will be reviewed at greater length in Section 4 of the report.

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Figure 3-8
Progress in the Licensing Process
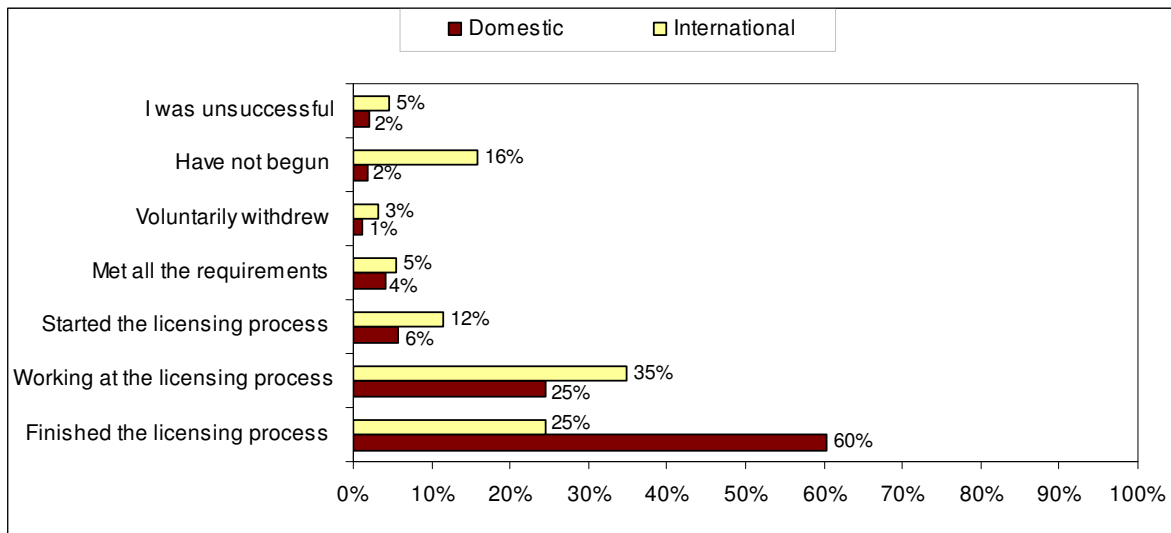
■ Domestic   □ International

Category	Domestic	International
I was unsuccessful	2%	5%
Have not begun	2%	16%
Voluntarily withdrew	1%	3%
Met all the requirements	4%	5%
Started the licensing process	6%	12%
Working at the licensing process	25%	35%
Finished the licensing process	60%	25%

Domestic n=1,059 International n=2,277
Source: QA1 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario
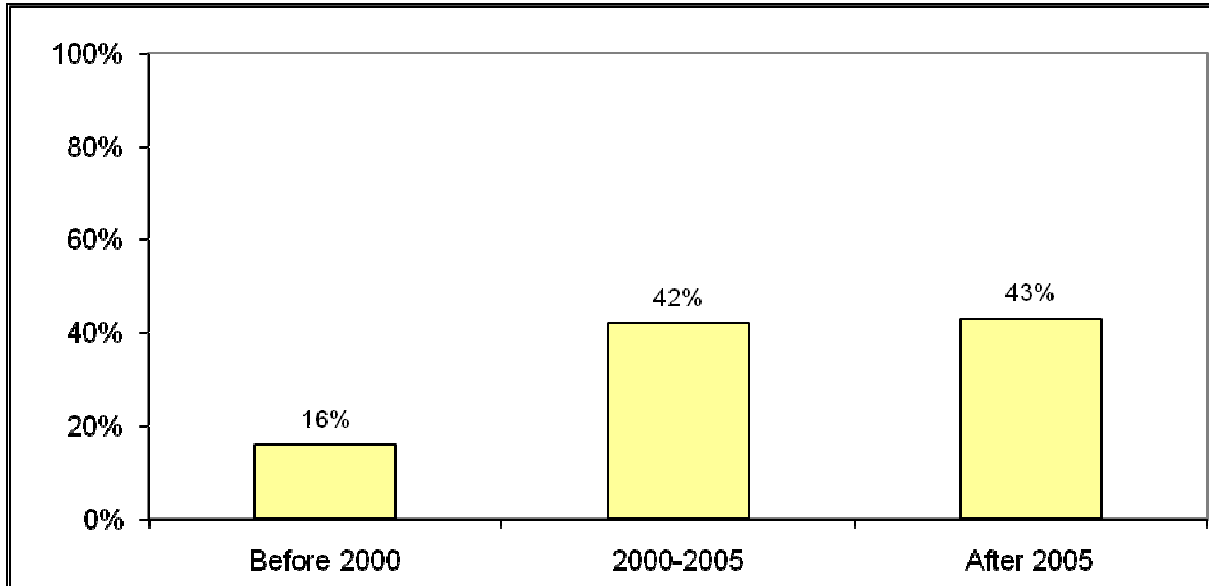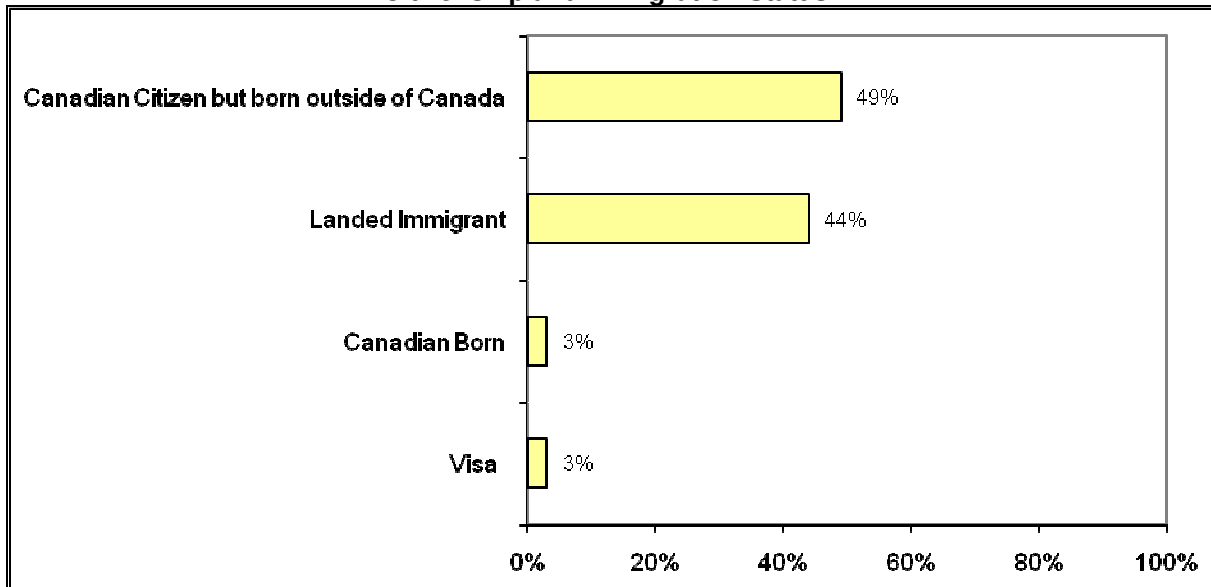Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Survey participants were asked when they first began the licensing process and when they were expected to complete the process. On average, DTIs expected the process to take 2 ½ years, while ITIs expected the process to take four months longer. With respect to respondents who reported meeting all the requirements but not having a license yet, DTIs expected to complete the process in one year. In contrast, ITIs who had met all of the requirements but did not have a license expected to complete the process in 2 ½ years. DTIs who voluntarily withdrew from the licensing process typically withdrew after 17 months. In contrast, ITIs waited longer, withdrawing after 25 months.

Respondents were asked to identify their profession. A large number of Engineers (n=1,417) completed the survey. This was followed by:
  ➢ Physicians or Surgeons (n=424)
  ➢ Pharmacists (n=236)
  ➢ Teachers (n=200)
  ➢ Medical Lab Technologists (n=185)
  ➢ Dental Hygienists (n=123)
  ➢ Dietitians (n=118)

With the exception of Engineers and Teachers, the top five professions were health professions. The table below highlights the other 37 regulated professions.

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Table 3-9
Professions by Respondents

Profession	Total Respondents			% of Total who answered		
	Total	Trained Domestically	Trained Internationally	Total	Trained Domestically	Trained Internationally
Architect	37	5	32	100%	14%	86%
Audiologist or Speech-Language Pathologist	7	3	4	100%	43%	57%
Chartered Accountant	40	17	23	100%	43%	58%
Chiropodist	23	14	9	100%	61%	39%
Chiropractor	2	0	2	100%	--	100%
Dental Hygienist	123	116	7	100%	94%	6%
Dental Surgeon	23	1	22	100%	4%	96%
Dental Technologist	4	0	4	100%	--	100%
Denturist	1	0	1	100%	--	100%
Dietitian	118	93	25	100%	79%	21%
Early Childhood Educator	14	0	14	100%	--	100%
Engineer	1417	536	881	100%	38%	62%
Engineering Technician or Engineering Technologist	64	21	43	100%	33%	67%
Forester	8	7	1	100%	88%	13%
General Accountant	32	10	22	100%	31%	69%
Geoscientist	8	1	7	100%	13%	88%
Land Surveyor	6	1	5	100%	17%	83%
Lawyer	60	10	50	100%	17%	83%
Management Accountant	28	10	18	100%	36%	64%
Massage Therapist	23	21	2	100%	91%	9%
Medical Laboratory Technologist	185	15	170	100%	8%	92%
Medical Radiation Technologist	16	5	11	100%	31%	69%
Midwife	3	0	3	100%	--	100%
Nurse	68	23	45	100%	34%	66%
Occupational Therapist	23	15	8	100%	65%	35%
Optician	24	21	3	100%	88%	13%
Optometrist	12	5	7	100%	42%	58%
Paralegal	7	6	1	100%	86%	14%
Pharmacist	236	25	211	100%	11%	89%

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Profession	Total Respondents			% of Total who answered		
	Total	Trained Domestically	Trained Internationally	Total	Trained Domestically	Trained Internationally
Physician or Surgeon	424	28	396	100%	7%	93%
Physiotherapist	24	8	16	100%	33%	67%
Psychologist	9	5	4	100%	56%	44%
Respiratory Therapist	12	7	5	100%	58%	42%
Social Worker	26	10	16	100%	38%	62%
Social Service Worker	4	1	3	100%	25%	75%
Teacher	200	16	184	100%	8%	92%
Traditional Chinese Medicine	-	-	-	-	-	-
Veterinarian	27	3	24	100%	11%	89%
Total Respondents	3,457	1059	2398	100%	31%	69%

n=3,457
Source: QA4 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

3.5.1   Place of Training

Respondents were asked where they received their training for their respective professions. As illustrated in the above Table 3-9, 69% of respondents reported they were internationally trained.

Further inquiry revealed the place where they received training. The majority of DTIs (84%) reported Ontario as the place they received their training. By comparison, ITIs received training in a number of countries, with almost half of respondents (44%) receiving their training in Southern Asia[10]. The table below notes the other places that professionals received training.

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[10] "Southern Asia" as well as the regions indicated in Table 3-10 is based on United Nations Sub regions. For a complete list of the sub regions please visit http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49regin.htm

Table 3-10
Place of Training – International Respondents

Place of Training	Total
Southern Asia	44%
Western Asia	8%
Eastern Europe	7%
South America	6%
Northern Africa	6%
Eastern Asia	6%
Northern Europe	5%
North America	5%
Southern Europe	3%
Caribbean	3%
Western Europe	2%
Middle Africa	2%
Central America	2%
Eastern Africa	1%
Southern Africa	1%
Australia and New Zealand	1%
Western Africa	Less than 1%
South Eastern Asia	Less than 1%
Central Asia	Less than 1%

International n=2,260
Source: QA7 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

3.5.2 Language of Training

When ITIs were asked the language used for their training, 73% of respondents reported English as the language used for their professional training. This is a surprisingly high number as most internationally trained individuals come from countries where English is not the first language. Spanish, Chinese and Farsi were the most prevalent languages of first training after English.

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January 20, 2010

Table 3-11
Language of First Training

Language of First Training	Total
English	73%
Spanish	7%
Chinese	5%
Farsi	4%
Arabic	3%
Romanian	3%
French	3%
Russian	2%
Filipino	1%
Polish	1%
Other	8%

n=2,259
Source: QA8 Getting Your Professional Licence (Multiple answers accepted)

SECTION 4:   LICENSING AND REGISTRATION

4.1   Personal Knowledge and Experiences

This section examines the individual experiences of DITIs with regard to the licensing process. Respondents were asked to indicate where they were in the licensing process and the reasons why they had particular outcomes.

4.1.1   Progress in the Licensing Process

Survey participants were asked to select statements that best described their progress towards getting their professional licenses in Ontario. Sixty percent of DTIs and a quarter (25%) of ITIs had successfully completed the licensing process and were now able to practice in their profession in Ontario.

Almost half (47%) of ITIs had started or were working at the licensing process, compared to 31% of DTIs. A much higher percentage of ITIs had not started the process (16% vs. 2% of domestically trained individuals).

A minority of the respondents (4%) met all the requirements for licensing, but were not licensed or voluntarily withdrew from the licensing process (2%). These respondents cited 'other reasons' for not getting a license including the fact that they thought that the process was too long and complex. Other reasons why survey participants withdrew from the licensing process, included:
  ➢ family commitments;
  ➢ other financial reasons; and
  ➢ requirements for additional experience that they were either unable or unwilling to fulfill.

Some survey participants who had stopped were awaiting results of their licensing process.

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January 20, 2010

Figure 4-1
Progress in the Licensing Process
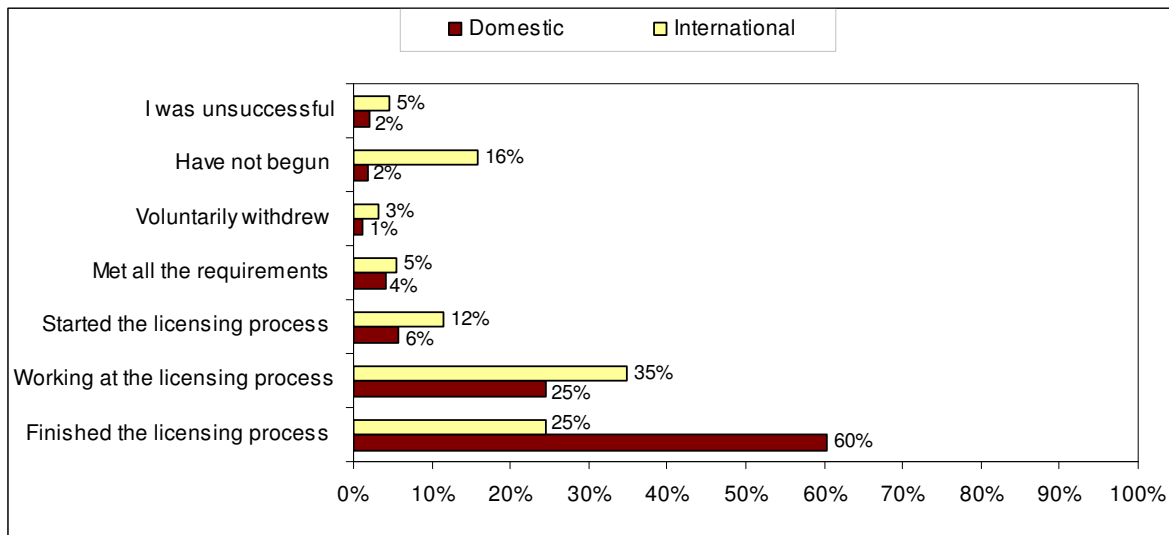
Domestic n=1,059 International n=2,277
Source: QA1 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Further examination by profession showed that there was a fairly proportional split between the domestic non-health, health and engineering professionals who had completed the process. Among ITIs about a third of non-health (33%) and over a quarter of engineering professionals (28%) had completed the process, while the health professionals were lagging at 18% completion. However, there was a higher percentage of health professionals (40%) working at the licensing process compared to non-health (26%) and engineering (33%). Half (50%) of the international health professionals had started or were working on their license compared to just one quarter (25%) of domestic. Twenty four percent of domestic non-health and engineering (44%) applicants had started or were working at their licenses compared to their international counterparts (33% and 49% respectively).

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January 20, 2010

Table 4-2
Progress in the Licensing Process - by Profession

	Domestic			International		
	Non-health (n=118)	Health (n=398)	Engineer (n=536)	Non-health (n=443)	Health (n=955)	Engineer (n=879)
Obtained a licence	55%	51%	47%	33%	18%	28%
Working at the licensing process	21%	12%	35%	26%	40%	33%
Started the licensing process	3%	13%	9%	7%	10%	16%
Met all the requirements	5%	2%	5%	4%	7%	5%
Voluntarily withdrew	3%	1%	1%	2%	2%	5%
Have not begun	8%	1%	1%	25%	19%	8%
Unsuccessful	5%	2%	2%	3%	5%	5%
Other		1%		1%	1%	

Source: QA1 - Getting you Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

4.1.2   Stopped the Licensing Process

About 10% of the professionals had started the licensing process, but had stopped and were not working at it at the time of the survey. Respondents gave several reasons why they did not finish the process. While a higher percentage of international professionals cited these reasons, a majority of both domestic and international professionals indicated that they stopped because the process was long (59% international, 44% domestic), complex (56% international, 36% domestic) and expensive (42% international, 26% domestic).

Almost half (47%) of international professionals cited family commitments and financial reasons, compared to a third (32%) of domestic professionals. Other reasons cited for stopping the process included unrecognized experience, need for further education, return to school, personal reasons and change of career. The focus groups identified several international professionals who had changed careers, often because of their inability (for various reasons) to get licensed in their professions.

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January 20, 2010

Figure 4-3
Reason for Not Completing the Licensing Process
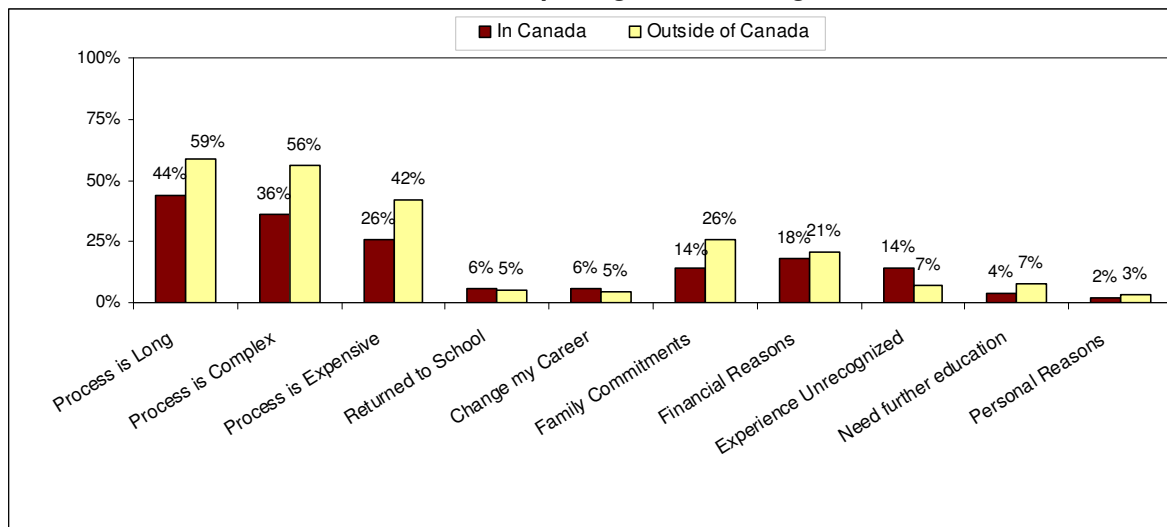
Domestic n=50, International n=229
Source: Q-B2 - Getting you Professional Licence in Ontario

A large majority of international health (76%), non-health (70%) and to a lesser extent, engineers (48%) think that the process is too long. An average of 59% of the international professionals think it is too complex, and more than half of non-health (56%) and health (56%) think it is too expensive. Less than a third (30%) of engineers thought it is too expensive; this fact is corroborated by analysis of the fees paid by the professionals (Section 5), which showed that on average, engineers paid the least amount of fees compared to the other two categories of professionals. Overall, while the engineering professionals cited these three reasons, they did so to a lesser extent than the health and non-health professionals.

> "Actually, I had heard about the length of the process…I heard that it takes at least 2 years…but I didn't know the percentage of success in this process. I knew several people who came here for their exams and most of them actually gave up because of the prolonged process…but none of them [told] me that it was impossible."
>
> Focus Group Participant

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January 20, 2010

Figure 4-4
Why the Licensing Process was NOT completed by
Internationally Trained Professionals
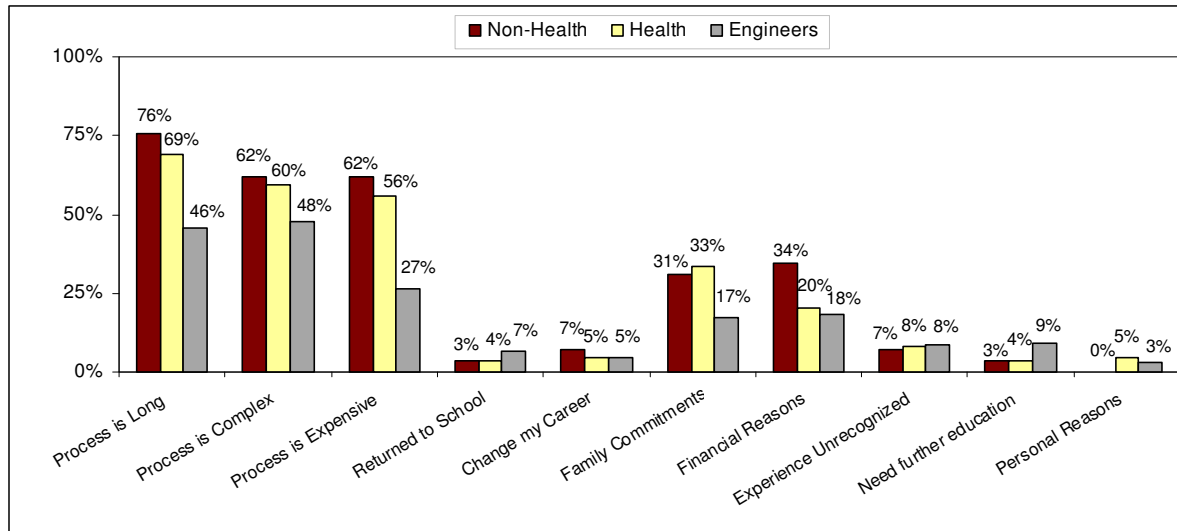
International Non-health n= 68, International Health n=750, International Engineers n=668
Source: Q-B2 - Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario

4.1.3 Length of Time

A majority of the domestic professionals (58%) took less than a year to get licensed, compared to 21% of international professionals. Conversely, half of the international professionals (50%) took 1-2 years, while just 19% of domestic professionals took that long. About a quarter of both domestic (24%) and international (29%) professionals took three or more years to get their licenses. Beyond three years, the differences in length of time spent in the process lessened somewhat between the international and domestic professionals.

**Figure 4-5
Length of the Licensing Process**
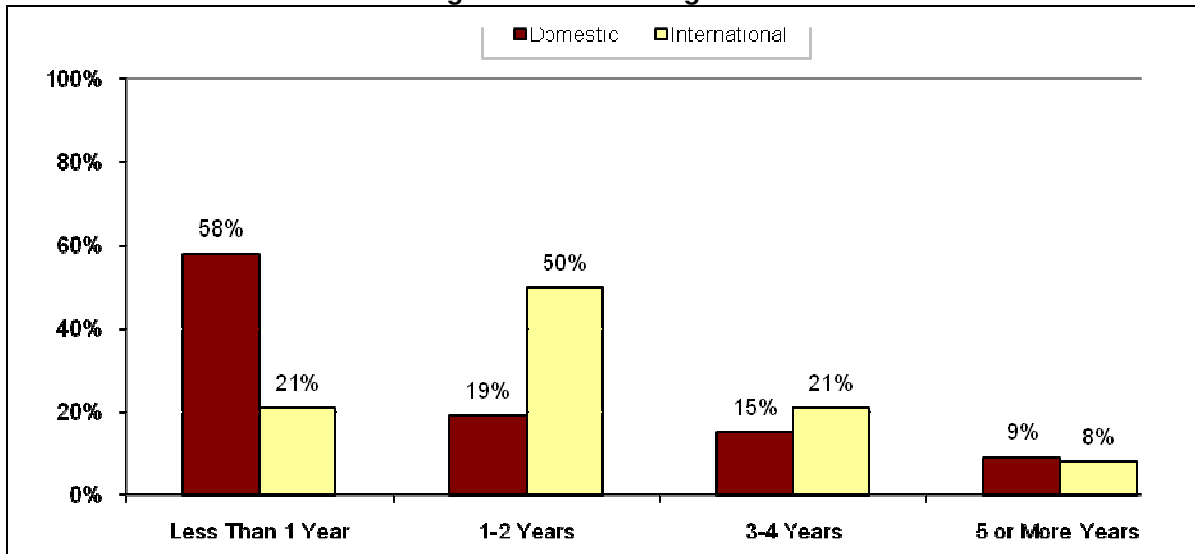
Domestic n=619, International n=521
Source: Q-B1 - Getting you Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

By profession, the majority (78%) of domestic health professionals took less than a year to complete the process, compared to just 28% of international health professionals. The differences were also stark among the engineers, with 38% of domestic engineers getting their licenses in less than one year, compared to just 10% of international professionals. However, the majority of international engineering professionals (60%) receive their licenses within 1-2 years. The percentage of domestic and international engineers that get licenses after 3 or more years is not significantly different. The domestic and international non-health professionals had the least significant differences in their licensing times, with just over a third of domestic (36%) and international professionals (35%) getting licensed within less than a year. Interestingly, a higher percentage of international non-health professionals (40%) got licensed between 1 and 2 years compared to 31% of their domestic counterparts.

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January 20, 2010

Figure 4-6
Length of Licence Process by Profession
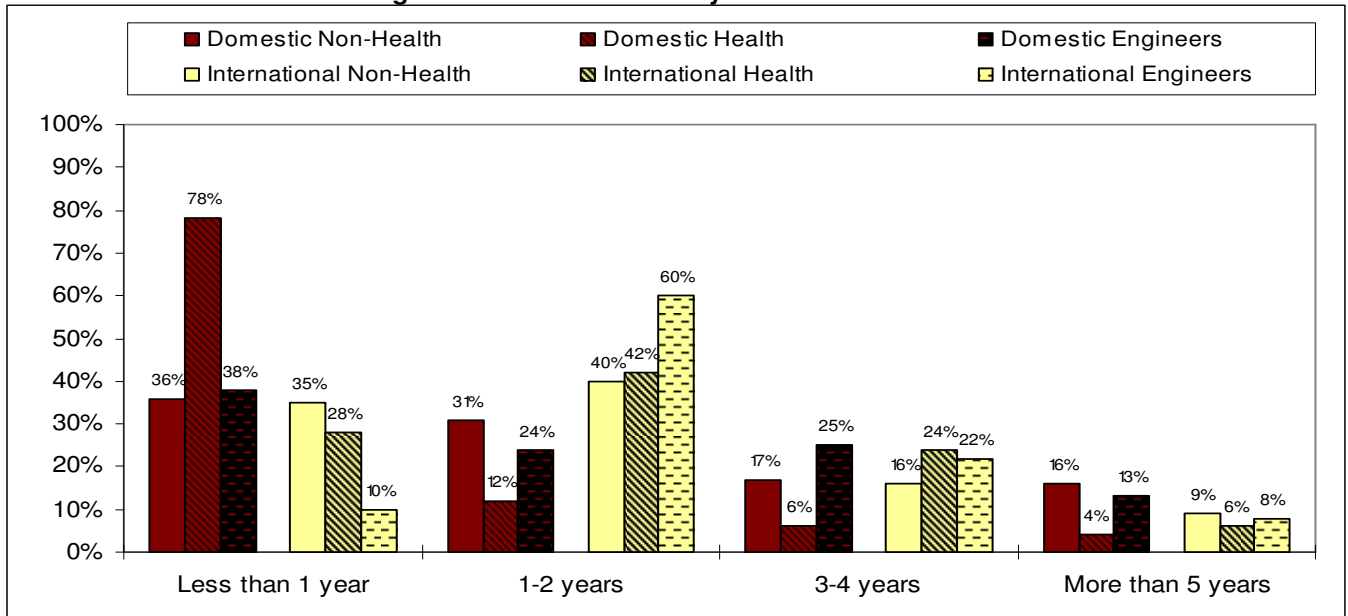
Domestic Non-health n=64, Domestic Health n=311, Domestic engineers n=244, International Non-health n= 136, International Health n=156, International Engineers n=229
Source: Q-B1 - Getting you Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Overall, one can safely conclude that the differences in length of licensing time between the international and domestic professionals can be explained by the fact that a significant number of the professions require internationally trained individuals to get Canadian work experience prior to being licensed in their professions. Additionally, the qualifications assessment process may cause delays in the process for internationally trained individuals.

4.1.4   License Denial

Survey respondents who had been denied licenses were asked if they had been given the reason why. About two-thirds of domestic (69%) and international professionals (64%) who had been denied licenses indicated that they had been given reasons why they were denied. The Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act stipulates that regulatory bodies have to provide written reasons to applicants within a reasonable time in respect of all registration decisions and internal review or appeal decisions (2006, c. 31, s. 8 (c)). The professionals who indicated that they did not get reasons why they were denied may have been denied licenses in the period prior to the Act.

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January 20, 2010

The top three reasons that professionals were given for being denied licenses were:
  ➢ They did not complete or pass the necessary accreditation exams;
  ➢ The regulatory body did not recognize the equivalency of their educational qualifications; and
  ➢ The regulatory body did not recognize the equivalency of their work experience.

Other reasons included the fact that the professionals did not possess the appropriate level of education/knowledge or did not possess the required amount of appropriate work experience.

Focus group participants often expressed frustration and were confounded by seeming contradictions in stated requirements and the fact that they were denied licenses when they felt that they met the requirements. For example, one participant came from a university that has an agreement with the PEO, which indicates that the PEO will recognize engineering graduates from their school because their curriculum met Ontario engineering curriculum requirements. However, when he moved here and applied for a license, he was required to take additional educational courses.

4.2   Knowledge of Licensing Process

Knowledge is a significant factor in the licensing process, particularly the ability to access relevant information in a timely manner. This section examines respondents' knowledge of various aspects of the licensing process, including costs, qualifications and requirements that they had to meet in order to be licensed.

4.2.1   Knowledge of Licensing Process

Respondents were queried on their knowledge of various aspects of the licensing process. The majority of the respondents knew the steps necessary to start the licensing process, (90% domestic and 84% international), the education and practical experience needed for their professions (94% domestic and 82% international), and the application documents required for application (88% domestic and 85% international). A higher percentage of DTIs knew the education and practical experience required than the ITIs; this may be a reflection of the fact that ITIs generally face requirements for additional education and/or experience based on their international experience prior to coming to Canada.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

"When I first came it wasn't that easy…there were a few websites; some of them had conflicting information and you had to go through different licensing bodies across Canada... I think the process has changed and improved drastically in the last couple years where they introduced the Health Force Ontario for people who have background to get training. Now there is a process to tell you exactly what to do."

Focus Group Participant

"When I came here I completely knew the process and it was very clear because of the website…Medical Council of Canada and CPSO (College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario) website and Ontario Health Force…"

Focus Group Participant

Three quarters of domestic (78%) and international professionals (75%) knew how to get their qualifications assessed. However, just over half of domestic (56%) and international professionals (51%) knew what they could do if they were unable to acquire the documents they needed for qualification.

Table 4-7
Knowledge of Licensing Process

	Domestic	International
Beginning the licensing process	90% (n=987)	84% (n=1,903)
Education and practical experience needed for the profession	94% (n=986)	82% (n=1,914)
Qualifications assessed	78% (n=890)	75% (n=1,855)
Application documents required for qualification	88% (n=980)	85% (n=1,917)
Inability to acquire the documents for qualification	56% (n=683)	51% (n=1,479)
Length of licensing process	67% (n=963)	53% (n=1,828)
Licensing fees	81% (n=994)	74% (n=1,905)

Source: Q-C1 – Getting your Professional License in Ontario

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

The professionals also seemed well informed on the cost of licensing, with domestic (81%) leading the international (74%) per the trend in this line of inquiry. It was interesting to note however, that while 67% of the domestic professionals know the length of the licensing process, a much lower percentage of international (53%) knew about this. For international professionals, the length of the licensing process is somewhat more complicated than for domestic professionals as they often have to get credentials sent from their countries of training for assessment, take extra education courses and exams, and get Canadian work experience before they can get licensed. These steps and the related costs factor into the length of the licensing process, so it is understandable that fewer of them would feel knowledgeable about the length of the process.

Overall, the interesting observation in this question was that on many aspects, the international professionals were equally or only slightly less knowledgeable than the domestic professionals. These results speak to the efforts that the regulatory bodies, the government and other related agencies such as professional associations and immigrant serving organizations have made to ensure availability of information on the various aspects of the licensing process. In fact, a concern that was raised in the focus groups was that there were often too many sources of information on licensing for a particular profession. As a result some professionals, particularly the international ones, indicated that they were sometimes unclear about which of those was the authoritative source of information on the profession.

> *"I could not get anyone to answer me on the difference between CCPE (Canadian Council of Professional Engineers) and PEO (Professional Engineers of Ontario) designations and recognition between the two."*
>
> Focus Group Participant

4.3   Information Availability and Accessibility

Knowledge of the process is intrinsically tied to access to relevant information. Further to the inquiry on the knowledge they had on the licensing process, respondents were asked about their sources of information on the licensing process and accessibility of this information (i.e., how easy or difficult it was to get this information). This section looked at various sources of information utilized by the respondents and ease of access to required information.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

4.3.1   Sources of information

Survey respondents were asked how they found the information on the licensing process. A majority of the domestic (78%) and international (73%) respondents got their information from the website of the regulatory body. For domestic professionals, communication with the regulatory body (46%) and friends and family (29%) were the next most cited sources. The situation was reversed with international professionals, who relied more on friends and family (38%) followed by communication with the regulatory body (28%).

The largest difference between the domestic and international professionals was that 20% of the domestic relied on their education institutions for information on the licensing process, compared to just 1% of the international professionals. This is a reasonable difference because DTIs often get information on the licensing process from the educational institutions in which they are getting the training for their professions. Overall, ITIs utilized more sources of information than DTIs, including Canadian government websites (13%), Health Force Ontario (6%), Global Experience Ontario (1%) and immigrant serving agencies. In fact, these sources were almost exclusively utilized by the ITIs.

When examined by profession, the majority of international and domestic health, non-health and engineering professionals utilized the website of the regulatory body. Engineers utilized the regulatory website more than any other professionals by far, with 90% domestic and 78% international utilizing their website, compared to an average 68% by health and non-health domestic and 69% of international health and non-health.

Figure 4-8
Sources of Information
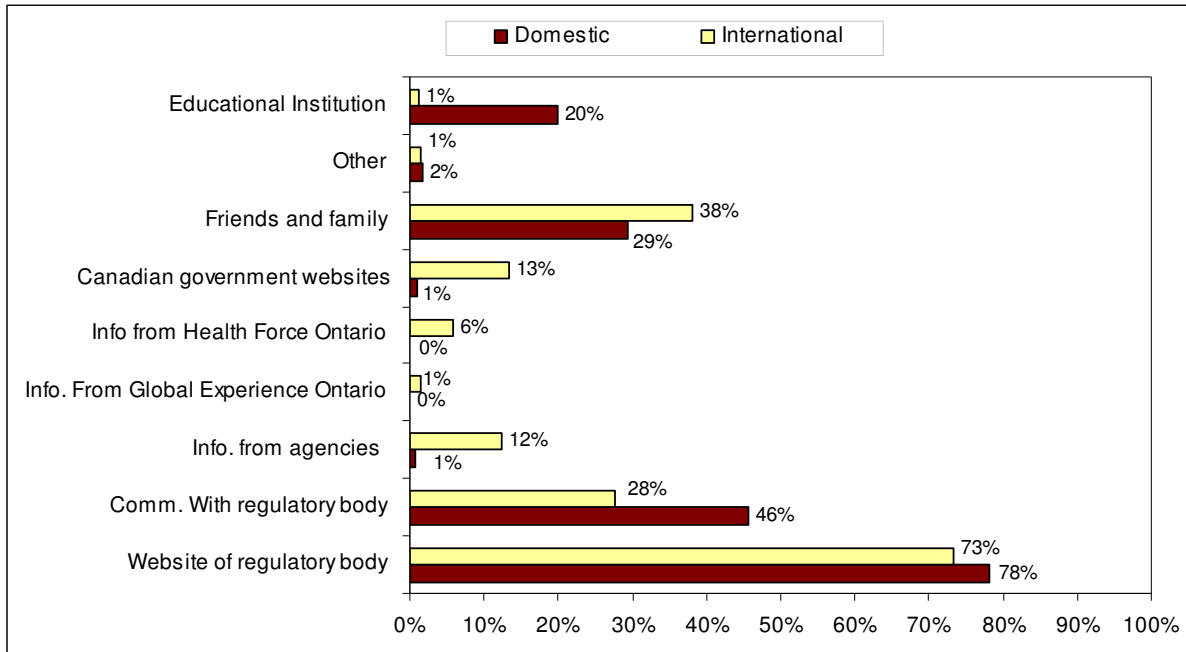
Domestic n=1,000, International n=2,119
Source: QC2 - Getting you Professional Licence in Ontario

Half (50%) of domestic health professionals communicated with their regulatory body, more than the non-health (45%) and the engineers (42%). Comparatively, about a quarter (27%) of international health professionals communicated with the regulatory body, less than their non-health (30%) and engineering (28%) counterparts. Though the proportion is slightly higher for ITIs, both ITIs and DTIs resorted to family and friends for information to a significant extent (38% and 29%, respectively).

4.3.2   Ease of Getting Information

Respondents were asked to rate how easy or difficult it was to get information about the licensing process. A majority of the domestic professionals found it easy to get information about the requirements for getting a license (77%) and information about fees (81%), compared to a little less than half (48%) of the international professionals on requirements and 68% on information about fees. Therefore, while an average of 84% of international professionals knew the steps necessary to start the licensing process, including the education and practical experience and application documents required (see 4.2.1), it was not as easy for them to find this information on the requirements. Similarly, a high percentage of domestic (78%) and international (75%) professionals knew how to get their qualifications assessed. However, only half of domestic (52%) and under a third of

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

international professionals (30%) found it easy to get information on how the regulatory body assesses the qualifications.

Table 4-10
Ease or Difficulty of Getting Information about the Licensing Process

	Domestic			International		
	Easy	Undecided	Difficult	Easy	Undecided	Difficult
Information about the requirements for getting a license (e.g. work experience, education, language skills) (Domestic n=948, International n=1,994.)	77%	13%	10%	48%	27%	28%
Information about fees (Domestic n=952, International n=1,996.)	81%	15%	5%	68%	21%	11%
Information about the length of the process (Domestic n=943, International n=1978.)	55%	28%	18%	30%	32%	38%
Information about resources for applicants (e.g. a guide to help prepare for exams, orientation sessions) (Domestic n=925, International n=1939.)	58%	27%	15%	33%	30%	38%
Information about how you can see your records(Domestic n=866, International n=1897)	29%	50%	20%	23%	41%	36%
Information about the appeal process(Domestic n=703, International n=1769.)	33%	51%	16%	23%	44%	33%
Information about how the regulatory body assesses your qualifications (Domestic n=929, International n=1982.)	52%	29%	20%	30%	31%	39%
Information about bridging programs (Domestic n=956, International n=2,012.)	26%	59%	15%	24%	39%	37%

Source: QC3 - Getting you Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Overall, a higher percentage of international professionals found it difficult to get information on these aspects of the licensing process than those who found it easy. In fact, twice as many international professionals across the board found it more difficult to get this information than did the domestic professionals. The fact that a high percentage of international professionals were knowledgeable about the process despite the difficulty they faced in accessing the information speaks to their diligence in seeking the information, as well as the multiple sources that they utilized in order to get the amount of information that they had.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

SECTION 5:   ASSESSMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

This section reviews the qualifications that are required in order to become licensed. As part of the qualification process, applicants are expected to meet academic and work-experience requirements. This includes: provide documentation (transcripts and reference letters), complete credential assessments and examinations.

5.1   Qualification Assessment

Assessment of qualifications is one of the first steps in the licensing process. This step determines whether an applicant has the necessary academic qualifications and experience to be registered in the profession. The assessment of applicant's credentials is done by a regulatory body or in combination with a third party; third parties or qualification-assessment agencies provide degree-equivalency assessments, occupation specific credential assessments and competency and prior learning assessments and may conduct examinations. As indicated in Figure 5-1 the most common qualification assessor for DTIs was the regulatory body (97%).

Figure 5-1
Qualification Assessment
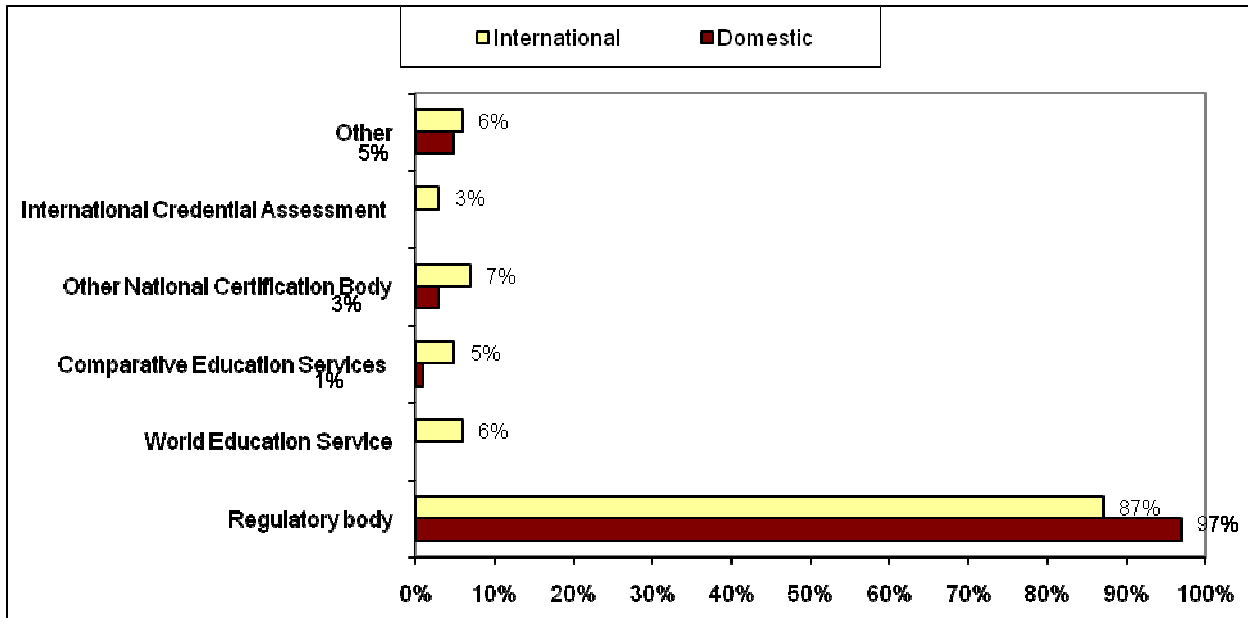
Domestic n=889, International n=1,765
Source: QD1 Getting Your Professional Licence

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Although a high percentage (87%) of international professionals sought the services of the regulatory body, others used third-party agencies. These included the National Certification Body (7%), World Education Service (6%) and Comparative Education Services at the University of Toronto (5%).

When examined by profession (non-health, health and engineers), an overwhelming majority (92%) of internationally trained engineers used the regulatory body. One key reason for this finding may be because the regulatory body for engineers does not use a third party and engineers represent the majority of the respondents. As illustrated in Figure 5-2, international non-health and health professionals sought the services of third party agencies more frequently.

Figure 5-2
International Professionals Qualification Assessment
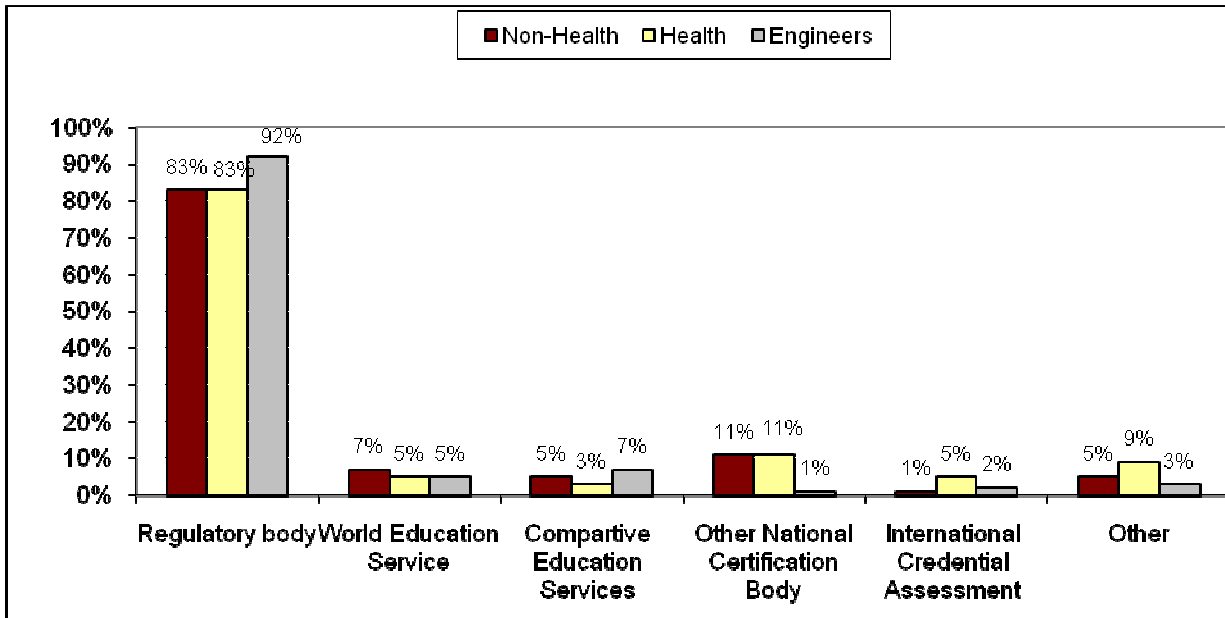
International non-health n=366, Health n=865, Engineers n=780
Source: Q D1 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

In the focus groups, participants reported on their frustration with the qualification assessment process. Often, applicants are required to get their qualifications assessed by several agencies. This increases the length and cost of the process.

Once applicants begin the process of becoming licensed, they are required to provide the regulatory body or third party agencies with documents. While the document requirements vary by regulated profession, these usually include official transcripts and reference letters;

proof of legal status to work in Canada, documentation of previous work experience and a resume.

The majority (96%) of DTIs and 92% of ITIs indicated that the regulatory body had informed them of the documents that were required to complete their qualification assessment. Of those respondents that indicated that they consulted another organization, most stated (90% domestic and 91% international) that they were also informed of the documents required to assess qualification. There was no significant difference between the DTIs and ITIs.

Respondents were asked to report on the length of time that it took to collect these documents. Most DTIs (56%) reported that it took less than one month to collect the documents. In contrast, ITIs (52%) took between one to six months to collect the information.

"In order to get all my letters and transcripts for the Ontario Teachers College I had to go all the way back to India and visit all the different places in order to send them directly to the college."
Focus Group Participant.

Figure 5-3
Length of Time to Collect Documents
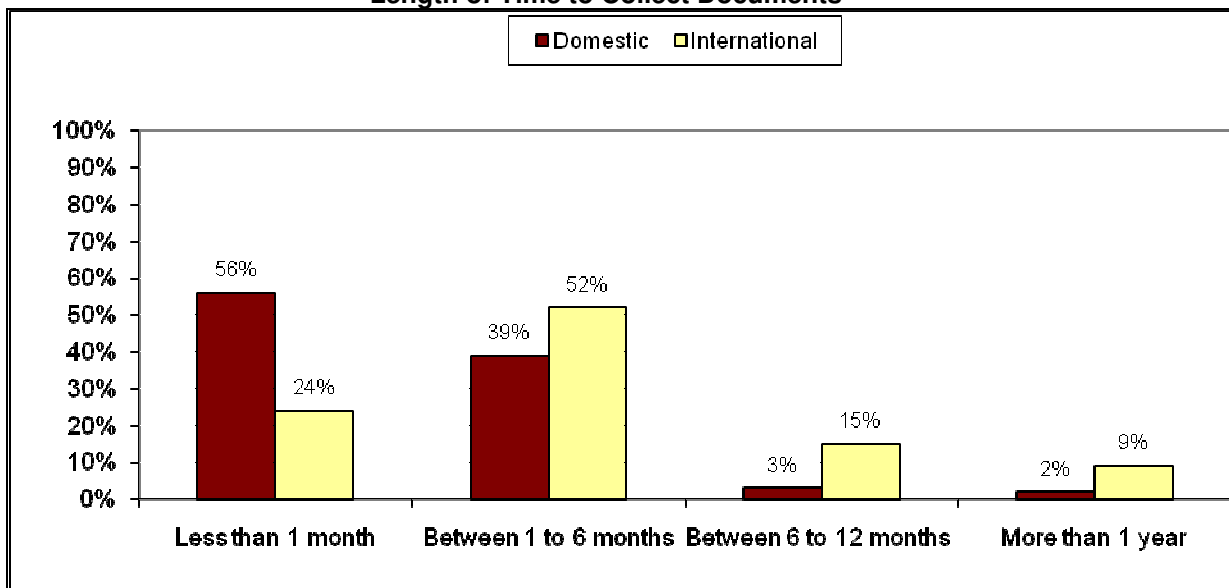
Domestic n=871, International n=1,799.
Source: QD4 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

In addition to the cost and time, it is difficult to translate hours of study (from other countries) into credits. Credits don't exist in some countries so the conversion may not accurately capture someone's qualifications.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

> *"My alma mater is located within ex-socialist Europe, so the socio-economic/educational system has totally changed since my graduation in 1985, which complicated my ability to produce reliable information at the pace the College was expecting me to."*
>
> Focus Group Participant

In one particular instance, an engineer in the focus group reported that his application was pending because the Professional Engineers of Ontario (PEO) needed his certificates/transcripts from a local high school in Africa. He stated that the process has taken him three years and he was unclear why the PEO needed his high school certification when PEO already had his Bachelors and Masters Degree transcripts and certificates.

Survey participants were asked if they were/had been given the criteria that were used to assess qualifications or work experience. Overall, 57% were told/given the criteria used to assess their qualifications. When examined by region of training (domestic vs. international), 53% of ITIs reported that they were not given/told the qualifications criteria. In contrast, less than one-quarter (23%) of DTIs reported that they were not told the criteria.

5.2   Examinations

As part of the licensing process, applicants must complete several examinations depending on the profession. Regulatory bodies and third parties administer the exams. The number and nature of the exams differ between professions. Thirty regulated professions require applicants to take at least one examination as part of the registration process.

Respondents were asked if they had completed exams. As Figure 5-4 illustrates, DTIs (76% non-health, 92% health and 83% engineers) took more exams than ITIs. The profession that had to complete the most exams (for both the internationally and domestically trained) were the health professionals.

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January 20, 2010

Figure 5-4
Profession that required an exam
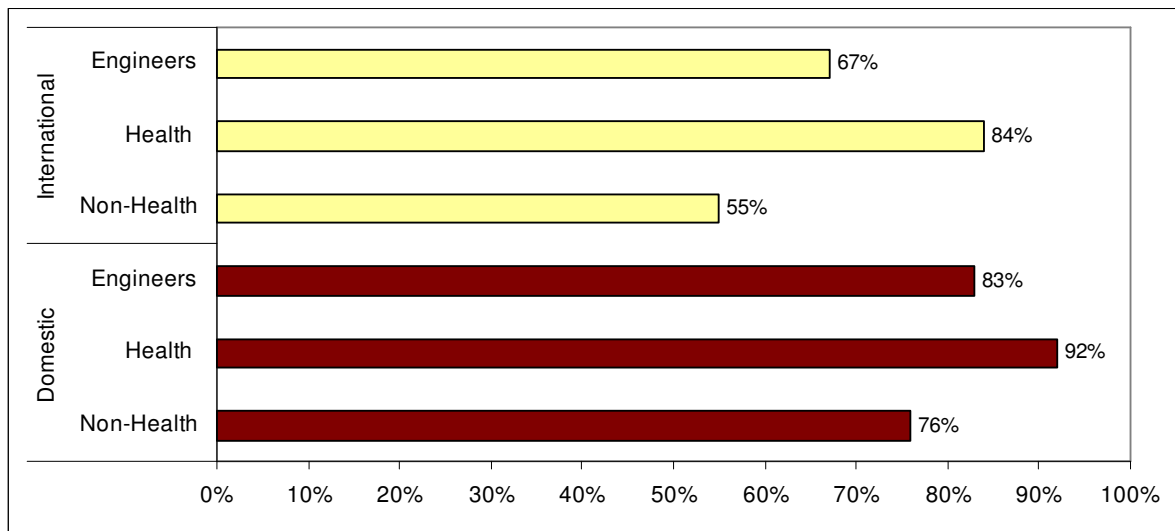
Domestic Non-health n=91, Domestic Health n=350, Domestic engineers n=465, International Non-health n= 324, International Health n=750, International Engineers n=668
Source: QD6 Getting Your Professional Licence

Respondents were asked about the number of exams that they completed. A majority (90%) of DTIs completed between one to five exams. More than three-quarters (77%) of ITIs completed one to five exams.

Figure 5-6
Number of Exams Required
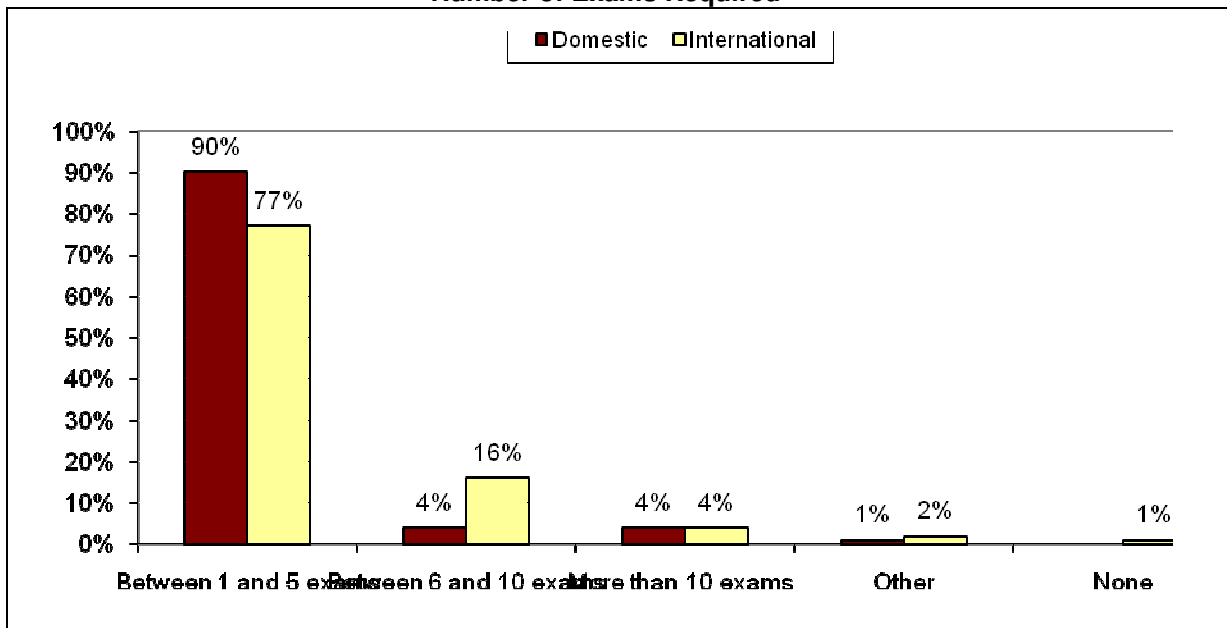
Domestic n=751, International n=1,107
Source: QD7 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

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January 20, 2010

When examined by profession (health, non-health and engineers), those in the non-health professions completed the most number of exams. A total of 30% of domestic non-health professionals completed more than six exams. More than one-third (39%) of international non-health professionals completed more than six exams.

Figure 5-6
Number of Exams Required by Profession
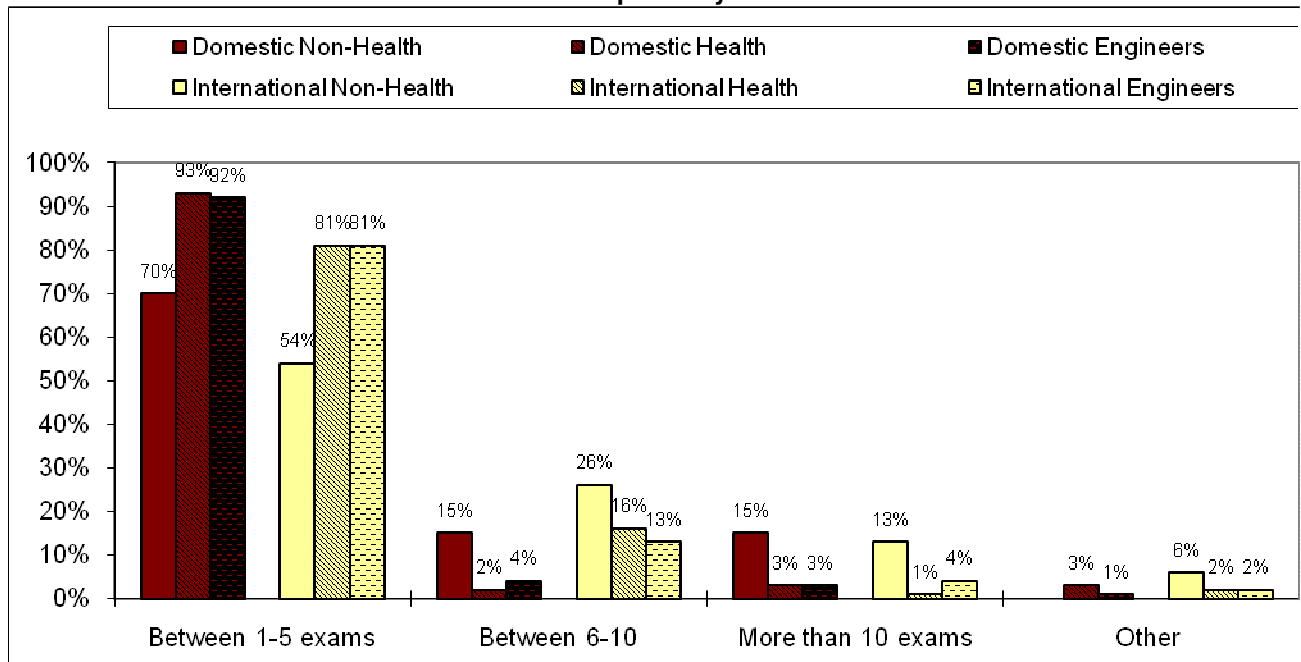
Domestic Non-health n=66, Domestic Health n=313, Domestic engineers n=372, International Non-health n= 161, International Health n=555, International Engineers n=400
Source: QD9 Getting Your Professional Licence
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Excludes 'none'.

5.2.1 Typical Length of the Examination Process

Further inquiry revealed the length of time it required to complete the exams. As illustrated in Figure 5-7, 70% of DTIs completed the examination process in less than one year. By comparison, 41% of ITIs reported that it took longer (between 1-2 years) to complete their exams.

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January 20, 2010

Figure 5-7
Length of Time to Complete Exams

Domestic n=756, International n=1,137
Source: QD8 Getting Your Professional Licence
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

When comparing professions in Figure 5-8, 68% of the domestically trained non-health professionals reported requiring more than one year to complete their examinations, while only 23% of the domestic health professionals and 29% of the domestically trained engineers took more than 1 year to complete their exams. Across all the professions however, it took longer for internationally trained individuals to complete their exams compared to their domestic counterparts. Seventy-seven percent non-health, 87% health and 60% engineering ITIs reported it took them longer than one year to complete their exams.

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January 20, 2010

Figure 5-8
Length of Time to Complete Exams by Profession
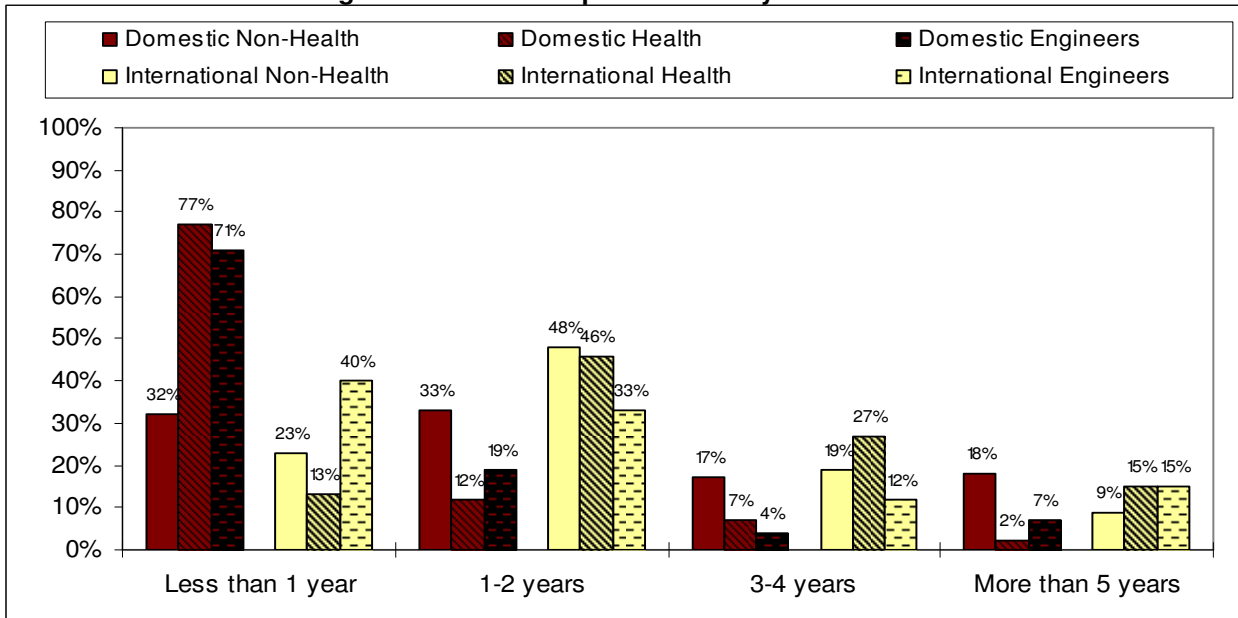
Domestic Non-health n=66, Domestic Health n=318, Domestic engineers n=372, International Non-health n= 160, International Health n=568, International Engineers n=409
Source: QD8 Getting Your Professional Licence

5.2.2 Examination Fees

Survey participants were asked about the fees associated with completing exams. As demonstrated in Figure 5-9, a majority (59%) of DTIs paid less than $500. In contrast, a total of 47% of ITIs paid more than $1,000 for completing examinations.

Figure 5-9
Examination Fees
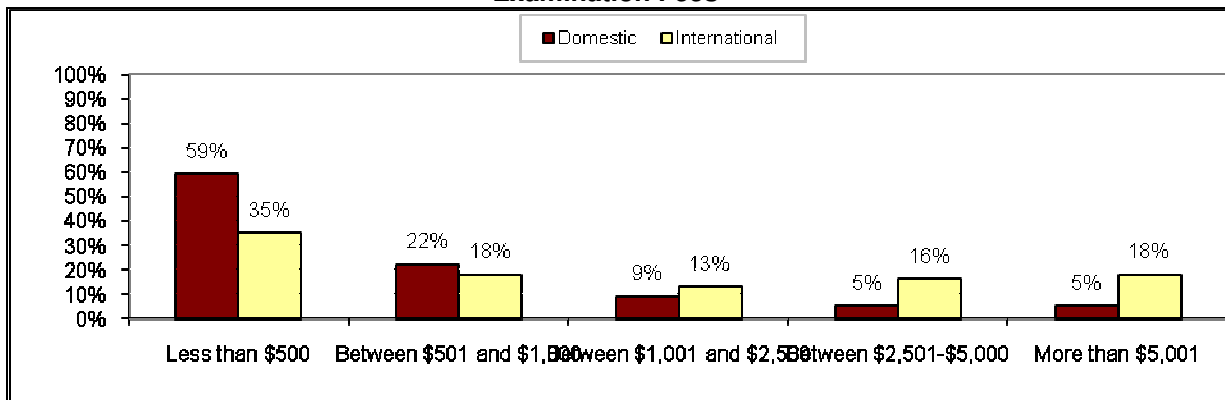
Domestic n=711, International n=1,101
Source: QD9 Getting Your Professional Licence
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

When comparing the professions, non-health professionals paid more for completing exams. Overall, 75% of non-health professions spent more than $501 on exams. This may be due to the high number of examinations that non-health professionals are required to complete. By contrast, engineering professionals paid less than the non-health and health professionals.

When examined by where trained (domestic and international), the differences were more significant. It ultimately costs more for ITIs to complete the exams than their domestic counterparts.

Figure 5-10
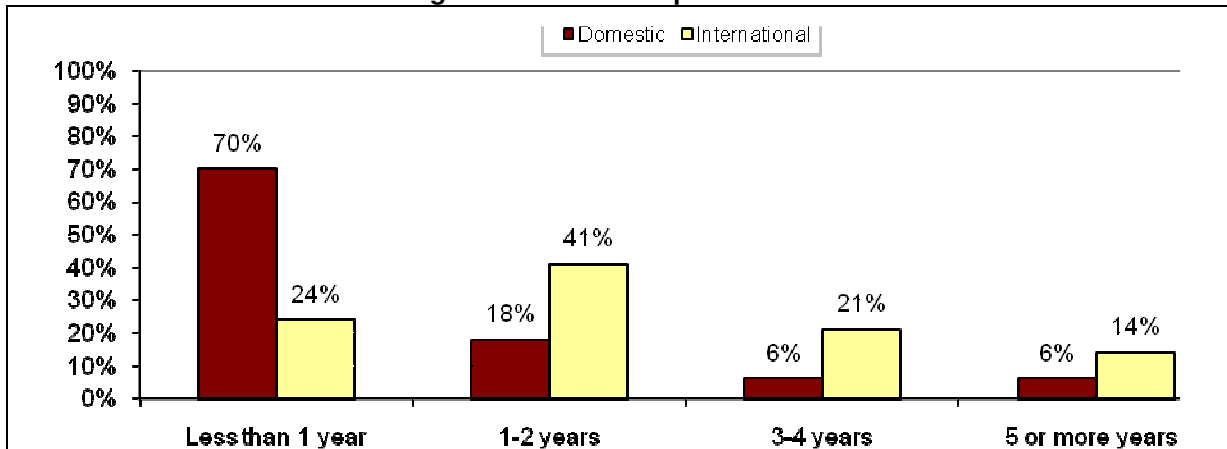**Examination Fees by Profession**
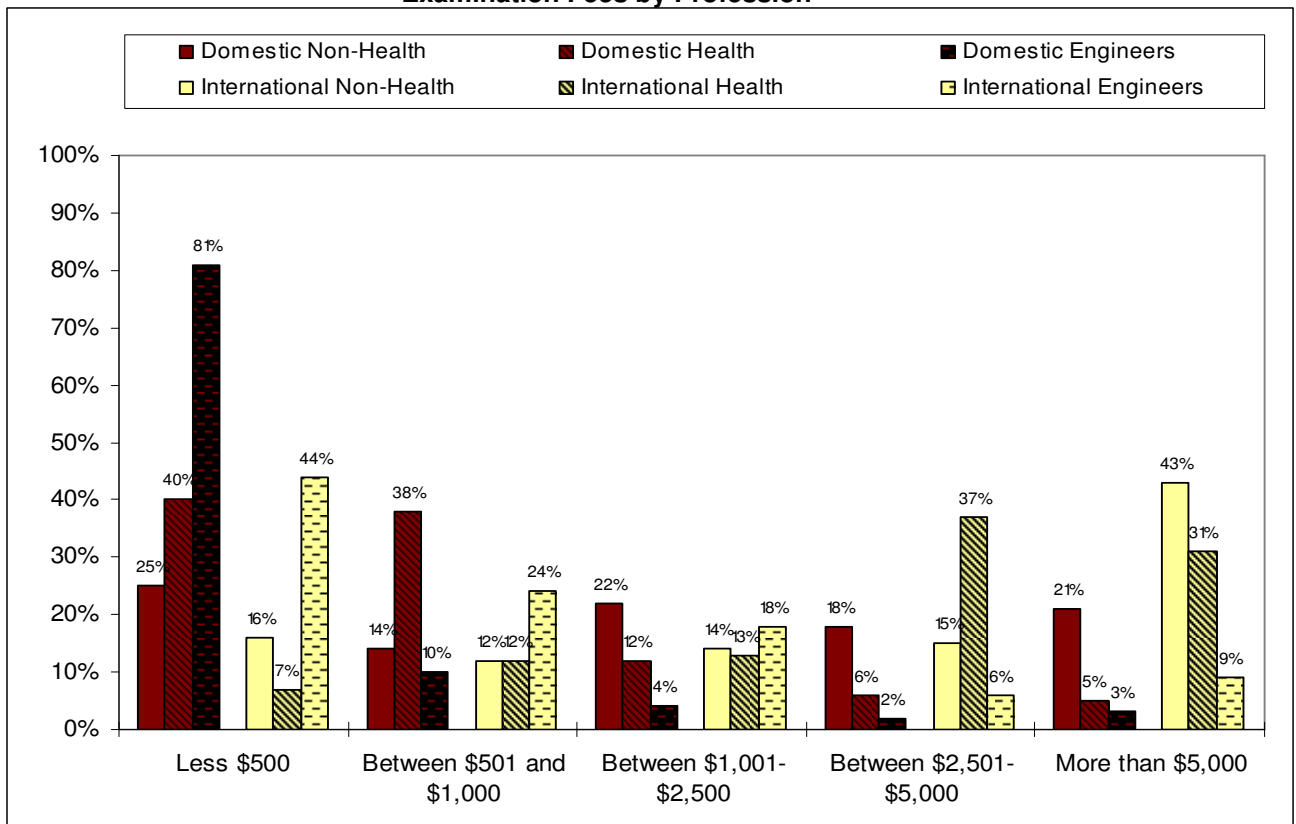
Domestic Non-health n=63, Domestic Health n=297, Domestic engineers n=354, International Non-health n= 158, International Health n=575, International Engineers n=368
Source: QD9 Getting Your Professional Licence

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

5.3   Challenges with the Examination Process

Participants were questioned on the challenges they faced when completing their exams. When considering region of training (domestic and international), 58% of DTIs and 49% of ITIs felt that the length of the examinations was the most difficult part of the process. This was followed by respondents who felt that they were unprepared and the exam questions were challenging. Unsurprisingly, 14% of ITIs reported experiencing language difficulties. A small percentage of respondents (6% of DTIs and 4% of ITIs) felt that questions were biased and unfair.

Figure 5-11
Challenges with the Examination Process
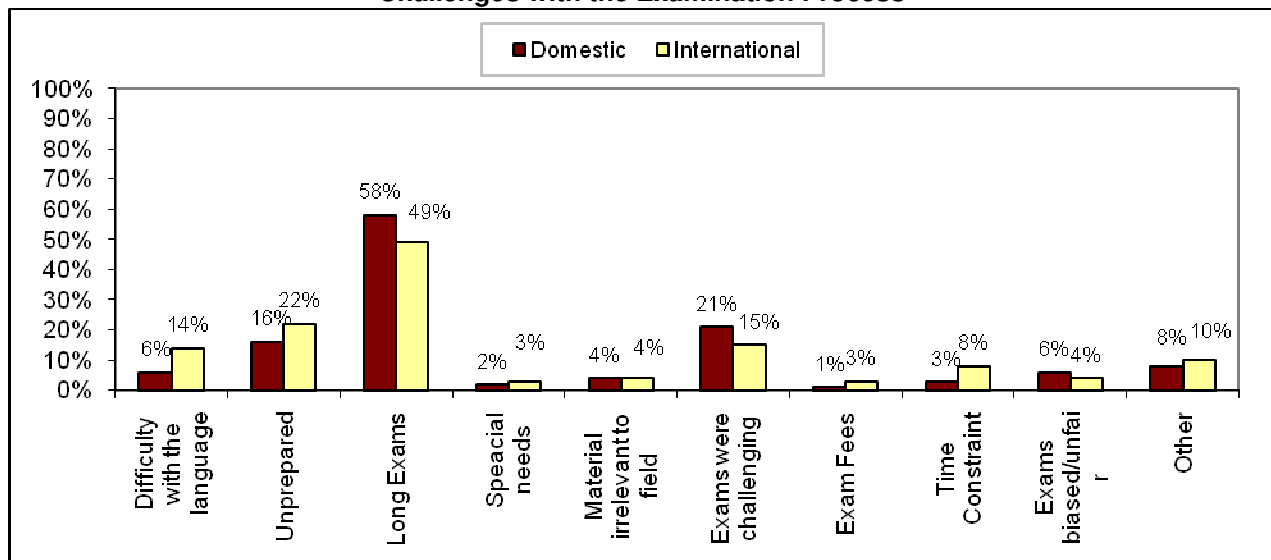
Domestic n=338, International n=743, Source:
Source: QD11 Getting Your Professional Licence
Note: Multiple answers accepted

These findings were echoed in the focus groups. Focus group participants noted the length and cost of the exams. One doctor stated, "…*I tried and failed a second time and I have not tried again because it costs $700 every time to sit for that exam.*"

Respondents were also asked to report on the ease and difficulty of the format of examinations-such as multiple choice or practical exams. Forty-one percent of DTIs found multiple-choice exams difficult. A slightly higher percentage (43%) of it is also found it difficult.

For 46% of DTIs and ITIs the most difficult exams was the format practical/clinical exam. By comparison, the format that was least difficult was an essay or short answers type of exam.

Table 5-12
Examination Completion Length

Format of Examinations	Domestic			International		
	Easy	Undecided	Difficult	Easy	Undecided	Difficult
An exam that asks multiple-choice questions (Domestic n=539, International n=952)	18%	42%	41%	14%	43%	43%
A practical exam (clinical exams) (Domestic n=348, International n=813)	11%	43%	46%	11%	43%	46%
An exam that asks for essay answers or short answers (Domestic n=521, International n=872)	16%	48%	36%	13%	48%	39%

Source: QD10, Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

5.4   Enablers to success in the examination process

Respondents were asked to report on the resources they used to prepare for exams. More than half (51%) of ITIs and 70% of DTIs used sample exam questions to prepare for the exams. Sixty-eight percent of DTIs also used material provided by the regulatory body and 54% used a guide to help prepare for the exams.

Figure 5-13
Examination Process - Enablers
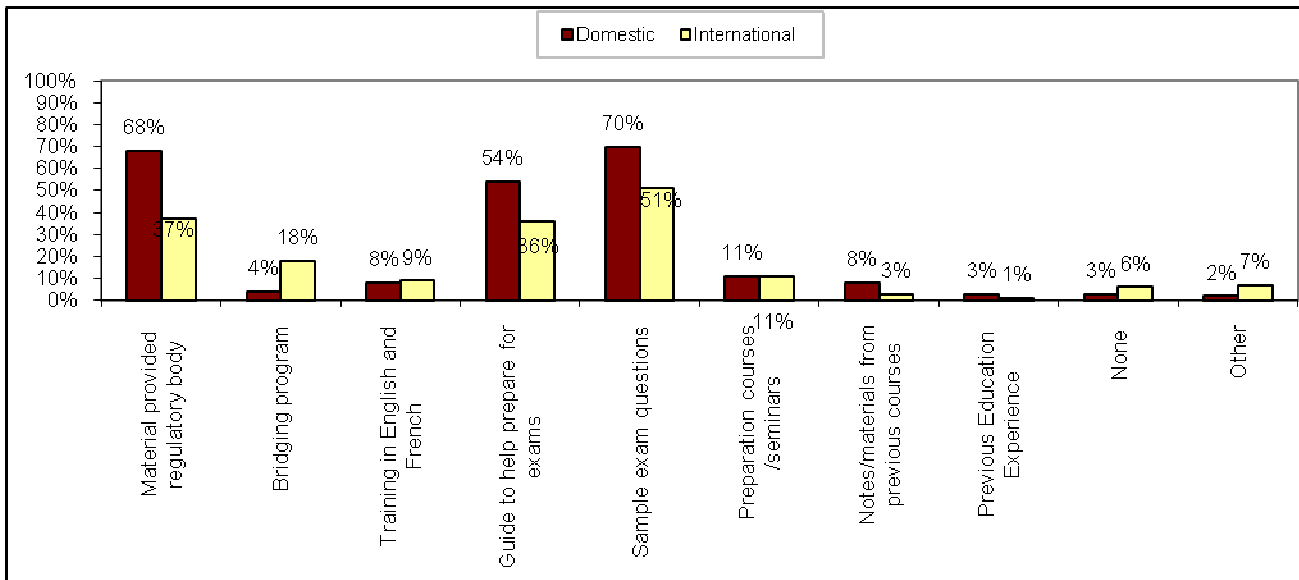
Domestic n=735, International n=1,092
Source: QD12 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Multiple answers accepted

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R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

The survey asked respondents if the material they used to prepare for the exam was helpful. Across the domestic professions, 97% of non-health professionals, 96% of health professionals and 97% of engineers found sample exam questions the most helpful tool in preparing for exams. A slightly lower percentage of international professionals, 84% non-health, 85% health, and 91% engineers found sample exam questions a helpful tool.

Table 5-14
Exam Preparation – Helpful Materials

| Materials Provided	Domestic			International		
	Non-health	Health	Engineers	Non-health	Health	Engineers
Material provided by the regulatory body	96%	88%	92%	92%	81%	90%
Bridging program	100%	94%	72%	96%	90%	95%
Training in English or French	91%	92%	95%	90%	93%	92%
A guide to help prepare for the exams	93%	94%	96%	95%	82%	92%
Sample exam question	97%	96%	97%	84%	85%	91%
Other	86%	96%	97%	85%	88%	93%

Domestic Non-Health n=135, Domestic Health n=650, Domestic Engineers n=813, International Non-Health n=216, International Health n=841, International Engineers n=588

Source: QD13 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario

Note: Multiple answers accepted

SECTION 6: REQUIREMENTS FOR GETTING A LICENCE

6.1 Requirements for Licensing

This section of the report examined the requirements that professionals had to meet in order to become licensed in their professions in Ontario. Specifically, professionals were asked about the education, work experience and language skills required before they could get licensed in their professions.

6.1.1 Overview of Requirements

There were two main requirements indicated by the professionals: Canadian work experience and more education. A majority of DTIs (45%) and ITIs (58%) indicated that getting Canadian work experience was a requirement they had to meet in order to get licensed in Ontario. A higher percentage of ITIs (35%) indicated more education as a requirement, compared to 29% DTIs. This requirement was confirmed in focus group discussions:

> "*They [certification body] should let you know that you cannot work as an Engineer [immediately]…you have to go through this loop or cycle to be recognized as an Engineer…*"
>
> Focus Group participant

> "*At the beginning, I wanted to get certified but the first info I got, I remember …I spoke with few other engineers – internationally trained – and they told me that the best bet for me would be to find a job and have 1-2 years experience in Canada before even having a chance to go through the [licensing] process without any issue…*"
>
> Focus Group participant

Close to a third of DTIs (29%) indicated that they did not have to meet any of the requirements listed in table 6-1, compared to 12% of ITIs. A higher percentage of international respondents (17%) were required to complete accreditation exams and/or improve their English or French (18%). The somewhat surprising result was that a very low percentage of ITIs indicated that they required their credentials assessed and/or accreditation exams in order to get licensed.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

An almost similar proportion of domestic and international non-health professionals indicated that they needed to get more education (47% and 41%) and experience (49% and 46%) in Canada. The survey demonstrates that Canadian work experience is a more important requirement for engineers – domestic and international - than for the other professionals. The majority of domestic (66%) and international engineers (68%) indicated that they needed Canadian work experience; the difference was stark in the health professionals, where over half of international health professionals (53%) required Canadian work experience, compared to just 16% of domestic professionals.

Table 6-1
Requirements

	Domestic			International		
	Non-health	Health	Engineer	Non-health	Health	Engineer
Get more education	47%	47%	12%	41%	46%	21%
Get experience in Canada	49%	16%	66%	46%	53%	68%
Improve English or French	4%	2%	1%	21%	23%	12%
Complete Accreditation Exam(s)	5%	9%	7%	10%	13%	12%
Complete Refresher Course(s)	4%	24%	1%		2%	
Complete Appropriate Internship		6%		2%	5%	1%
Complete Language Proficiency Exam (s)				1%		
Have credentials assessed	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%	6%
Bridging Program					1%	
Other	3%	2%	2%	3%	4%	2%
None	23%	39%	22%	22%	9%	10%

Domestic Non-Health n=133, Domestic Health n=415, Domestic Engineers n=521, International Non-Health n=488, International Health n=1138, International Engineers n=938
Source: QE-2 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Multiple answers accepted

Overall, other than language related requirements and refresher courses, these results indicate that these licensing requirements apply across the board for DTIs and ITIs, with similar expectations from each group.

6.1.2   Additional Education Requirements

In this section, respondents were asked how many additional education courses they needed to get licensed in their professions. About twice as many ITIs (62%) indicated the requirement of an additional 1 to 5 courses, compared to DTIs (33%). A higher percentage of ITIs (18%) were required to take between 6 and 10 courses compared to DTIs (12%). This disparity was discussed at length in the focus groups in Section 9 where ITIs claimed

that they did not understand why they were required to take extra education courses in order to qualify for licensing in their profession. This was particularly the case for ITIs who had already been practicing in their professions prior to immigrating to Canada. They found these requirements particularly baffling and frustrating as they had already met the educational qualifications and practical experience necessary to qualify them for licensing in their country.

> *"If I had known that I would have to study again the same courses [again] that I studied 8 years ago, I wouldn't have come."*

<div align="right">Focus Group Participant</div>

A result that seemed anomalous was that close to half (49%) of the DTIs were required to take more than 10 courses, compared to just 15% of the ITIs. This may have been a result of question interpretation, with DTIs counting the number of courses that they were required to take throughout their educational training, in comparison to ITIs, who may only have indicated the number of extra courses required to get licensed in Ontario, exclusive of the count of their educational courses in their countries.

Figure 6-2
Additional Education Courses
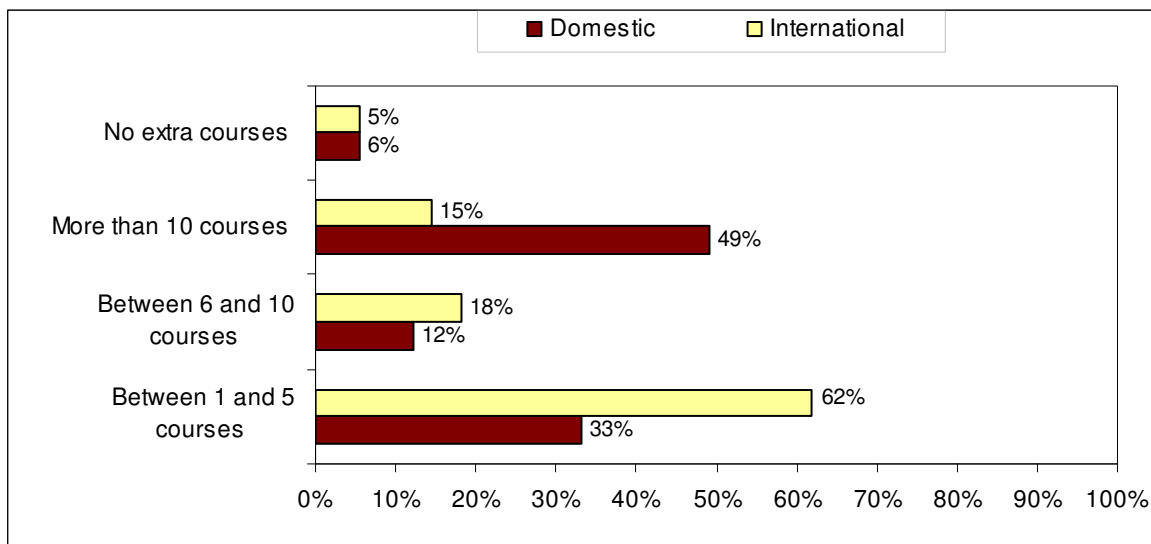
Domestic n=181, International n=425
Source: QE-2 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario.
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

By profession, about half or more of international non-health (56%), health (73%) and engineering professionals (47%) were required to take between one and five additional educational courses, compared to about a third of domestic non-health (38%), health (30%)

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R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

and engineers (37%). Similarly, more ITIs were required to take between six and ten additional courses than DTIs.

Table 6-3
Additional Education Courses

Number of Courses Needed	Domestic			International		
	Non-Health	Health	Engineers	Non-Health	Health	Engineers
Between 1-5	38%	30%	37%	56%	73%	47%
Between 6-10	19%	10%	11%	20%	13%	27%
More than 10	41%	55%	42%	18%	11%	18%
None	3%	5%	11%	6%	4%	8%

Domestic Non-health n=37, Domestic Health n=106, Domestic Engineers n=38, International Non-health n=104, International Health n=212, International Engineers n=109.
Source: QE-2 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

6.1.3 Length of Time to Complete Courses

Professionals were asked the length of time it took them to complete the additional courses that were required of them. Seventy-five percent of the ITIs and 66% of the DTIs took two years or less to complete their extra courses. This question was particularly pertinent for ITIs with families and related responsibilities. The length of time that it took to finish extra courses as well as the related costs, were significant factors that were raised in the focus groups. These factors influenced professional's decisions on whether to seek licensing in their professions. It may also be a factor in the length of the courses that they choose to take, where such choices exist.

> *"You have to put in the balance... your profession or your family…I don't mind that other people (don't mind others) taking care of their kids; for me, no; these years that they are young, they are not going to come back – that is why I got discouraged [from pursuing the licensing process]."*
>
> Focus Group Participant

> *"I decided not to pursue the licensing process – I have a mortgage, I have two cars, I'm having a baby soon, I have my job full time…I would do it, if there is guarantee that at least they would consider me and give me the chance to go through Medical School or clinical shadowing experience."*
>
> Focus Group Participant

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

6.1.4   Course Fees

More ITIs (67%) spent up to $10,000 on their extra courses than DTIs (48%). Forty-one percent of ITIs spent up to $5,000 on courses, compared to 26% of DTIs. The differences between ITIs and DTIs lessened considerably when required fees hit $10,000.

> *"My advice would be to get a job first, because you have to get a lot of money to pay (for) all those courses…get a job, before you apply [for licensing]."*
>
> Focus Group Participant

An interesting finding was that a quarter (25%) of DTIs indicated that the fees associated with their courses were more than $25,000. The researchers believe that these professionals may have considered the fees associated with their academic training for their professions (as contrasted with fees associated with extra courses required after someone has completed their academic training).

Figure 6-4
Fees for Required Additional Education
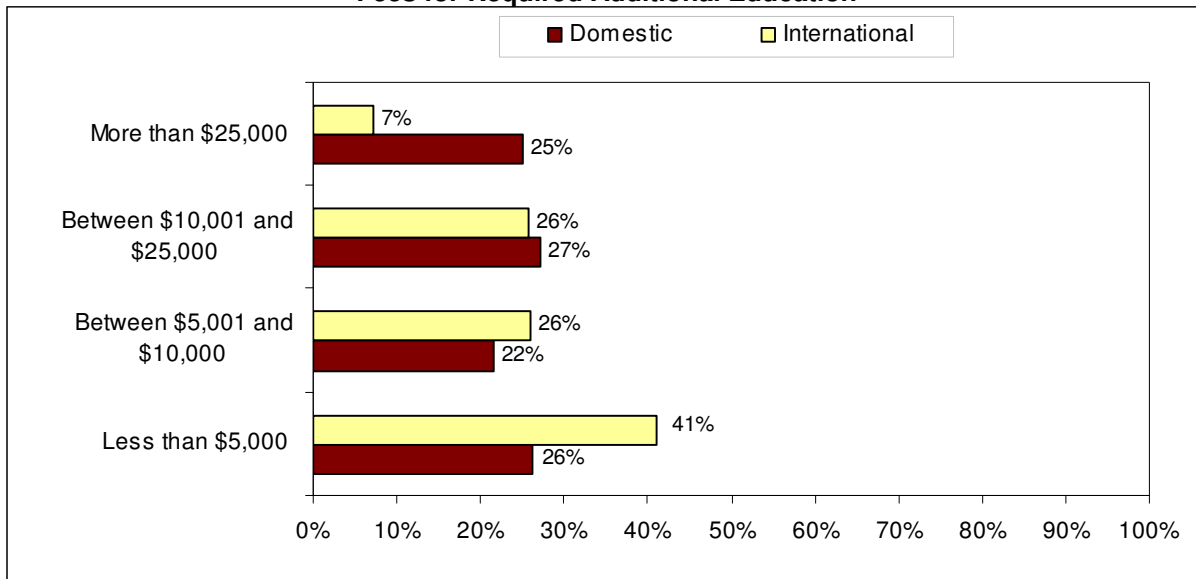
Domestic n=180, International n=416
Source: QE-4 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario.
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

A higher percentage of international non-health (48%) and health professionals (44%) spent up to $5,000 compared to domestic non-health (29%) and health professionals (20%). Among domestic professionals, more engineers (41%) spent up to $5,000 than the non-health and health professionals. However, their international counterparts spent more on their courses, with 43% of international engineering professionals spending between $5,000 and $10,000. A higher percentage of domestic (64%) and international health professionals

(37%) spent over $10,000 on their courses, compared to just 27% of their non-health counterparts. Overall, a higher percentage of domestic health professionals spent more money on their courses than any other group of professionals.

Figure 6-5
Fees for Required Additional Education by Profession

Domestic Non-health n=37, Domestic Health n=106, Domestic Engineers n=38, International Non-health n=104, International Health n=212, International Engineers n=109.
Source: QE-4 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario.
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

6.1.5   Financial Help to Get Extra Education

Professionals who took extra courses were asked if they got any loans, grants or other financial help from government or other organizations to pay for the education. The study revealed that financial considerations are a prevalent factor for ITIs. In focus groups, professionals talked about the financial burdens of immigration, the costs of settling into a new country, often with families, and un-employment/under-employment while seeking work or licensing in their professions. This seems to indicate a greater need for financial assistance through the licensing process. However the study showed that while 37% of DTIs got financial assistance, only 17% of ITIs received the same. Some ITIs got the assistance they needed:

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R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

"The initial process I remember is paying for the first exam – I received support from Ontario Works to pay that one – so that facilitated for me to jump into the process."

Focus Group Participant

Table 6-6
Financial Assistance for Additional Education

	Domestic			International		
	Non-Health	Health	Engineers	Non-Health	Health	Engineers
Yes	35%	42%	26%	16%	17%	21%
No	65%	58%	74%	84%	84%	80%

Domestic Non-health n=40, Domestic Health n=118, Domestic Engineers n=43, International Non-health n=116, International Health n=260, International Engineers n=112.
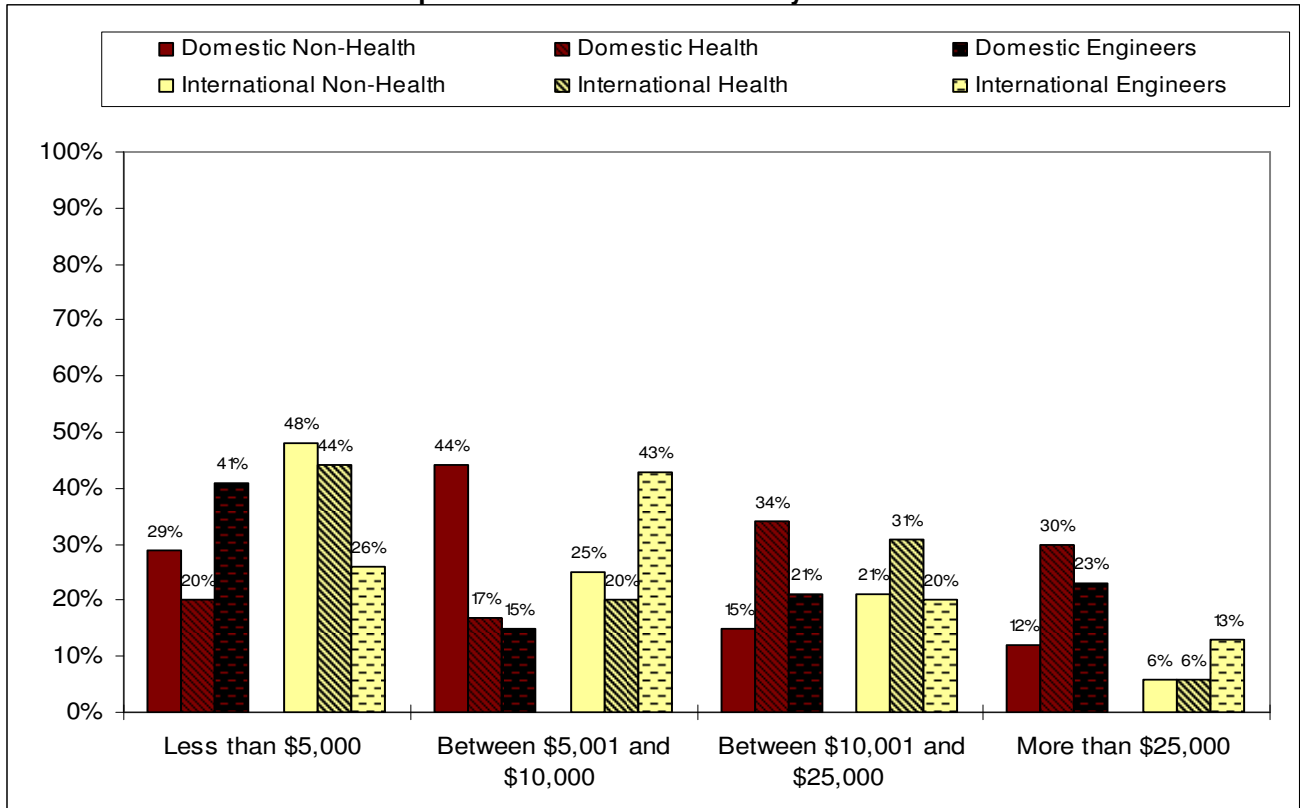Source: QE-5 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

More domestic non-health (35%) and health professionals (42%) received financial assistance, compared to their international counterparts (16% and 17%). There was no significant difference between domestic and international engineers who received financial assistance. However, given that internationally trained engineers spent more on average on their courses than their domestic counterparts, one would expect that more international engineering professionals would need financial assistance. While a higher percentage of domestic and international health professionals spent more than $10,000 on their courses, financial assistance with these high fees is only reflected among the domestic health professionals (42%) and not among their international counterparts (17%).

6.2   Work Experience

Professionals were asked about their work experience prior to coming to Canada and in Canada, and whether this experience counted towards the experience required for licensing. As part of this line of questions, professionals were also asked about the challenges that they faced in getting relevant work experience in Canada that would count towards their licensing process.

6.2.1   Challenges in Getting Work Experience

ITIs were asked about the challenges they faced in getting the work experience that was required for licensing in Canada. This was an open-ended question and professionals listed various challenges that they had experienced. Among the challenges listed by the professionals was that they did not possess previous Canadian work experience that would

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

enable them to gain a position with a Canadian employer. This is the proverbial Catch 22 faced by so many immigrants. Closely related to the previous, professionals also listed the lack of job or volunteer opportunities for newcomers/new graduates.

Additional challenges included difficulties getting requested documents, references, proof of credentials and other related information necessary for employment and licensing; and personal reasons, including time management, financial burden of the associated costs of getting Canadian experience. A total of 26% of internationally trained individuals indicated that they had no challenges in getting the work experience that they needed in Canada.

6.2.2 Length of Work Experience

Close to two-thirds of the DTIs (71%) had more than 36 months of work experience in Canada, compared to a third (31%) of ITIs. A much higher percentage of ITIs had less than 3 months of work experience (22%, compared to 2% DTIs). A majority of ITIs (59%) had less than two years of experience, compared to a majority (80%) of DTIs who had over 2 years of experience.

Figure 6-11
Length of Work Experience
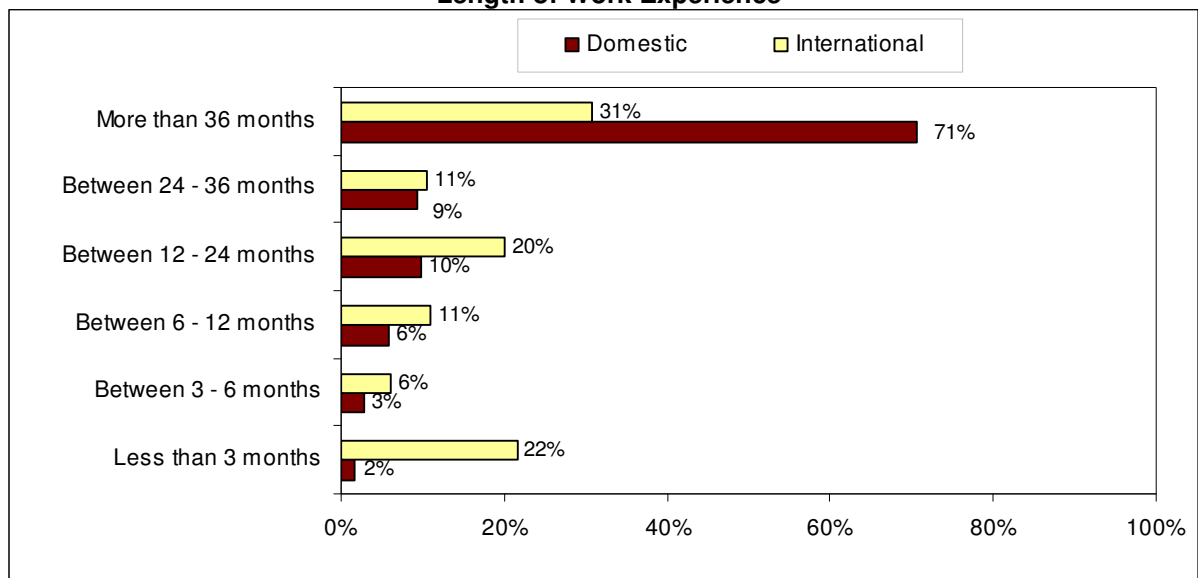
Domestic n= 361, International n=815.
Source: QE9. Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario.
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

6.2.3   Relevance of Previous International Work Experience

Over half (58%) of ITIs indicated that their previous work experience completely or partially counted towards the work experiences that they needed to work in their professions in Canada. In focus groups, some professionals felt that assessment of the work experience was a very subjective process in some licensing bodies and not always a straightforward process for everyone:

> *"I think that the problem with work experience is that it's not recognized; and it is not recognized because there is not an objective criteria behind it…it's that there are no objective standards. When I applied, for instance, to the NCA [National Committee on Accreditation], I had practiced law for 9 years, I was a straight A student in law school, I took all the classes, the same core classes that every Canadian law student takes…well, maybe a little different but its not that different, so why do I need to do anything – and I don't know that anybody actually looked at the stack of paper I sent them…maybe they did, maybe they didn't, I don't know. There is no transparency there. There is nothing objective."*

<div align="right">Focus Group Participant</div>

Table 6-12
Previous Work Experience – Country of Training

Previous Work Experience	International		
	Non-Health	Health	Engineers
Yes Completely	23%	17%	27%
Yes, Partially	37%	24%	44%
No	40%	60%	28%

International Non-health n=113, International Health n=312, International Engineers n=401.
Source: QE10. Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario.
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

A majority of international health professions (60%) indicated that their previous work experience did not count towards the work experience needed for their licensing, much higher than the non-health (40%) and engineering (28%) professionals. It was interesting to note that while the majority (71%) of engineers indicated that their previous work experience partially or completely counted towards licensing, a large percentage (68%) as seen in Section 6.1.1 indicated that they were still required to get Canadian work experience. This may be due to the fact that the PEO has a Canadian experience requirement for licensing.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

6.3   Language Skills

A common obstacle to hiring ITIs is language proficiency. Language skills generally fall into two categories: written, read and spoken skills, and proficiency in profession-specific language such as medical terminology. The study asked respondents to indicate the language skills that were required for their profession, and to indicate if they had taken language programs to assist with their licensing process.

6.3.1   Language Skills Required

ITIs were asked if they were required to have certain language skills for their professions. A majority (95%) indicated that they had a language skill requirement. Close to half (48%) were required to have an acceptable score on a language test, while a smaller group (12%) needed an acceptable score on a profession specific language test. A third (34%) of the professionals had to demonstrate reasonable fluency in English and/or French.

Figure 6-13
Language Requirements
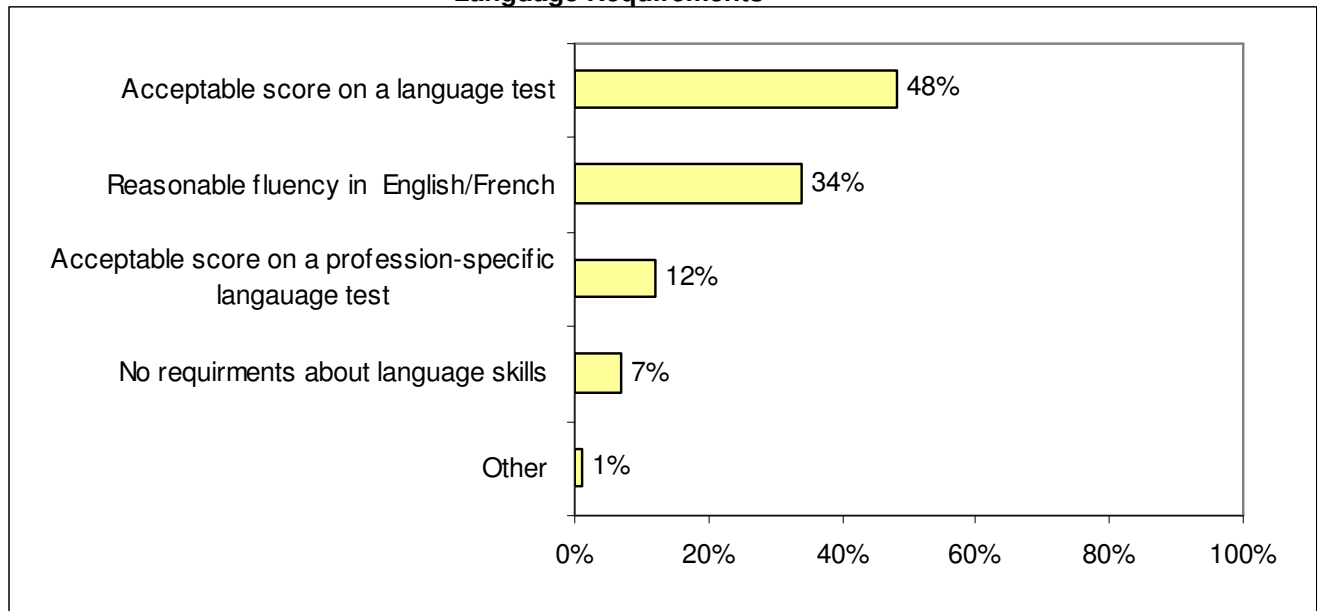
International n=278
Source: QE11. Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario.
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

6.3.2   Language Ability

Across the board, a majority of the professionals indicated that they were skilled users of read (95% DTIs, 90% ITIs), written (91% DTIs, 81% ITIs) and spoken English (92% DTIs, 79% ITIs). The percentages for ITIs were somewhat lower than those of DTIs, as would be

expected in a group where 63% had a primary language other than English (see table 3.7). Proficiency in French was much lower than in English. An average 63% of DTIs and 59% of ITIs indicated that they were basic users of read, written and spoken French.

Table 6-13
Language Skills

	Domestic			International		
	Basic User	**Intermediate User**	**Skilled User**	**Basic User**	**Intermediate User**	**Skilled User**
ENGLISH						
Reading	1%	5%	95%	2%	8%	90%
Writing	1%	8%	91%	3%	16%	81%
Speaking	1%	7%	92%	3%	18%	79%
FRENCH						
Reading	60%	21%	19%	57%	21%	23%
Writing	63%	22%	16%	56%	22%	22%
Speaking	65%	18%	17%	63%	17%	20%

English Domestic n=2618, English International n=5178, French Domestic n=1587, French International n=1419.
Source: QE12. Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario.
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

SECTION 7: BRIDGING PROGRAMS

Bridging programs are programs that are put together by employers, educational institutions, regulatory bodies and community organizations to help qualified, internationally trained individuals move quickly into the labour market by providing them with courses and/or opportunities to gain the experience that they require to get licensed or certified in their profession. Bridging programs often assess the existing skills and competencies of an individual so that they can provide workplace experience without duplicating what one has already learned. Programs offerings may include mentoring, clinical or workplace experience, skills or academic training, language training for a profession, and individual learning plans to identify additional training needs.

7.1.1   Completion of a Bridging Program

ITIs were asked if they completed bridging programs offered by their regulatory bodies. A small percentage (13%) of ITIs chose to complete a program, while 6% were required to. In a focus group discussion, some participants raised the issue that it was sometimes difficult to get into a bridging program.

> *"[I] have tried to apply but cannot get in; [they] keep saying that the positions are full. Have tried for last three months at the beginning of every month at 12:01 a.m. [to apply online] but always full – how is that possible?"*
>
> Focus Group Participant

A third (35%) did not think that they needed a bridging program and about as many (29%) indicated that there was no bridging program available.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Figure 7-1
Completion of Bridging Programs by International Professionals
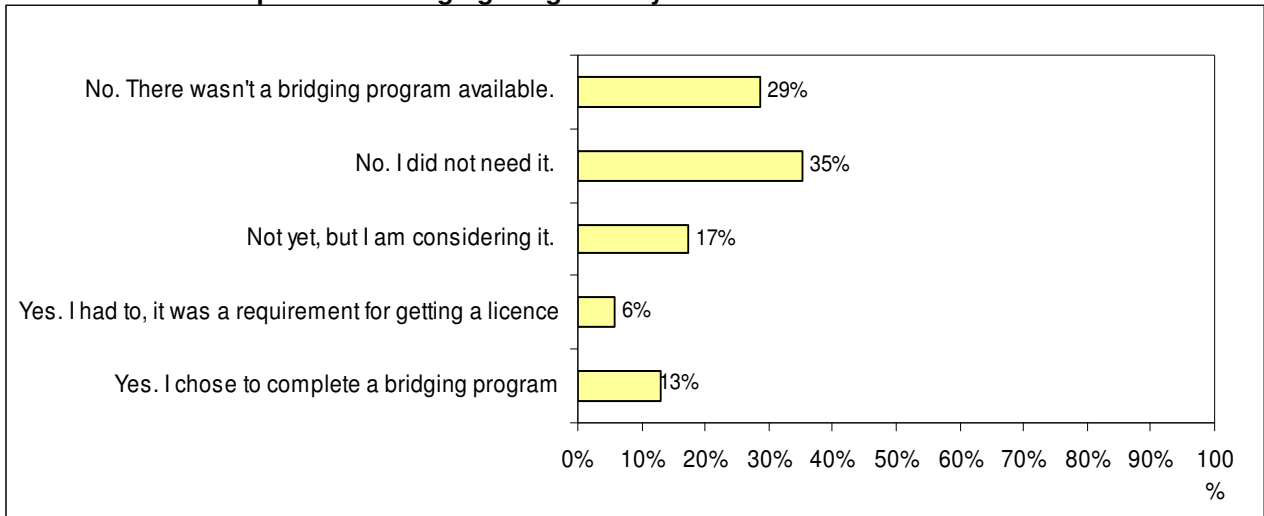
International n=1,497
Source: QE-6 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario.

A quarter of non-health (26%) and health professionals (28%) had completed bridging programs. A majority of engineering professionals (57%) indicated that they did not need a bridging program. A third of health and non-health professionals were unable to complete one because they did not have access to a program.

Figure 7-2
Completion of Bridging Programs by Profession
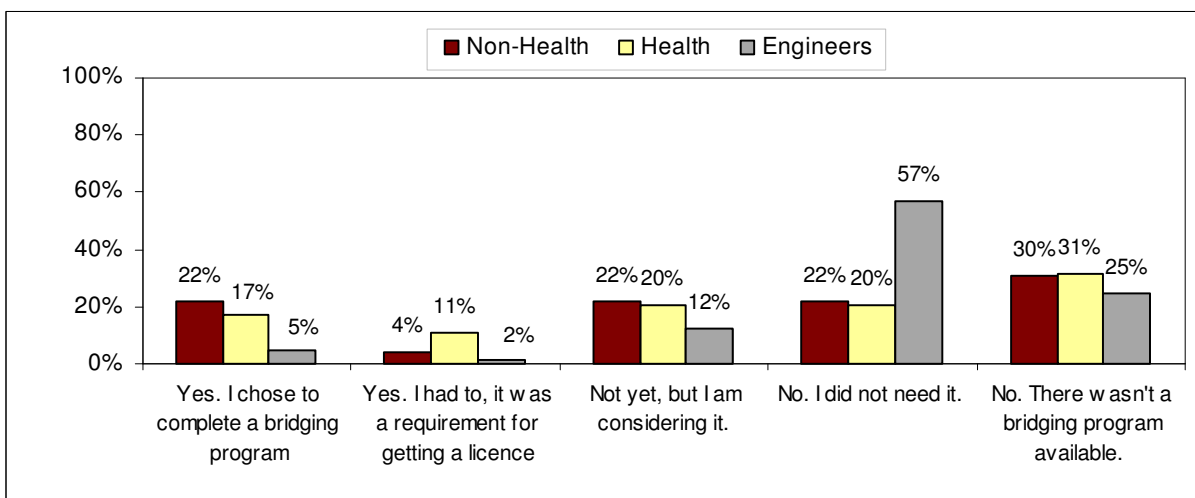
International Non-health n=282, International Health n=623, International Engineers n=592.
Source: QE6 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario.
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

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January 20, 2010

7.1.2   Fees for the Bridging Program

Forty-five percent of the professionals who attended bridging programs paid less than $5,000 for their programs, while over a third (38%) paid between $10,000 and $25,000. Further examination of the data revealed that a higher percentage of non-health professionals (66%) paid less than $5,000, compared to just over a third of health (39%) and engineering professionals (38%). Health professionals paid by far, the highest amount of fees for bridging programs – with 47% paying between $10,000 and $25,000, compared to just 18% of non-health and engineering professionals in the same fee category. This is in keeping with earlier findings that health professionals on average spent more on their education than the other professionals (section 6.1.4).

Figure 7-3
Fees for Bridging
Programs
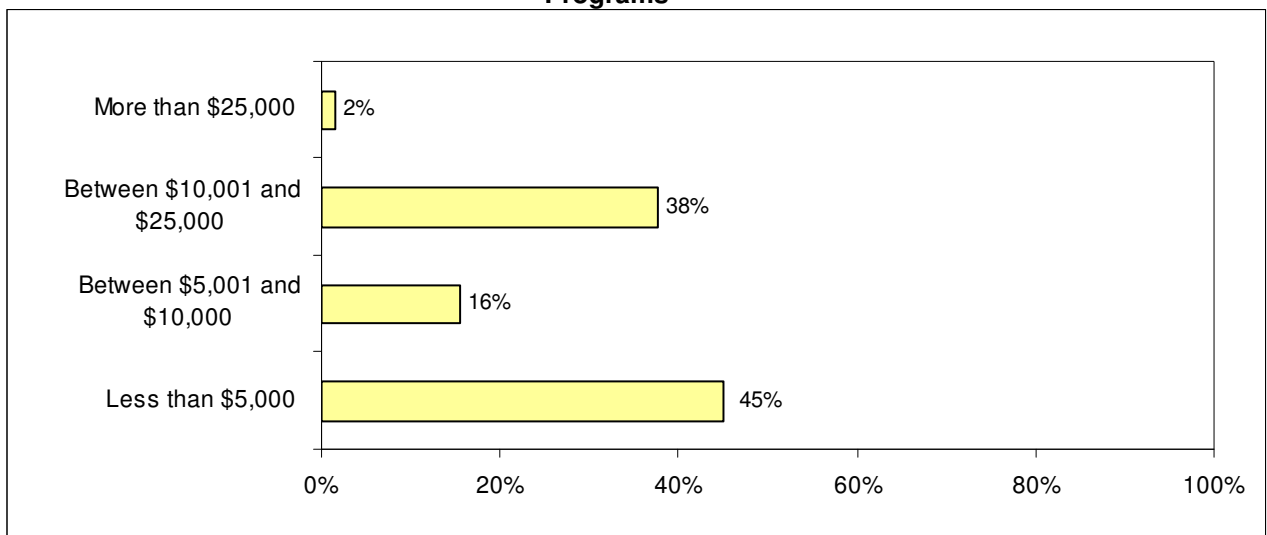
International n= 244
Source: QE7 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario.
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

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January 20, 2010

Figure 7-4
Fees for Bridging Programs by Profession
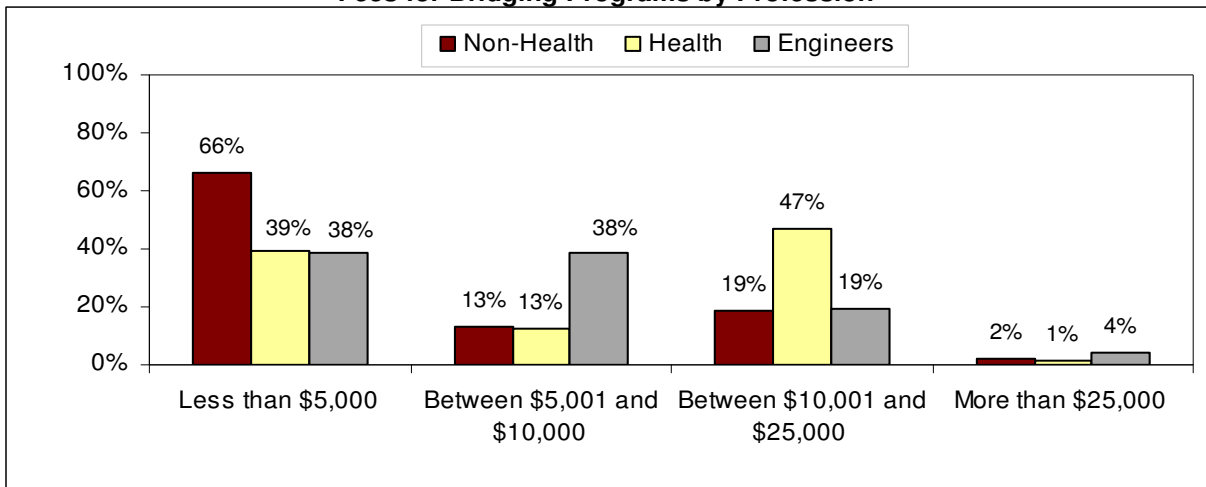
International Non-health n=53, International Health n=165, International Engineers n=29.
Source: QE7. Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario.
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

SECTION 8:   APPEALS

An applicant may request a re-evaluation of decisions regarding registration, qualifications assessment or examinations. Each regulatory body must have a registration committee that reviews decisions made by the registrar that are unfavourable to applicants. Applicants to health professions can ultimately appeal decisions to the Health Professions Appeal and Review Board (HPARB).

Survey respondents were asked if they had requested an appeal. A very small percentage of DTIs (1%) and 2% of ITIs indicated they appealed a decision. Most DTIs (78%) and ITIs (61%) had not requested an appeal. More than one-in-ten ITIs (11%) were unaware of the appeals process. It should be noted that only 39 respondents where appealing a decision at the time of the survey.

8.1   Reason for Appeal

Participants who had sought an appeal, were asked the reason why they requested an appeal. The four main reasons respondents asked for an appeal include:
- ➢ Re-evaluation of exams;
- ➢ Assessment/outcome was conducted unfairly (credentials not being accepted)
- ➢ Lack of explanation about results; and
- ➢ Reduce the number of courses/exams the applicant had to complete.

Overall, across professions and training areas, the most cited reason for requesting an appeal was the unfairness of the decision. One survey respondents felt that:

…"my appeal was about the way PEO handled the Engineering Experience Review. I was interviewed by two PEng regarding structural engineering. The way the interview was conducted is not consistent with the guidelines PEO provided on their brochure. The interview was unfair, biased and seemed useless."

Other survey participants expressed similar feelings of frustration. For example,

"Initially I was told that I had failed. When I called my school, they told me that almost everyone else in my time slot had failed; therefore we became suspect of the results. An appeal was made on behalf of the students by

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

the school and the exam results were evaluated again. It turned out that I had actually passed but due to the subjective marking I initially failed. This whole process took very long and the College dragged their feet with the results and to this day I believe some people still don't have a fair examination."

One health professional applied for an appeal because:

"… I felt that because of the " International Mutual Recognition Agreement" being in place, why should I have to spend up to 2000 dollars and hours and hours of studying and taking exams when the Agreement specifically states that US graduates from an accredited university should be recognized the same as Canadian graduates."

As demonstrated from the above statements and similar open ended responses, applicants felt that the licensing process was unfair and unclear.

8.1.1   Length of the Appeals Process

Of those who had sought an appeal, the process took less than one year for 94% of DTIs and 76% of ITIs. For 22% of the ITIs, the appeals process took longer than one year to complete.

Figure 8-1
Length of Appeal Process
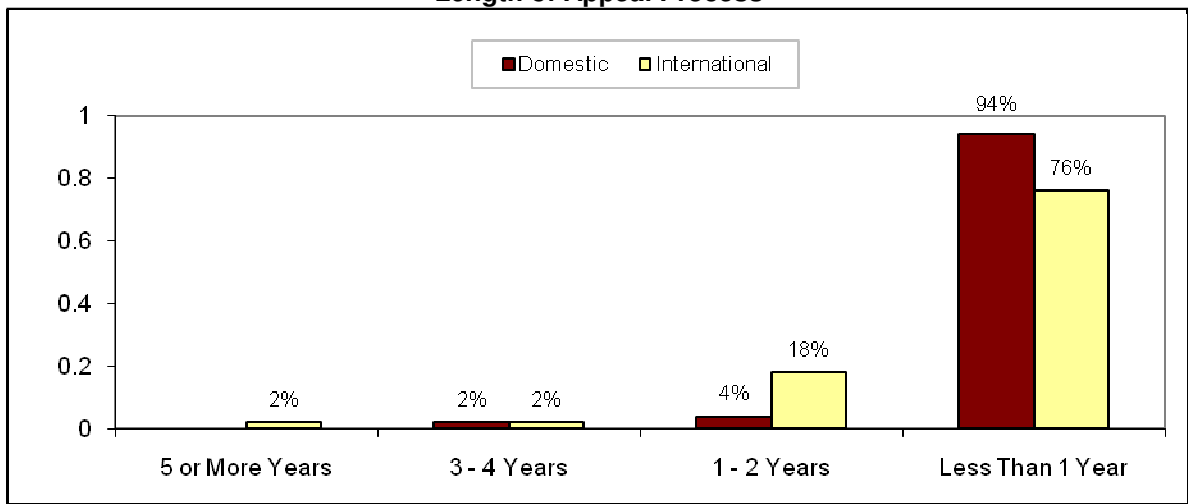
Domestic n=49, International=164
Source: QF4 Getting Your Professional Licence
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

When examined by profession, (non-health, health, engineers) and region of training (domestic and international), all of the domestic non-health and health professionals who had requested an appeal had completed the process in less than one year. However the process took longer than one year for 13% of domestic engineers. In comparison, the process took longer than one year for ITIs (26% non-health, 20% health and 26% engineers.)

Figure 8-2
Longer than One Year to Appeal
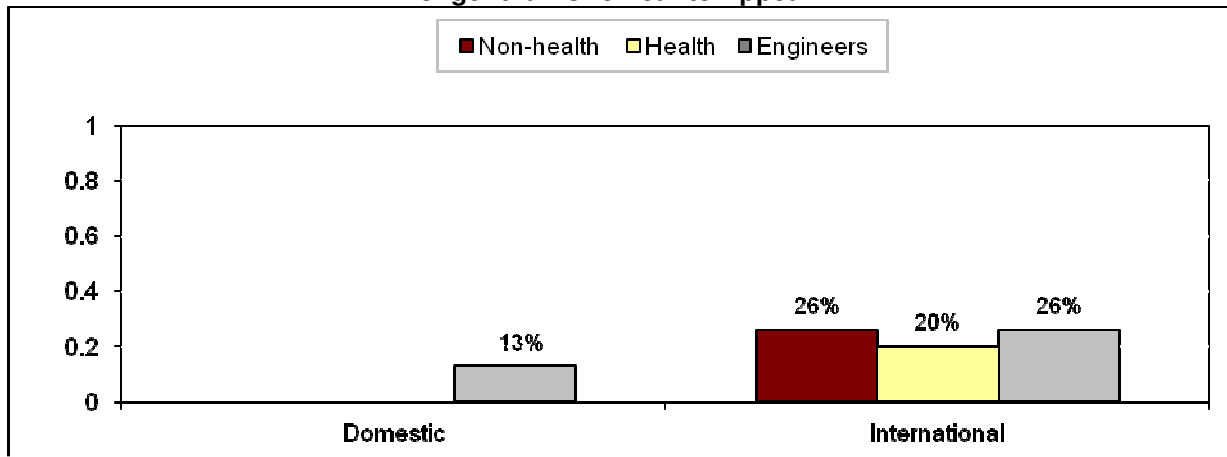
Domestic n=3, International n=40
Source: QF4 Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario

8.2   Perceived effectiveness of the appeals process

Those who had not asked for an appeal, were asked the reasons why. The most common reason that participants did not request an appeal was the time, cost and difficulty associated with the appeals process. One participant in particular, did not ask for an appeal:

> *"…I was told that the likelihood of an appeal responding in my favour was slim and it would cost me an additional $300 on top of the cost to do the examination initially and the cost to repeat the examination. ."*

With respect to the profession, engineering participants expressed the following: the *"appeal fee is double of the fee to retake the PPE exam."* Or *"it was cheaper just to retake the exams again."*

There were several other reasons why applicants chose not to appeal decisions. This included:
- Low success rate of appeals. Some applicants felt it was *"pointless to even bother trying."*

> ➤ Applicants tried other alternatives. For example, acquired work and academic experience.
> ➤ Fear of negative consequences from the appeal process; and finally
> ➤ Applicants gave up on the process.

More than half (53%) of DTIs' and 59% of ITIs' appeals were unsuccessful. Further analysis revealed that 70% of domestic and 69% of international non-health professions had unsuccessful appeal decisions. However, over half of health professions (57% domestic and 53% international) seemed to have a higher success rate.

Figure 8-3
Unsuccessful Appeal Decisions
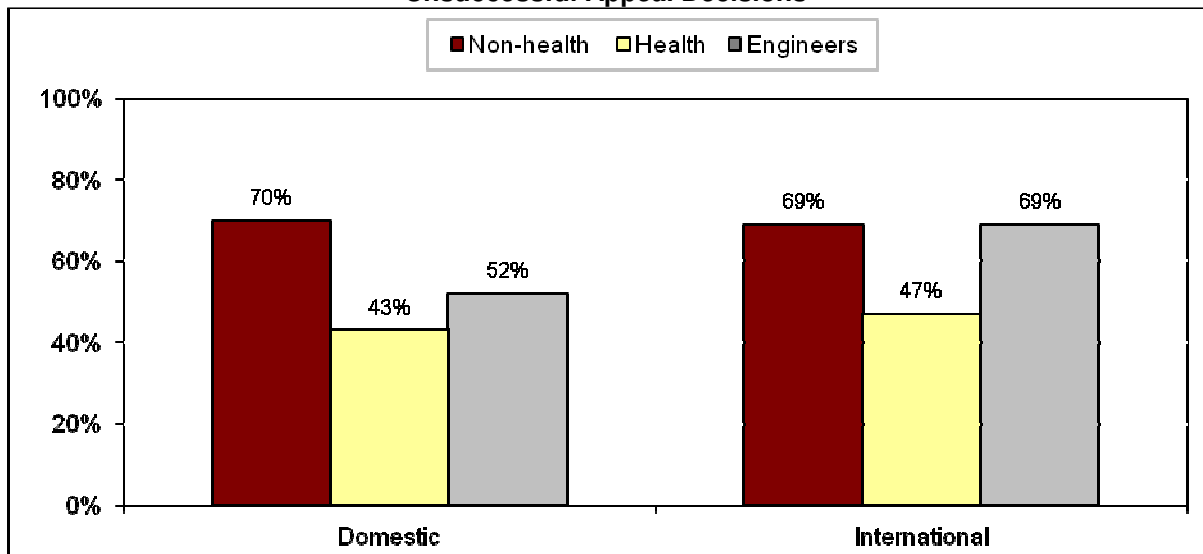
Domestic n=24, International n=85
Source: QF5. Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario

The survey asked participants if the regulatory body (or other organization dealing with the appeal) had provided reasons behind the appeal decisions. More than half (53%) of ITIs and 47% of DTIs had received reasons behind the appeal decision.

For those participants who had received a decision on the appeals process, the most common appeal decision was the original exam score was upheld. One engineer stated that the *"PEO just re-affirmed the assessment made by ERC."* Other reasons included:

> ➤ Work experience did not meet the requirements;
> ➤ Academic experience did not meet the requirements; and
> ➤ Failure to pass the exams.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

SECTION 9:   RESOURCES

9.1   Sources of Help

Respondents were asked who they tried to get help from during the licensing process. The professionals received help from a variety of sources, chief amongst them the regulatory bodies, which over half of the DTIs (62%) and ITIs (54%) sought out. Over half (54%) of DTIs and well over a third (44%) of ITIs also sought help from educational institutions.

Overall, ITIs utilized a wider variety of sources of information than the DTIs, including immigrant serving organizations, employers, government organizations and other unspecified sources.

9.2   Helpful Organizations

Further to the above question, respondents indicated which people or organizations they found most useful in the licensing process.

Overall, DTIs found professional associations, regulatory bodies and educational institutions very useful. Domestic health professionals (91%) found employers as useful as the domestic non-health (91%) and engineering (92%) professionals. Well over half (63%) of their international health counterparts found employers useful. As would be expected, only ITIs found value in organizations that help immigrants; a majority found them useful.

Table 9-1
Useful Organizations

	Domestic			International		
	Non-Health	Health	Engineers	Non-Health	Health	Engineers
Professional associations	89% (n=37)	87% (n=121)	90% (n=165)	68% (n=59)	56% (n=158)	72% (n=173)
Regulatory bodies	92% (n=38)	89% (n=182)	83% (n=178)	71% (n=122)	71% (n=278)	72% (n=194)
Educational institutions	87% (n=31)	92% (n=198)	92% (n=118)	73% (n=75)	71% (n=226)	74% (n=143)
Organizations that help immigrants	-	-	-	76% (n=70)	61% (n=123)	65% (n=95)
Employers	91% (n=23)	91% (n=56)	92% (n=180)	57% (n=44)	63% (n=127)	78% (n=169)
Government organizations		60% (n=5)	50% (n=2)	59% (n=17)	62% (n=45)	63% (n=19)

Source: QG2 Getting Your Professional Licence
Note: Multiple answers accepted

9.3   Useful Resources

Respondents were asked to indicate how useful they found a set of resources in helping them during the licensing process. Some of the results were predictable; for example, a minority of DTIs (on average 7%) indicated that they found resources that primarily serve immigrants useful, including bridging programs, Health Force Ontario and Global Experience Ontario. On average, a third (30%) of ITIs found these resources useful. A majority of ITIs and DTIs found information from regulatory bodies (77% and 85%), exam preparation resources (62% and 77%) and support from peers and family members (71% and 73%) useful.

One finding that may warrant further inquiry was that less professionals – DTIs (27%) and ITIs (28%) – found resources that help pay for the cost of education as useful as they probably should, given the considerable costs of extra education courses that the professionals are required to do in order to get licensed. ITIs received less financial assistance (17%) than their domestic counterparts (37%) (see 6.1.5); these results may indicate a need for more financial assistance resources for professionals as they go through the licensing process.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Table 9-2
Useful Resources

	Domestic	International
Information from the regulatory body	85% (n=841)	77% (n=1,587)
Bridging programs	9% (n=621)	34% (n=1,362)
Exam preparation resources	77% (n=842)	62% (n=1,506)
Support programs for immigrants	6% (n=804)	36% (n=1, 465)
Work opportunities provided by employers	59% (n=826)	49% (n=1,526)
Networks of professionals	70% (n=817)	57% (n=1,505)
Opportunities to be helped by a mentor	41% (n=794)	38% (n=1,441)
Language training in English or French	14% (n=822)	38% (n=1,561)
Information and services provided by Global Experience Ontario	6% (n=726)	22% (n=1,224)
Information and services provided by Health Force Ontario	8% (n=751)	27% (n=1,339)
Information or support from peers and family members	73% (n=841)	71% (n=1,607)
Help paying for the cost of education	27% (n=812)	28% (n=1,470)

Source: G3 Getting Your Professional Licence
Note: Multiple answers accepted

A higher percentage of DTIs (70%) found networks of professionals a useful resource compared to ITIs (57%). This may be a reflection of ITIs having fewer opportunities for networking. Since networking is often conducted among peers, the fact that fewer of them (59%) work in related professions relative to their domestic counterparts (86%) may be a contributing factor (see 3.3). A considerable percentage of DTIs (41%) and ITIs (38%) found opportunities to be helped by a mentor useful.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

SECTION 10: OVERALL COMMENTS ON THE LICENSING EXPERIENCE

The first portion of the section examines the experience that participants found most helpful in the assessment and licensing process. The second portion of the section analyzes the challenges encountered in the licensing process.

10.1 Facilitated the assessment and licensing process

Participants were asked the most helpful experiences during the licensing process in an open-ended question in the survey. The support and assistance from friends, family and employers was identified as being the most helpful when navigating through the license process. Meeting and networking with other professionals who had completed the licensing process was extremely useful in understanding the licensing requirements. Focus group participants also identified mentors and employers as a key component to success.

Respondents noted the increased knowledge gained through the seminars, courses and bridging programs as very helpful in getting licensed. Some applicants noted the assistance they received from regulatory body as valuable in the process.

Some applicants did not have any difficulty in completing the licence process. They found it clear and straightforward. "*I had no problems with the licensing process. The process was clear and I did not encounter any obstacles. It proceeded in a timely manner.*"

10.1.1 Participants comments regarding regulatory bodies

Focus group participants were asked how the licensing process could be improved; participants felt that the licensing process could be streamlined and more consistent. The licensing process could be made clearer and more accurate information could be made available. One applicant felt that:

> "*Lots more information needs to be told to people before they come e.g. waiver of fees if apply in first year in country, how long the process takes, what is required, etc. Some information is buried in the site; it needs to be more upfront.*"
>
> <div align="right">Focus Group Participant</div>

With regards to the interviewing process, engineering participants felt that interviewers should not be volunteers but instead this service could be contracted. This would reduce the

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

time that applicants had to wait for the volunteers' availability. Participants emphasized the need to have members of the interview panel that are knowledgeable in their area of practice. One Computer Science Engineer applicant felt that:

> "*That day I came, I had two members of my panel, none of them were Computer Science Engineers… I felt like we were talking two different languages… I would say something and the types of questions they were asking weren't Computer Science Engineering questions.*"
>
> Focus Group Participant

Many focus group participants indicated that they wanted to see changes in the examination process. Participants felt that the costs of examinations were too high, especially if they are required to take several examinations. Focus group participants also indicated that they would like to see different versions/ exams used in the past available, either for free or for purchase, to use as study guides.

The length of the licensing process was noted by numerous focus group participants; the process was very time consuming and took indefinite amounts of time, for example:

> "*I had heard about the length of the process… I heard that it takes at least 2 years…I knew several people who came here for their exams and most of them actually gave up because of the prolonged process.*"
>
> Focus Group Participant

The participants recommended that an outline of the overall process, indicating time approximations for each of the licensing steps, would be helpful. They also suggested a method of checking the status of their application without having to go through contacting different people at each stage of the application process. Participants also felt that it would be helpful to have statistics about success of licensing/employment in their field.

Focus group participants felt that the information was too decentralized; the information should be available all on one central site. Participants indicated that the result of licensing information on numerous sites lead to conflicting information about the licensing process.

Assessment of qualifications was a notable topic in the focus groups; many participants felt that their qualifications should be assessed on a case-by-case basis instead of one general

standard for all countries and educational/work backgrounds. One focus group participant, a Medical Doctor with a Masters in Public Health, said:

> *"There are many professionals with very good skills and knowledge*
> *in their specialities, but when they come, they are being assessed*
> *as a fresh medical graduate, that I don't think is fair… why not*
> *benefit from the experience of that person as a specialist?"*
>
> Focus Group Participant

At present, the regulatory bodies require some applicants to have their educational transcripts translated by the institution they attended and sent directly from the institution, often requesting multiple copies of the same document. Participants indicated that many of the institutions will not translate the documents or do not have access to translation services. Some participants expressed difficulties getting their educational institutions to send their transcripts to the regulatory body. Therefore, the recommendation to the regulatory bodies was to allow applicants to submit original un-translated documents to the regulatory body for translation, at the applicant's cost.

Focus group participants suggested that the entire licensing process be more transparent; many participants said they were under the impression that once they completed the licensing process, they would be employed. The licensing body needs to stress that completing the licensing process does not guarantee employment; it merely licenses the individual in Ontario.

10.1.2 Participants comments regarding the Federal and Provincial Governments

Focus group participants provided recommendations to the federal and provincial governments in regards to the licensing and assessment process. Members of the focus groups suggested that the issues with the licensing process stem from the fact that immigration laws are federal, while the licensing and regulatory bodies are provincial. As a result, the immigration process does not specifically indicate to foreign trained/educated professionals that there is a lengthy and costly process involved to become licensed in Canada. One focus group respondent said:

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

"You get people in, they don't even tell you about these regulations… you go for the immigration process… we have a friend who is just moving… he is coming to try things here. He wasn't told about all these certifications… he's coming and no talks about certifications, no talks about anything. So you come here and then what?"

Focus Group Participant

Participants felt that the immigration process recruited professionals, but there was no mention of licensing requirements once they arrived in Canada. Once they arrived in Canada, there were no jobs for them, even after they were licensed, one focus group participant said:

"It would have been really helpful if someone had said, 'You know, there is a good chance that you may not be recognized in Canada when you come over"

Focus Group Participant

The message abroad is that Canada needs professionals, but the bodies are sending the message to applicants that there are too many professionals and not enough placements for them.

The majority of focus group participants spoke about difficulties getting Canadian work and/or volunteer experience. Focus group participants suggested that the government provide the Canadian work experience that is a requirement for many applicants. Participants indicated that employers hired directly from Canadian schools and had no empty spaces for ITIs. Those employers who were willing to hire outside of recent Canadian graduates were not willing to hire ITIs. Participants pointed out that licensed persons in their field were unwilling to let them volunteer or job shadow them. One participant told of his experience, saying:

"I really want to work as an Engineer… I went knocking on doors on all engineering companies… asking, I just want to clean your floors, maybe in two years I will be able to peek into your blueprints and then once I have some experience doing something around here, perhaps I will know where to go, what to do, how things are done… no way, no way, no, no, no… the most I got."

Focus Group Participant

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

10.1.3 Recommendations to other professionals

In the focus group discussions, participants also provided advice for professionals who were considering coming to Ontario. Participants recommended beginning the process while still in their home countries by sending in official transcripts and other documents that are required; this would reduce the amount of time. Others suggested trying to acquire a fellowship.

Sadly, many focus group participants suggested that applicants not come to Canada at all. If they are planning to come, the main suggestion was to be prepared to support oneself for at least a year and have enough money to pay for all of the licensing process.

Some participants expressed difficulties getting their educational institutions to send their transcripts to the regulatory body. Especially in developing countries, the institutions would sometimes not reply to the requests and didn't have the funds to send several copies. ITIs suggested getting multiple copies of the transcripts before arriving in Canada. This would eliminate having to wait for documents to be sent from abroad.

Focus group participants recommended finding a mentor in the field, someone to help answer any questions and help navigate the complex licensing process. Others suggested that applicants read and completely understand the licensing process before coming to Canada.

10.2 Challenges with the assessment and licensing process

Survey participants were asked in open-ended questions to report on the biggest challenges they faced as they navigated through the licensing process.

The most frequently cited challenge was the difficulty and length of the academic and work experience process. This was also noted in Section 5 of the report. Numerous participants reported that the *"process is time consuming and they never tell you how much time it may take to get licensed."* Others expressed frustrations over the length of time, for example*: "I applied in June 2008 and received an answer in October 2008, making it impossible to start classes in the Fall session. The College gives 18 months to complete the requirements."* A participant like this was frustrated that they would have to spend more time waiting for the next session of classes. Frequency of sessions differed depending on the profession; some professions hold classes less often than others.

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R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

This information was reiterated in the focus groups. Participants found the application process very time consuming and emotional. One in particular felt that *"everybody is talking about the shortage of engineers and doctors, but when you come you only find there are obstacles."*

Another barrier to navigating through the licensing and registration process was the difficulty and length of time to complete the accreditation exams, language proficiency exams and required education. The main challenges with the exams can be attributed to the following:

> ➢ The format of exams (for example essay style and multiple choice questions);
> ➢ The cost of the exams;
> ➢ The length of exams (some exams are 4 hours long); and
> ➢ The number of times that exams are offered in a year.

Many applicants noted the difficulty of the exams, for example:

> *"Although I believe I received an excellent education from my American University, the exams were still very challenging upper level engineering subject specific exams. I had been out of school for over a year and some topics had been covered in my second or third year of schooling making it difficult to get back into the topics. Furthermore, it was difficult to find time to study with the already heavy load at my actual workplace and with the responsibilities of being a new husband contributing to a healthy marriage."*

Survey participants also indicated the lack of communication and resources provided by the regulatory body. Respondents experienced difficulty with communication with the regulatory body on the following:

> ➢ Information relayed by the regulatory body was inaccurate;
> ➢ Participants didn't understand the criteria/requirements to become licensed;
> ➢ Websites were difficult to navigate;
> ➢ Lack of clarity with regards to timelines; and
> ➢ Staff was uncommunicative, curt and unhelpful.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

As one participant articulated,

> *"Trying to get detailed information from the College is very difficult. The contact person is slow in returning calls or emails. It is difficult to know what to do, how to do it and if what is being done will meet the requirements. There is no follow up with the College."*

Another felt that:

> *"…staff at the regulatory body were reluctantly helpful and made me feel that I should know what I was supposed to do, despite the website not being completely clear. I can't imagine how difficult it would be for someone new to Canada who doesn't speak the language well or have co-workers to guide them through the process."*

In addition to the difficulties experienced with the communication, the cost of the licensing process was felt to be a burden. Participants struggle with multiple demands on their time, including, in many cases, the demands of work, family, and preparing for exams. One participant found it difficult to juggle family commitments and studying for exams.

Survey respondents also highlighted the following barriers in getting licensed or registered:

➢ The feeling that the regulatory body, third party agencies and employers have discriminatory practices: Applicants indicated they often felt discriminated against because they had foreign credentials, had accents and were a visible minority.

➢ The difficulty and ambiguity of the interview process; applicants indicated that it was difficult to prepare for the interview when they did not know what to expect during the interview. Others pointed to the subjective nature the process.

➢ The difficulty and length of time with acquiring the documents to get licensed.

Focus group participants indicated numerous challenges with the assessment of their qualifications, including:

➢ Length of time to get multiple copies of original documents proving education;

➢ The need to prove each level of education achieved, including high school;

➢ The translation of documents including educational transcripts; and

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R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

> ➢ The cost of having qualifications assessed (many participants have qualifications assessed several times by different bodies).

Additionally, participants indicated that they experienced challenges with having their qualifications assessed when their education was non-traditional. Participants reported that some courses in other countries did not have a traditional credit system and therefore could not be transferred to an equivalent Canadian credit; therefore, their qualifications in many areas were often overlooked or under assessed.

SECTION 11: CONCLUSIONS

This section of the report presents conclusions drawn from the research findings. It is important to remember that while a large number of respondents answered the survey, they do not comprise a random sample. The following conclusions are based on the data from the survey as well as focus group discussions and represent the opinions of over 3,000 DITIs in Ontario representing over 37 regulated professions:

➢ Generally, there appears to be adequate information on the licensing process. It is available from multiple sources including the regulatory bodies' websites, direct communication with the regulatory body, educational institutions, immigrant service agencies and websites, government websites and friends and family.

➢ ITIs in the study found it more difficult than DTIs to find the information they were looking for. Both would be better served by a single source of comprehensive information that was easy to find (e.g., a link on the home page of the regulatory body that specifies not only the process and application requirements, but statistics on the length of the process and application success rates).

➢ Bridging programs are not well understood and might experience greater uptake if information about them was more easily obtained; only 25% of all respondents indicated it was easy to obtain this information. This was supported by participants in the focus groups, many of whom did not know what they were.

➢ The ITIs who participated in the study receive mixed messages from different levels of government. Efforts made to align the communications of the federal and provincial authorities and those of the regulatory bodies will help reduce the confusion and frustration of ITIs.

➢ Analysis of the qualitative data suggests that ITIs need to be better informed prior to arriving in Canada of the importance of having all of their required documents as these are more difficult to obtain from within Canada – leading to a longer and more frustrating application process.

➢ Efforts need to be made to communicate and emphasize the length and cost of the assessment process. The length, complexity and costs associated with the licensing process are frustrating for both DTIs and ITIs. While both experienced frustration, the process lasted longer and cost more for ITIs. As previously mentioned, this could be due to required documents not being readily available. Many ITIs arrive with family responsibilities and take lower paying jobs – delays in getting their qualifications assessed compound their frustrations.

➢ Financial support in the form of government grants or loans to assist applicants pay for their education appeared to be more accessible by DTIs (37%) than ITIs (17%);

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R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

however, given that ITIs found it more difficult to find information about the application process, it may be that the discrepancy in financial support may be due to lack of awareness on behalf of the ITIs that this support is available. Making this information more available to ITIs would likely reduce the gap.

➢ ITIs are less prepared for the examination process than DTIs and also struggle to a greater degree with language difficulties. It should be noted, however, that the main challenged experienced by both was the actual length of the exam. These challenges would be mitigated if applicants had more detailed information on the process. Applicants would be better prepared if sample examination questions and/or a guide to writing the exams were provided or made available in advance. Applicants who took bridging programs found these helpful; however, the availability and cost of these programs need to be more effectively communicated.

➢ The requirement of some regulatory bodies for Canadian experience is perceived as a particularly difficult challenge for ITIs. There was agreement among many focus group participants that if regulatory bodies require Canadian experience, there should be a requirement of employers to provide it.

➢ Very few respondents to the survey (less than 2%) went through the appeal process. There was general dissatisfaction with the process with respondents expressing concern that they could not be sure that the process was transparent. Another 10% were unaware there was an appeals process. Success rates of appeals vary by regulated profession but were higher than the perceptions held by those who did not appeal; the general perception was that the chances of a successful appeal are minimal. This gap between perception and reality could be addressed through a more effective communication strategy. Posting appeal success rates would also make the outcomes more transparent and add legitimacy to the process.

Overall, this study found that the frustrations experienced by both DTIs and ITIs can be mitigated by better communication. There is a pressing need for each regulatory body to develop a comprehensive information package that delineates the time and cost to complete every stage of the licensing application process. The package should be easy to understand and easy to obtain by DTIs and ITIs (both inside and outside Canada). ITIs in particular would benefit from consistent communication from the various levels of government prior to arrival in Canada.

APPENDIX A: LITERATURE REVIEW

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario:
The Experiences of International and Canadian Applicants
Office of the Fairness Commissioner
Literature Review

Introduction

The current global economy is highly knowledge and skills based. In order to remain competitive in this kind of environment, many industrial countries are investing in developing workforces that are highly skilled and knowledgeable. Due to their low and/or negative population growth rates, many of these countries rely to a great extent on immigration to build the skilled labour force that they need.

Within Canada, as in some industrialized nations, there is concern over the ability of younger generations to support the country's aging population. According to 2006 census data, Canada's native-born population had only increased by 400,000 people in the 5 years previous to that (Statistics Canada 2007). As a result, Canada has become increasingly dependent on immigration to provide an adequate skilled workforce to maintain its social services and economic growth. Currently, immigration policy in Canada addresses three main priorities, with specific categories of immigrants for each of these. Family class immigrants arrive in Canada as part of a program to reunite family members with each other, while protected persons are mainly refugees who settle in the country for humanitarian reasons. Economic class immigrants include skilled workers and entrepreneurs who move to Canada to work and to establish businesses.

Canadian immigration policy favours immigrants with higher education and skills. On average, immigrants today have higher education levels than Canadians. High immigration rates are expected to continue and will play a crucial role in ensuring a highly skilled workforce, especially in the context of Canada's low birth rate and an aging population (Anisef, Sweet and Frempong, 2003:28). Statistics Canada estimates that Canada will depend entirely on immigration for its net labour force growth by 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2007). Other industrialized countries now compete against Canada in trying to attract highly skilled workers from other countries.

Higher incomes and economic, social and psychological well-being are all associated with a rapid and effective integration of immigrants into the Canadian labour market. The Canadian economy will also benefit from utilizing immigrants' skills and from their reduced dependence on income support and other social assistance. However, the labour market

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

experiences of newcomers to Canada, including those moving to Ontario, have demonstrated a distressing trend: despite Canada's commitment to diversity and multiculturalism, the wage gap between immigrants and the Canadian-born has not closed but widened – even for those immigrants with a university education and knowledge of one official language (McIsaac, 2003:61). Analysis of data from the 2001 census indicated that recent and very recent immigrants earned approximately 30% less than those born in Canada (qtd. in Walters, Phythian and Anisef, 2006). Similarly, Alboim, Finnie and Meng found that "one year of domestic (work) experience generates the same return as two-and-a-half years of foreign experience" Alboim, Finnie and Meng, 2005:6). This has implications for immigrants who come to Canada with several years of work experience, and who would lose the value of their experience based on this fact. Almost two-thirds of economic-class immigrants report that their material well-being has worsened (34%) or remains the same (31%) as it was before immigration (Schellenberg and Maheux, 2007:6). Beyond the obvious questions these findings raise about equitable access to appropriate employment for newcomers to Canada, concerns about employment also appear to be having impacts on attitudes related to social cohesion: those who report not having improved their material condition since arriving in Canada are, overall, less likely to believe that coming to Canada was the right decision (Schellenberg and Maheux, 2007:16).

Internationally Trained Individuals (ITIs) who seek to work in regulated professions are particularly affected. Regulated professions have regulatory bodies, which establish requirements for entry into the profession, membership in the regulatory body, qualifications for use of the professional designation as well as standards for practice and competence (Schellenberg and Maheux, 2007:16). Several research studies have indicated that ITIs face significant challenges and barriers to gaining access into regulated professions, particularly in relation to the application and licensing/registration process. These studies have also documented the frustration of ITIs, a number of whom give up on getting the necessary registration to practice in their professions due to the complicated and often long and expensive process for getting their qualifications and experience recognized by the regulatory bodies in their professions.

Because registration is the basis for access to regulated professions, this literature review discusses the process in detail. The review starts by examining ITI demographics and regulatory bodies in Ontario. Further sections examine issues around assessment, individual and institutional level access issues, and appeals processes, outlining the specific experiences of applicants at various stages of the registration process. Readers will come away with an understanding of the processes, procedures, and issues associated with access to regulated professions, and with an appreciation of the experiences of international and Canadian applicants.

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

11.1 **The Ontario Context**

Demographics

Ontario's workforce draws heavily from professionals initially trained outside of Canada. Between 2004 and 2008, Ontario received an average of 123,000 immigrants from over 160 different countries (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2008:26). Close to 111,000 people immigrated to Ontario in 2008. While this figure is a reduction from the highs of 140,000 in 2005 and 126,000 in 2006, it is still the highest number amongst the provinces (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2008:26). Statistics Canada indicates that immigrants will account for practically all the workforce growth in Ontario by 2011 (Government of Ontario, 2005:3).

Approximately 61% of the total number of immigrants to Ontario are of working age. Of these, more than 70% are highly skilled and have post-secondary education (Government of Ontario, 2005:3). They bring with them unique skills and experience, some from countries that would be potential competitors with Canada on the global economic stage. Data show that 20 percent of the working-age immigrants to Ontario (about 18,000 people each year) seek to continue their professional careers in the regulated professions and trades (Policy Roundtables Mobilizing Professions and Trades (PROMPT), 2004: 12).

These ITIs place Ontario at a distinct advantage, particularly on the economic front. They also fill gaps in professions that face personnel shortages required to fill the province's needs. For example, according to a 2005 report by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), the demand for pharmacists significantly exceeded the supply, and there was a growing demand for midwives (Government of Ontario, 2005:7,8). Shortages of doctors, particularly in rural areas of the Province, have been reported over the years, with the Ontario Medical Association reporting that "Ontario ranks dead last in Canada's doctor shortage, with just 84 doctors per 100,000 people" (Luisa D'Amato, 2008:n. pag.). In a news release in March 2009, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario indicated that the Province was facing a devastating nurse shortage unless the government funded an additional 3,000 positions to adequately address the healthcare needs of Ontarians (Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, 2009: n. pag.). In news releases in March and April 2008, the National Union of Public and General Employees, the Canadian Health Professionals Society and the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Technologists sounded the alarm over a growing shortage of laboratory professionals.

> "The Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science estimates that 43.7% of general medical laboratory technologists in Ontario will be eligible to retire by 2015 –

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

a rate that cannot be replaced through existing educational programs." (National Union of Public and General Employees, 2008:n. pag.)

While shortages in the health care field have a tendency to get a lot more attention, there are shortages in other areas as well. For example, in a keynote address to colleges' Ontario's Skills Shortage Symposium in March 2008, Len Crispino, the President and CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce highlighted an impending shortage in the architectural labour force caused by a projected increase in retirements from the profession and exacerbated by graduations in the field at roughly 200 fewer than demand will require (qtd. in Ontario Chamber of Commerce, 2008:n. pag.).

The government of Ontario recognizes the benefit that ITIs bring to the province. In order to enhance their potential contribution to the economy and the society in general, the government has developed a number of support programs and policies to help ITIs integrate rapidly into the economy, including:
- Programs and policies that place a priority on assistance to new Canadians. Programs include language training; information on the labour market; accreditation, including criteria for licensure, registration or certification; skills upgrading; and opportunities to gain the equivalent of Canadian work experience.
- Opportunities for ITIs to become licensed and to work in their selected fields (Government of Ontario, 2005:3).

In spite of these initiatives, there are still significant barriers and challenges facing ITIs seeking to work in regulated professions. A study by the Ontario Regulators for Access (2003:3) identified four main challenges that prevented or delayed ITIs' access to professions in Ontario as:
- Lack of pre-immigration licensing information
- Lack of knowledge of Ontario workplace practices
- Lack of occupation-specific language
- Difficulty in finding bridging programs and work placements (Ontario Regulators for Access, 2003:3,4).

Based on the fact that Ontario consistently receives over twice as many immigrants as any other Province, it would be safe to say that the loss to the Ontario economy associated with unrecognized qualifications of ITIs is significant. In order for the province to benefit from their knowledge and skills, and for the ITIs and their families to benefit from their immigration into Ontario, there is clear need to increase ITIs' access to the professions and to integrate these professionals into the economy within reasonable timeframes.

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Other than the government, there are a number of key players and issues to consider in the registration process. These are examined briefly below.

Regulated Professions in Ontario

In Ontario, there are 38 regulatory bodies, of which 22 are health professions, the others representing various non-health disciplines. These regulated bodies share the following common characteristics:

- The authority of the regulatory body comes from an Ontario statute.
- Professionals need the authority of the regulatory body to practise their profession in Ontario, to use a professional designation, or both (Ontario Regulators for Access, n.d., n. pag.).

The regulatory bodies establish requirements for entry into the profession, membership in the regulatory body, qualifications for use of the professional designation as well as standards for practice and competence (Ontario Regulators for Access, n.d., n. pag.).

Over the years, a number of studies have looked into access into regulated professions in Ontario, particularly for ITIs who seem to face the most obstacles to gaining access into their professions (e.g. *Access to Ontario's Regulated Professions by International Candidates – Research Report and Compendium of Promising Practices* published by the Ontario Regulators for Access in July 2003, and *The Discounting of Immigrants' Skills in Canada: Evidence and Policy Recommendations* by Naomi Alboim, Ross Finnie and Ronald Meng published in 2005. These studies have consistently shown that ITIs particularly, face many obstacles to gaining access into their professions. The obstacles are sometimes directly related to the professional's competencies, for example, language barriers. Sometimes the barriers are related to the registration/licensing process, for example, lack of clear information on requirements necessary to qualify to practice in their profession in Ontario.

FARPA

The Fair Access to the Regulated Professions Act was passed in 2006 to help ensure that regulated professions and individuals applying for registration by regulated professions are governed by registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair. The Act requires regulated professions to adopt registration practices that are fair, transparent and in part by requiring a more accountable process. The Regulated Health Professions Act 1991, as amended by FARPA, reflects the provisions of FARPA and require health professions to have registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair (Government of Ontario, FARPA 2006).

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Office of the Fairness Commissioner

The Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC) is an arm's length agency of the Government of Ontario that works with regulatory bodies to ensure that the regulated professions covered under FARPA or the RHPA as amended have registration practices that are transparent, impartial, objective and fair. The Fairness Commissioner assesses compliance with the legislation and ensures that the regulatory bodies treat all applicants fairly. There are 35 regulated professions that fall under the OFC's mandate. The office requires the bodies that regulate the professions to review their own registration process, submit reports about them and undergo compliance audits. The OFC does not advocate or intervene on behalf of individuals or to assess credentials (Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC), n.d., n. pag.).

Third Party Agencies

A key group of stakeholders are third party agencies that assess qualifications of ITIs at various levels. These include:
- Credential assessment agencies, which assess the educational credentials of ITIs in order to provide a Canadian degree equivalent to the credentials e.g. World Education Service
- Agencies that conduct occupation specific credential assessments, i.e., they assess the educational and sometimes experiential qualifications of applicants in specific occupations, e.g. the University of Toronto Faculty of Dentistry and the University of Western Ontario, Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry assess international credentials and conduct clinical assessments where appropriate for the dental surgeons' two-year qualifying program
- Agencies that determine competency and conduct prior learning assessments. Such agencies may also conduct examinations e.g. the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science, which conducts prior learning assessments (PLA) and administers examinations and the Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences, which coordinates PLA process for respiratory therapists (OFC, 2008: 27-29).

A number of these third party agencies perform multiple functions, while others specialize in specific assessments, including occupation-specific assessments. For example, the World Education Service assesses international credentials in Ontario. The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards and the National Committee on Accreditation administer the national qualifying examinations for architects and lawyers, respectively. However, the National Committee on Accreditation also assesses credentials of internationally educated lawyers, while in the architectural profession, the Canadian Architectural Certification Board

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

undertakes this task. As of 2007, twenty seven (17 health and 10 non-health) professions utilized third party agencies such as World Education Service, International Qualification Assessment Service and University of Toronto Comparative Education Services to assess applicants' credentials. World Education Service is the third party credential assessment service used by most professions in Ontario (OFC, 2008:11, 15).

11.2 <u>Registration</u>

Professional regulatory bodies serve the dual purpose of protecting the professional status of practitioners, as well as protecting the public's interest and safety (PROMPT, 2004:22). The principle of self-regulation entails that the authority to set standards and register practitioners has been delegated by legislation to professional bodies that are independent from government. Practitioners are best qualified to ensure that proper standards of competence and ethics are maintained in order to protect public health, safety and welfare (Thomson, 2005:13).

The present study focuses on the 36 regulatory bodies that currently fall under the mandate of the Fairness Commissioner in Ontario. (This does not include other regulated professions/trades which are not subject to FARPA/RHPA). Twenty-two of these are in health related professions. All but five professions are regulated through public statute (PROMPT, 2004:30). Four are regulated through private statute, and the remaining one is directly regulated by the Ontario Government (PROMPT, 2004:30). Regulatory bodies range in size from 237 licensed professionals registered with the College of Midwifes to 190,000 licensed professionals registered with the College of Teachers. Regulatory bodies are almost entirely funded by their membership. In 2007, there were just over 46,000 new applicants to Ontario's regulated professions, and in 2008, this number increased to just over 49,700. Of these, 20% were internationally trained applicants (OFC, n.d., n.pag.).

The structures of the regulatory bodies are similar, but not identical. A specific ministry has jurisdiction over the profession, and a Council is elected by the membership. A President or Chairperson heads the Council and employs a staff headed by a Registrar or Executive Director. The main roles of regulatory bodies are to grant licenses, set entry requirements, set standards of practice, set codes of conduct, assess fitness of members, deal with complaints and discipline members.

The registration component is the basis for access into regulated professions. The registration process typically begins when a candidate files an application with the regulatory body and pays a fee. The next step is an assessment of academic credentials through the submission of certificates, transcripts, and curricula or courses of study. If their language of

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

instruction was not English or French, internationally educated professionals are sometimes required to take a language proficiency test as part of the registration process. This step is generally followed by examinations to determine and demonstrate professional competency. In some cases, based on the results of these tests and examinations, the regulatory body may refer the applicant to an academic program or a specialized bridging program where the applicant can complete additional courses, improve language skills, or gain work experience. Some regulatory bodies may also interview applicants. The requirements that must be met to be registered also include other components that are not directly related to qualifications, such as demonstrating good character or providing proof or authorization to work in Canada. A positive registration decision is made when the regulatory body is satisfied that the requirements for registration have been met. In cases where the regulatory body denies registration, internal appeals or reviews can occur by automatic referral to the registration committee, or referral to the committee following an applicant's request (Thomson, 2005:16-25).

Individuals seeking registration in a regulated profession must show that they meet the qualifications to practice in Ontario. Although requirements vary, they typically include:
- Documentary evidence of identity
- Status in Canada (citizen, permanent resident, temporary worker, etc)
- Minimum academic qualifications
- Language proficiency
- Supervised clinical or work experience
- Good character
- Successful completion of provincial or national examination(s)
- Payment of a registration fee
- Canadian work experience requirements (Thomson, 2005:16).

The PROMPT Policy Paper identified three overarching principles that it recommended should underlie the registration process, namely: it should be in the public interest, accountable, and equitable. The paper highlighted a key problem underlying access to regulation as the phrase 'public interest'. It argues that the concept is vague and notoriously difficult to define, particularly as it is not defined in the Acts in which it is found. This has left its interpretation open, meaning that it can be (and has been) narrowly conceived or widely interpreted, depending on the situation (PROMPT, 2004:56-59). It is expected that the public will benefit when decisions are made in the public interest. Because the health, safety and welfare of the public are maintained by setting standards for the practice of a given profession, competency is essential. Given that there is no single definition or interpretation of the term public interest, a sophisticated definition must take into account many often

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

competing claims while maintaining and upholding Ontario standards (PROMPT, 2004:56-59).

The accountability of regulatory access means that the registration process ensures and publicly demonstrates that registration is carried out in the public interest (PROMPT, 2004:61). This requires that regulatory authorities should justify their decisions clearly to the public both to garner confidence and provide information so that the public can judge some aspects for itself. Related to this, the final principle of equity (the FARPA and the OFC utilize the term 'fairness') involves the legal obligation to provide non-discriminatory processes and the ethical obligation to consider skills, knowledge, credentials and competency to practice without regard to an applicant's country of training, socio-economic status or employment status, and without regard to labour market demand (PROMPT, 2004:62).

When internal registration and appeal processes are effective, fair, and well understood, applicants are less likely to feel the need for an independent appeal or to feel aggrieved by a registration decision. The FARPA Fair Registration Practices Code required regulated professions to adopt the following practices.

General Duty:
- To provide registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair

Specific Duties:
- <u>Information:</u> To provide information to individuals applying or intending to apply for registration by the regulated profession. This includes information on length of process, registration practices, requirements for registration and fee scale
- <u>Timeliness, Responses and Reasons:</u> To make registration decisions, respond in writing to applicants, and provide written reasons in respect of decisions within reasonable time
- <u>Internal Review or Appeal</u>: To provide internal review of or appeal from its decisions within a reasonable time; provide applicants opportunity to make submissions with respect to internal reviews or appeals; specify the format in which submissions are to be made (i.e. orally, written, electronically)
- <u>Information on Appeal Rights</u>: To inform an applicant of their rights to request further review or appeal of a decision; and to bar decision-makers on the registration decision from acting in the same capacity in a review or appeal of the same registration decision
- <u>Qualifications:</u> To make publicly available information on qualification documentation that must accompany applications, and alternatives that may be acceptable if an applicant cannot obtain the required documentation for reasons beyond their control.

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

- Assessment of Qualifications: To assess qualifications in a transparent, objective, impartial and fair way if it does so itself, or to take reasonable measures, if it uses a third party, to ensure that the assessor does so in the same way
- Training: To ensure that individuals assessing qualifications and making registration, internal review or appeal decisions are trained, including where appropriate, on how to hold hearings and on any special considerations that may apply in the assessment of applications and the process for applying those considerations
- Access to Records: Upon written request, to provide an applicant with access to records held by it that are related to the application
  Limitation: A regulated profession may refuse access to a record if:
    o The record or information in it is subject to a legal privilege that restricts disclosure
    o Another Act, an Act of Canada or a court order prohibits disclosure of the record or information in it in the circumstances
    o Granting the access could reasonably be expected to lead to the identification of a person who provided information to the profession explicitly or implicitly in confidence, and the profession considers it appropriate in the circumstances that the identity of the person be kept confidential
    o Granting access could negatively affect public safety or undermine the integrity of the registration process
- Severability: An applicant has a right of access to the part of a record that can be reasonably severed from the part to which the applicant does not have right of access (by reasons stated in limitations above)
- Process to be Established: To establish a process under which requests for access to records will be considered
- Fee for Access: A regulated profession may charge an applicant a fee for making records available if the profession first gives the applicant an estimate of the fee
- Amount of Fee: Amount of fee shall not exceed the amount prescribed by the regulations or the amount of reasonable cost recovery, if no amount is prescribed
- Waiver of Fee: The regulated profession may waive payment of all or part of the fee that an applicant is required to pay (for access to records) if, in its opinion, it is fair and equitable to do so (Government of Ontario, 2006: Chapter 31).

The Thomson report (2005) to the Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration made several recommendations on what it considered elements that would constitute a fair registration process. The FARPA incorporates a number of these elements. The report had recommendations that do not seem to be covered, at least explicitly, by the Act. These include:

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

- Published criteria for deciding whether entry-to-practice requirements have been met and examples of when exemptible requirements could be exempted;
- Support for applicants during the registration process, including any internal appeal or review, provided by regulators or other organizations. Support is defined as access to someone who is able to help the applicant navigate through the process;
- Procedural protections when regulators rely on third party assessments of credentials, language skills, or competency. This means that applicants would still have the right of review or appeal on third party assessments;
- Arm's length internal appeal or review process. Applicants would therefore have the right to appeal decisions to persons within the regulatory body who were not involved in the initial decision, and to get good information about the basis for the initial proposal or decision to deny registration or impose conditions;
- The right to a hearing or the opportunity to meet with at least one decision-maker (Thomson, 2005:xiv).

11.3 <u>System Level Access Issues</u>

It is often costly for any given Canadian employer, educational institution or professional regulatory body to accurately assess the value of work experience or education gained in a foreign country (Alboim, Finnie and Meng, 2005:14). A high cost associated with the assessments may mean that some internationally educated professionals decide not to apply for registration. This decision would mean that the professionals would be unable to practice in the professions for which they are trained, which would reduce the value of their skills in this country. According to Alboim, Finnie and Meng, government could play a role in making information surrounding the value of foreign credentials available to employers, educational institutions and regulatory bodies. Government clearly has an economic interest in helping immigrants use their foreign obtained human capital more effectively; their dependence on social programs represents a cost which could be reduced with successful integration of immigrants into the Canadian labour market.

In their 2005 report, Alboim, Finnie and Meng indicate that regulatory bodies that are more interested in serving the narrow interests of their existing members have few reasons for changing their policies regarding access into their field (Alboim, Finnie and Meng, 2005:15).

> "Even those organizations that truly serve the broader public interest may focus on ensuring that everyone who is admitted is competent, rather than on ensuring that everyone who is competent is admitted, whereas the public – as well as the immigrants themselves – may lose when admission procedures are too heavily tilted toward the first rather than the second approach" (Alboim, Finnie and Meng, 2005:15).

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Regulators themselves acknowledge and have documented what they see as barriers for international candidates. In their 2003 report *Research Report and Compendium of Promising Practices (2003)*, the Ontario Regulators for Access identified a detailed list of gaps and challenges for regulatory bodies in improving access. Gaps and challenges were grouped into six major categories:

- *Resources* (limited resources for regulators to provide individualized feedback for international candidates and implement new best practices)
- *Information* (international candidates lack information or have misinformation about Canadian professional context; difficulties for regulators to maintain correct information on country-of-origin education, training, and practices)
- *Role of Regulator* (challenge for regulators to help international candidates understand regulatory role; complex balance of promoting access for international candidates while protecting the public)
- *Barriers for International Candidates* (lack of bridging programs; lack of networking opportunities; lack of occupation-specific language skills; requirements of Canadian work experience; costly licensing process given that regulators operate on a cost-recovery basis)
- *National Standards* (some regulators accept the strict standards of national body's assessment of international candidates)
- *Legislation and Regulation* (governing acts and legislation of some professions have narrowly defined or strict entry requirements) (Ontario Regulators for Access, 2003:17-19).

According to key informant interviews conducted for the PROMPT paper, there are more internationally educated applicants than Canadian educated applicants in some professions (PROMPT, 2004:40). This fact, the paper states, poses the legitimate question of whether the regulatory process in general, and its registration function in particular, has adequately and fairly responded to this new reality. It contends that as long as internationally trained professionals are regarded as an 'add-on' to the existing regulatory system, there will be no impetus to change the nature of the registration process. Regulators often find themselves constrained by a lack of resources with which to introduce access initiatives. Although the Ontario Regulators for Access found that most regulatory bodies are "engaged or interested in improving access by international candidates while maintaining high standards for public safety," they also found at the time that promising registration practices that existed were voluntary and tended to be ad hoc (PROMPT, 2004:41).

In the wake of various studies and reports that examined this issue in the 1990s, it was clear that a role existed for government in providing the means and incentives for educational

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

institutions, professional licensing bodies and other para-public organizations to solve ITIs' upgrading needs, including provision of appropriate resources to assist regulatory bodies in the licensing of ITIs. Efforts towards this end were initiated by the provincial government's Task Force on Access to Professions and Trades. Released in 1989, the report from this initiative detailed the barriers internationally educated people face in accessing employment in their field (PROMPT, 2004:14). Many of the recommendations of the report were not implemented due to their cost. But community groups began to advocate for better access to regulated professions and efforts were further supplemented by government initiatives, including an Access to Professions and Trades Unit and the Federal Provincial Working Group on Access to Professions and Trades (PROMPT, 2004:14). Occupational regulatory bodies were similarly developing occupation specific fact sheets, exploring alternative ways of assessing professional competencies, and compiling promising practices (PROMPT, 2004:15). The focus of these efforts eventually shifted from the identification of barriers to the development of solutions, with a number of reports including 'promising' and 'best' practices in access. In addition to this, reports had started to examine the issue of accountability with regard to access.

Fairness

Given the increased representation of ITIs in the discussion surrounding access, it was not surprising that part of the argument around access was couched in terms of equity and human rights. Legislation requires that citizens have equal rights and opportunities without discrimination, and that licensing bodies and educational institutions provide their services in a non-discriminatory way. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code provide a basis for the argument that registration in professional regulatory bodies should be granted without discrimination. The PROMPT Policy Paper examined this issue from a discrimination perspective. In the paper, PROMPT states that: "Courts have recognized that discrimination is

- primarily systemic and
- includes policies and practices which appear neutral and
- which are implemented for a legitimate purpose." (PROMPT, 2004:28)

The PROMPT paper argued that policies and practices which appear neutral have a disproportionate and negative impact on disadvantaged groups and therefore that formal equality was not enough to address the barriers related to discrimination. It maintains that laws and practices have a 'positive obligation' to achieve substantive equality and to prohibit discriminatory effects associated with foreign training.

It can be argued that because ITIs have the right to be treated without discrimination in employment and membership in regulated professions, practices that block their access (whether intended or unintended) by failing to recognize their skills and qualifications may

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

be deemed discriminatory. A positive observation from the report was that the pragmatics of demographic, legal, and economic necessity were driving a shift toward reducing barriers faced by ITIs and increasing their access to regulated professions. With the implementation of the FARPA, the Office of the Fairness Commissioner is working with the regulatory bodies to help them achieve 'transparent, objective, impartial and fair' registration practices. The Fairness Commissioner reported in the 2008-2009 Annual Report:

> "We are seeing the beginnings of positive systemic change, change that clearly reflects the values of Ontarians." (OFC, 2009:4)

11.4 Individual Level Access Issues

The assessment of education, experience, and language is a critical stage in the registration process. Assessment helps regulatory bodies determine the gaps, if any, between the qualifications that ITIs have and what they need to practise their profession. It also identifies the education and skills that are needed for ITIs to successfully register as a member of a regulatory body. This process, however, is where ITIs experience the majority of their issues in gaining access to the regulated professions.

Foreign Academic Credentials
Occupational regulatory bodies that determine who should be licensed to practice a particular occupation in a particular jurisdiction must also determine the academic requirements for licensure – and assessing academic credentials forms part of that determination. ITIs may need to have their academic credentials assessed to continue their education at the appropriate level, to gain licensure for a particular profession, and/or to find employment. Regulatory bodies depend on a variety of internal and external resources, including third party credential assessment agencies, to assess academic credentials.

Assessment is often complicated by the difficulties that arise when internationally educated professionals do not have the original documents from their home-country universities or colleges. Because these documents can be difficult to obtain once the immigrant has arrived in Canada, Alboim et. al. (2005:17) suggests that there would be value to considering a process where ITIs' academic credentials can be assessed in their home countries prior to their coming to Canada. Completing the assessments in their home countries would mean that ITIs would have a more realistic sense of the value of their credentials in Canada before they arrived (Alboim, Finnie and Meng, 2005:17). There would be potentially complicated details to work out if this route were taken, including decisions on whether Canadian or local (home country-based) assessment agencies would be utilized for verification of documents and program verification. In a study of qualification assessment agencies, the Office of the Fairness Commissioner found that while academic document verification is an important part

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

of the process, credential assessment goes beyond this to include documentary proof of work experience, professional licensure in the home country, where relevant, language proficiency, and in some cases, practice assessments and examinations as part of the assessment process in order to provide a complete picture of their skills and abilities (OFC, 2009:19-20). So while the transcript verification in the home country would cut out delays caused by seeking documents from the home country and waiting for these to be assessed while already in Canada, it would not address other aspects of the credential assessment process that can also take anywhere from two weeks to over two years.

For all the professions, internationally educated professionals cite a lack of information about credential assessment processes – both before moving to Canada and after – as a key issue (Coombs-Thorne and Warren, 2007). Some researchers suggest that provincial professional regulators can act as "labour market shelters" and, through their foreign credential adjudication processes, come to function as inequitable gatekeepers to particular professional labour markets (Bambrah, 2005). The research indicates that it is not just whether or not a credential is recognized appropriately that is at issue, but also the expense and length of time associated with the process. Because having credentials assessed, and, in some cases adjudicated by a regulatory body, can be a lengthy procedure, those undergoing the process often have to turn to subsistence employment that underutilizes their experiences, skills, or credentials. This situation can lead both to deskilling and to an inability to acquire Canadian work experience in the appropriate field.

Labour Mobility and Inter-Jurisdictional Recognition of Credentials

Until recently, there has been no automatic acceptance or recognition of assessments of foreign credentials between jurisdictions in Canada, despite various interprovincial mobility agreements (Alboim, Finnie and Meng, 2005:17). Because of the complex interplay of resources involved, credential assessment may occur multiple times for the same individual. For example, an internationally trained nurse may need to have his/her credentials assessed by a university to determine eligibility for a graduate degree in nursing in Ontario by the Ontario College of Nurses in order to be licensed as a nurse, and then again by the Quebec College of Nurses if he/she moves to that province to find employment (Alboim, Finnie and Meng, 2005:17). However, this problem will likely change in the future with the implementation of the Agreement on Internal Trade, making it easier for such a nurse to transfer to Quebec without having to go through the credential assessment and registration process all over again.

The Ninth Protocol of Amendment in the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), originally entered into by the government of Canada, 10 provinces and 2 territories, includes a

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

provision for ease of labour mobility between the regions. Under Article 708, the AIT calls for regulatory bodies to assess their occupations, identify commonalities, reconcile differences, and to establish and adopt standards that can be considered mutually acceptable without further examination for the licensing, certification or registration of workers who meet those standards. The Agreement provides that any worker certified for an occupation by a regulatory authority of one province or territory is to be certified for that occupation by all others and that any exception to full labour market mobility will have to be clearly identified and justified as necessary to meet a legitimate objective such as protection of public health or safety (Internal Trade Secretariat, 2007:85, 90). Article 709 specifically relates to regulated trades and requires that each signing party provide automatic recognition and free access to all workers holding an Interprovincial Standards (Red Seal) Program qualification. In over 50 years, the Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program has acknowledged competence and ensured recognition of certification of various trades throughout Canada without further examination. By including regulated professions under the Red Seal Program, the government has introduced an important avenue through which ITIs and Canadian professionals can gain greater mobility between provinces without having to undergo registration and certification with every move (Internal Trade Secretariat, 2007:85, 90).

Research suggests that there are four general arenas where credential assessment is at issue for ITIs: provincial/territorial credential assessment agencies, regulatory bodies, educational institutions, and with employers. Overall, the literature disagrees on where the responsibility for dealing with unresolved concerns should rest, whether with employers, the federal government, provincial governments, qualifications assessment agencies, or ITIs themselves (Statistics Canada, 2005:4). However, they are in agreement that individuals – employers and ITIs – cannot alter this situation on their own.

Foreign Work Experience Recognition

Canadian employers often wish to evaluate the previous work experience and references of prospective employees. This can be difficult when prior work experience was obtained in a foreign country, especially when the native language of the immigrant is not English or French. In light of this problem, immigrants may demonstrate their skills by putting together "prior learning assessment and recognition" (PLAR) portfolios. A study report released by the OFC in 2009 found that the use of prior learning assessment practices are quite limited among regulatory bodies and that it is primarily utilized to determine whether an ITI is eligible to undertake an examination or program of studies. The study found three national professional related assessment agencies and one university that conduct PLARS for specific regulated professions. There are many other community colleges and some

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

universities that provide this service for other occupational areas including various trades, not only to immigrants but also to others who have skills acquired outside the formal Canadian education system (Alboim, Finnie and Meng, 2005:17). The objective is to provide credit for experiential learning and potential exemptions from a course of study.

In a similar way, competency-based assessment tests use simulated or real environments to evaluate the skills possessed by individuals, and some occupational regulatory bodies now include this technique in their licensing procedures. Alboim, et. al. suggest that both this and the aforementioned methodologies are effective but expensive to develop and implement, particularly if each institution, regulatory body or employer develops its own approach, with no collaboration or sharing of best practices. They see a role for government to support the collaborative development and use of these competency based assessment tools (Alboim, Finnie and Meng, 2005:18).

The lack of recognition of the value of foreign work experience is cited by many internationally trained professionals, and other stakeholders, as a key barrier in accessing appropriate employment (Statistics Canada, 2005:2). Statistics Canada's *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada* finds that it is the most commonly cited reason given by internationally educated professionals themselves. In some cases, a lack of Canadian work experience may translate to a lack of familiarity with Canadian professional cultures (Anisef, Sweet and Frempong, 2003:31). For some regulated professions, there are specific requirements for Canadian work experience. Some key stakeholders working in the field of immigrant employment integration have put forward the view that approximately 30-40% of the wage gap between immigrants and those born in Canada can be explained by the non-recognition of foreign work experience (Statistics Canada, 2005:2), and a number of researchers in the field have found this issue to be a crucial barrier to successful and appropriate employment, both in regulated and non-regulated professions (Chekki, 2006).

Language Competency

The final target for assessment concerns the extent to which individuals can speak, read, write and listen in either English or French, particularly in an occupational setting. Educational institutions, employers, and regulatory bodies need to know if individuals have the language skills required to competently learn, work, and practice their skills. Generic tests (which do not measure occupation-related language skills) are often not sufficient to gauge whether an individual has the language skills required for their professional circumstances. In a study on the integration of international pharmacy graduates (IPGs) into the Canadian workforce, Malatest and Associates found that IPGs listed language barrier as a challenge they faced in getting licensed or registered. Specifically, some key informants

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

indicated that their lack of or limited knowledge of standard English, Canadian idioms and expressions, and healthcare terminology were barriers that complicated their licensure process. Similarly, some key informants from provincial pharmacy regulatory authorities mentioned that employers may, at times, have concerns that language issues, including strong accents, can be a concern particularly for those outside of large cities. They added that employers may also have concerns that language barriers between IPGs and patients may impact on the ability of the IPGs to relate to their patients (Moving Forward: Pharmacy Human Resources for the Future, 2008:36, 42).

Again, Alboim, Finnie and Meng advocate for government incentives to encourage employer sector councils and occupational regulatory bodies to develop sector-specific language tests (Alboim, Finnie and Meng, 2005:18). Recent findings produced by Statistics Canada indicate that those internationally educated professionals who report improved ability to speak English also report higher rates of successful registration. Furthermore, language training has been found to be beneficial: those who have engaged in such training report improved employment outcomes as well (Alboim, Finnie and Meng, 2005:18).

Since many occupations require high levels of fluency in an official language access to occupation-specific language training is a key issue. As Alboim and McIsaac (2007) point out, there are a variety of difficulties associated with providing high-level language training, particularly for those newcomers seeking work in a regulated profession. Such language training is not available everywhere, and is also highly variable, both in quality and in terms of particular programs' relationship to the language requirements of some regulated occupations (e.g., not all language programs are linked to Canadian Language Benchmarks, although some regulators require proof of attainment under this system) (Alboim and McIsaac, 2007:10).

Bridging Programs

When the appropriate assessments have been made, gaps between immigrants' existing skills and what is needed for licensure or labour market entry can be identified. Bridging programs are designed to provide the academic, skill, language and work experience top-ups needed to fill the gaps and help individuals meet the requirement for licensure or employment (Alboim, Finnie and Meng, 2005:19). Academic courses, practical skills and competencies, and higher-level language courses may be needed for the successful integration and access of immigrants to their chosen professions.

The accessibility of effective bridging programs remains a key issue. As the Public Policy Forum points out, bridging programs in Canada are "still in their infancy." (Public Policy

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

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Forum, 2008:36). Effective bridging programs (which, according to the Public Policy Forum, include input from multiple stakeholders, accurate and comprehensive assessment of participants, and financial solvency that allows for continued operation and feasible accessibility for participants (Public Policy Forum, 2008:1)) are only available in some regions and for some professions, and can be prohibitively expensive and quite lengthy. Bridging programs can present financial barriers – many do not allow students to qualify for financial aid or student loan programs (Alboim and McIsaac, 2007:11). While Ontario has the widest range of bridging programs available among all provinces, the levels of access to these programs are still limited compared to the numbers of ITIs that require the services. Preliminary evaluation results of some bridging programs by the MTCU found that the results of the programs were very positive e.g. 100% of those who completed Ryerson's midwifery bridging program became licensed, and 70% of ITIs who completed the Care for Nurses bridging program passed their licensing exam, compared to 33% previous to the program (Alboim, Finnie and Meng, 2005:20). These results indicate that, at least in some professions, bridging programs can be an effective vehicle for improving access to regulated professions for ITIs.

11.5 <u>Appeals</u>

Independent appeals of the registration decisions made by professional regulatory bodies are an important element of due process, fairness, and accountability (Thomson, 2005:viii). Because the regulatory bodies can decide whether an individual is permitted to practice a profession, access to an independent appeal is vital. Well developed, transparent, independent appeal mechanisms enhance public confidence in the overall registration process. Beyond this, independent appeals constitute an accountability mechanism that fosters due diligence and promotes high quality internal procedures (Thomson, 2005:ix).

There are a variety of decisions which applicants can appeal, including decisions to deny registration, decisions to grant or deny provisional, limited, or conditional registration, lack of registration decisions within a reasonable time, and refusals to accept or process applications (Thomson, 2005:xviii). Errors of law and errors of fact are reasonable grounds for appeal, provided that applicants can provide reasons for launching an appeal. Appeals are only part of the solution for improving access to professions by qualified internationally trained professionals (Thomson, 2005:ix). Fair registration processes will ensure that the independent appeal process is not overused and that the system is effective in determining access.

As highlighted by the Thomson report, previously, while most regulatory bodies had clear criteria for decision-making in most respects, it could be difficult in some cases for applicants

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

and ITIs in particular, to understand how regulators made decisions on equivalencies, competencies, and demonstration of professional or clinical judgement. As a result, it could be difficult to determine the reasons why an application for registration was denied. The report recommended that clear criteria were key to assessing whether a registration decision was wrongly made, deciding whether to launch an appeal, and formulating appeal submissions (Thomson, 2005:42). The report made several recommendations on elements that should be included in an independent appeal process for professional registration decisions including:

- Clear information on the appeal process, available to applicants
- Support for self-represented applicants
- Established timelines for completing registration appeals
- Option for applicants to choose paper review or in-person hearing
- Reasonable fees that do not deter applicants
- Reasonable disclosure of evidence by both parties and an opportunity for the regulator to revise its decision on the basis of new evidence prior to the appeal hearing
- Pre-hearing processes to clarify or resolve issues, conducted by a separate adjudicator and not mandatory for the applicant
- Flexible hearings, focussing on alleged errors, in which the tribunal can receive new evidence but can also allow the regulatory body to revise its decision in light of that evidence
- A single adjudicator, except when the Chair assigns a three-member panel for cases that raise significant, new, or difficult questions
- Clear written decisions and reasons (Thomson, 2005:xix).

These recommendations have been addressed by the FARPA, which requires that ITIs receive written reasons in respect of decisions on their applications, provide applicants an opportunity to make submissions with respect to internal reviews or appeals.

Conclusion

It is clear that while much effort with positive results has been made towards faster integration of ITIs into Ontario's labour force, there is still some work to do. Interviews with ITIs from all over Ontario in the study related to this literature review - "Study of Barriers Faced by Internationally Trained Individuals in the Registration Process" - reveals that there are still various obstacles that prevent their smooth integration into their professions. However, a number of ITIs are also able to point out various improvements in the registration process, particularly those that had earlier experiences and have witnessed friends and family navigate the process more recently (see report). This is a good sign that

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

things are moving in the right direction, with the help of regulatory bodies, the work of the Office of the Fairness Commissioner and the efforts of the government of Ontario. Specifically, the government of Ontario is continuing to work together with regulatory bodies, third party credential assessment agencies and immigrant serving organizations to introduce initiatives and funding programs that assist ITIs to integrate faster into their professions. Between 2003-2006, the government invested over $34 million into more than 60 bridge training programs that helped newcomers, including ITIs, to improve their language skills and prepare for exams that help them to enter their fields faster. In the same period, it provided $200,000 to develop career maps and interactive electronic career maps together with 22 professional regulatory bodies that provide road maps to ITIs seeking to gain entry into related professions. Government programs such as Job Connect are also helping ITIs to find employment through career and job preparation and placement services. In 2005-2006, for example, more than 15,000 ITIs benefited from Job Connect services. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has established the "Apprenticeship Innovation Fund" that supports curriculum development for apprenticeship programs and exemption tests that are used to assess the knowledge of skilled trades workers (Government of Ontario, 2006:6). Initiatives continue in 2009: the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration invited proposals for bridging projects that improve ITIs' access to occupational certification / registration and /or employment. Two such programs include the Mentoring to Placement (M2P) program to help newcomer environmental professionals get mentorship, technical and soft skills workshops and 3-12 month paid work placements with host organizations. This program was launched by Toronto and Region Conservation. The Internationally Trained Lawyer Program operated at the faculty of law at university of Toronto received $4 million investment from the government. The program will service approximately 90-100 internationally trained lawyers who wish to practice law in Ontario. The government is investing also $5.2 million towards a bridge training program for information technologists and business professionals at York University. These are just a few examples of numerous investments that the government has made into programs and services that help ITIs integrate into their professional fields.

As part of its efforts in this regard, the government has also funded several studies that continue to inform the process of ITI integration into the labour force. The report associated with this literature review - "Study of Barriers Faced by Internationally Trained Individuals in the Registration Process" - highlights the first-hand experiences of ITIs in the registration process, and seeks their views on changes that they think would facilitate their faster integration into regulated professions while ensuring that public interest and safety is protected. It is efforts such as these that are contributing to a better experience for ITIs and a stronger and more skilled labour force that will meet the needs of Ontario in the twenty-first century and beyond.

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

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R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

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R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

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Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

APPENDIX B: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario:
The Experiences of International and Canadian Applicants

Welcome! Thank you for doing this survey, commissioned by the Office of the Fairness Commissioner of Ontario.

Before you do the survey, please read the User Guide. It has important guidelines for doing the survey, definitions for some of the terms you may not know, and other information. While you are doing the survey, you can refer to the User Guide at any time by clicking on the User Guide button.

For most of the survey questions, you can select your answer from a list or a drop-down list. Some questions will let you give more than one answer ("Select all that apply"). For some questions, you must type in an answer. Several questions will give you an opportunity to describe your experience in the licensing process in your own words.

Part A: Introduction

This part of the survey asks about your progress in getting your professional licence. It also asks where you were first trained in your profession, and the language used for that training.

[Ask all]

A1.   Please select the statement below that best describes your progress toward getting your professional licence in Ontario.

(Select one answer only)

I have successfully finished the licensing process, and I can now practise my profession in Ontario. I have my licence.	$\circ_1$
I am working at the licensing process	$\circ_2$
I have started the licensing process, but I am not working at it now	$\circ_3$
I have met all the requirements, but I do not have a licence yet	$\circ_4$
I voluntarily withdrew from the licensing process	$\circ_5$
I have not begun the licensing process	$\circ_6$
I was unsuccessful	$\circ_7$
Other (please specify): _____	$\circ_{98}$
I don't know	$\circ_{99}$

[Ask if A1=1]

A2.   When did you get your Ontario licence for your profession?

I got my licence in __ __ __ __ Programmer: please have a drop down menu with years ("before 2000", "2000", "2001", "2002", "2003", "2004", "2005", "2006", "2007", "2008", "2009"). If response is "before 2000", please Thank and take respondent to the End screen.

[Ask if A1=2, A1=3, A1=4, A1=5, A1=7]

A3.   Below, please select the date when you started the licensing process (Start Date) and the date when you expect to finish (Expected End Date).

If you do not know the expected end date, please select "I don't know". If you do not have an expected end date because you were unsuccessful or you withdrew from the process, please select the date when you were unsuccessful or you withdrew.
Programmer Note: For the **months**, use full months (January, February, etc.) in a drop-down box..
For **Year** in the Start Date field, please enter: "before 2000", "2000", "2001", "2002", "2003, "2004", "2005", "2006", "2007" "2008", "2009" in a drop-down box. **If the start date selected is "before 2000", please thank and take respondent to End screen.**
For **Year** in the Expected End Date field, please enter 2009, 2010, etc to 2020)
In Expected End Date, please include "I don't know" in the drop-down list in case the respondent doesn't know the expected end date.

	Month	Year
Start Date	_____	_____
Expected End Date	_____	_____

[Ask all]

A4.   Which profession did you apply for in Ontario? If you have not applied yet, which profession are you planning to apply for?

(Select one answer only)

[Programmer Note: Please put professions in 2 columns to minimize scrolling.]

Profession		
Architect	$\circ_1$	Continue until Quota is complete
Audiologist or Speech-Language Pathologist	$\circ_2$	Continue until Quota is complete
Chartered Accountant	$\circ_3$	Continue until Quota is complete
Chiropodist	$\circ_4$	Continue until Quota is complete
Chiropractor	$\circ_5$	Continue until Quota is complete
Dental Hygienist	$\circ_6$	Continue until Quota is complete
Dental Surgeon	$\circ_7$	Continue until Quota is complete
Dental Technologist	$\circ_8$	Continue until Quota is complete
Denturist	$\circ_9$	Continue until Quota is complete
Dietician	$\circ_{10}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Early Childhood Educator	$\circ_{11}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Engineer	$\circ_{13}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Engineering Technician or Engineering Technologist	$\circ_{14}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Forester	$\circ_{15}$	Continue until Quota is complete
General Accountant	$\circ_{16}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Geoscientist	$\circ_{17}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Land Surveyor	$\circ_{18}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Lawyer	$\circ_{19}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Management Accountant	$\circ_{20}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Massage Therapist	$\circ_{21}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Medical Laboratory Technologist	$\circ_{22}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Medical Radiation Technologist	$\circ_{23}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Midwife	$\circ_{24}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Nurse	$\circ_{25}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Occupational Therapist	$\circ_{26}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Optician	$\circ_{27}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Optometrist	$\circ_{28}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Paralegal	$\circ_{29}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Pharmacist	$\circ_{30}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Physician or Surgeon	$\circ_{31}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Physiotherapist	$\circ_{32}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Psychologist	$\circ_{33}$	Continue until Quota is complete

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Respiratory Therapist	$\circ_{34}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Social Worker	$\circ_{35}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Social Service Worker	$\circ_{36}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Teacher	$\circ_{37}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioner or Acupuncturist	$\circ_{38}$	Continue until Quota is complete
Veterinarian	$\circ_{39}$	Continue until Quota is complete
None of the Above	$\circ_{99}$	Thank and take to End screen

[Ask all]

A5. **Did you get your first training for your profession in Canada, or outside of Canada?**

(Select one answer only)

In Canada	$\circ_1$	Continue to A6
Outside of Canada	$\circ_2$	Go to A7
I don't know	$\circ_{99}$	Go to End screen

[Ask Group 1 only]

A6. **Which province or territory were you trained in?**

(Select one answer only)

Alberta	$\circ_1$	Go to B1
British Columbia	$\circ_2$	Go to B1
Manitoba	$\circ_3$	Go to B1
Ontario	$\circ_4$	Go to B1
New Brunswick	$\circ_5$	Go to B1
Newfoundland & Labrador	$\circ_6$	Go to B1
Northwest Territories	$\circ_7$	Go to B1
Nova Scotia	$\circ_8$	Go to B1
Nunavut	$\circ_9$	Go to B1
Prince Edward Island	$\circ_{10}$	Go to B1
Quebec	$\circ_{11}$	Go to B1
Saskatchewan	$\circ_{12}$	Go to B1
Yukon	$\circ_{13}$	Go to B1

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

[Ask Group 2 only]

A7.   You were first trained in your profession outside of Canada. Please select the country.
(Select one answer only)
[Programmer note: Please add add a drop-down box with list of countries. Add options "I don't know" and "I prefer not to answer". If Respondent answers "I don't know" or "I prefer not to answer", please take them to the End screen.]

Groups Created:

Group 1: Canadian-Trained: If A5=1

Group 2: Internationally Trained: If A5=2

[Ask Group 2 only]

A8.   During your first training to become a/an [insert from A4], which language was used for the training?
(Select all answers below that apply)

English	❑$_1$
French	❑$_2$
Other (please specify): _____	❑$_{98}$

Part B: Your Experience in the Licensing Process

The licensing process is different for each person. We would like to know more about *your* experience in Ontario.

[Ask if A1=1]

B1.   How much time did the licensing process take? Please estimate the amount of time between the date when you first applied and the date when you got your licence as a/an [Insert from A4] in Ontario.

The licensing process took me _____ Programmer note: insert a drop-down menu. The drop-down would have one continuous list with "more than 10 years", 10 years, 9 years, 8 years, 7 years and so on to 1 year; 11 months and so on to 1 month; and 3 weeks, 2 weeks, 1 week. Users can only select one.

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

[Ask if A1=3]

B2.   **Why did you not finish the licensing process?**

(Select all that apply)

a) The licensing process is long	❑1
b) The licensing process is complex	❑2
c) The licensing process is expensive	❑3
d) I returned to school	❑4
e) I have decided to change my career	❑5
f) I have family commitments	❑6
g) I had financial reasons (other than the cost of the licensing process)	❑7
h) Other (please specify): _____	❑98
i) I don't know	○99

[Ask if A1=4]

B3.   **You met all of the requirements for getting a licence. Why did you not get your licence?**

(Select all that apply)

a) The costs of being in the profession are too high (licence, dues, etc.)	❑1
b) I returned to school	❑2
c) I decided to change my career	❑3
d) I have family commitments	❑4
e) I had financial reasons (excluding the cost of a licence, dues, etc.)	❑5
f) Other (please specify): _____	❑98
g) I don't know	○99

[Ask if A1=5]

B4. **Why did you withdraw from the licensing process?**

(Select all that apply)

a) The licensing process is long	$\square_1$
b) The licensing process is complex	$\square_2$
c) The licensing process is expensive	$\square_3$
d) I returned to school	$\square_4$
e) I decided to change my career	$\square_5$
f) I have family commitments	$\square_6$
g) I had other financial reasons (excluding the cost of licensing)	$\square_7$
h) Other (please specify): _____	$\square_{98}$
i) I don't know	$\bigcirc_{99}$

[Ask all except if A1=6]

B5. **If you were ever denied licensing, were you told why?**

Yes	$\bigcirc_1$	
No	$\bigcirc_2$	
I don't know	$\bigcirc_{99}$	

[Ask if B5=1]

B6. **What reasons were you given?**

$\bigcirc_{99}$ I prefer not to answer

Part C: Information about the Licensing Process

This part of the survey will help us understand what you knew about the licensing process when you started, and how you found information about it.

[Ask all except if A1=6]

C1. **When you started the licensing process to become a/an [Insert from A4] in Ontario, did you know about the following?**

[Programmer: Please randomize]

	Yes	No	Not Applicable	I don't know
a) How to start the licensing process	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
b) Education and practical experience you needed for the profession	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
c) How to get your qualifications assessed	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
d) The documents that must be included with your application, to prove your qualifications	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
e) What you could do if you could not get the documents that proved your qualifications	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
f) The amount of time that the licensing process usually takes	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
g) Licensing costs, such as fees for: applying to the profession; exams; courses; or a professional licence	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$

[Ask all]

C2. **How did you find information about the licensing process?**

(Select all that apply)

a) Website of the regulatory body	❑$_1$
b) Communication with the regulatory body	❑$_2$
c) Information from the agencies that serve immigrants	❑$_3$
d) Information from Global Experience Ontario	❑$_4$
e) Information from Health Force Ontario	❑$_5$
f) Canadian government websites (federal or provincial)	❑$_6$
g) Friends and family ("word of mouth")	❑$_7$
h) Other (please specify): _____	❑$_{98}$
i) I don't know	$\circ_{99}$

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January 20, 2010

[Ask all]

C3. How easy or difficult was it to get information about the licensing process? In the chart below, please select a rating (from "Very Easy" to "Very Difficult") for each kind of information.

Programmer: Please Randomize.

Kind of Information	Very Easy	Easy	Neither Easy Nor Difficult	Difficult	Very Difficult	Not Applicable	I don't know
a) Information about the requirements for getting a licence (for example, requirements for education, work experience, language skill)	○1	○2	○3	○4	○5	○8	○9
b) Information about fees	○1	○2	○3	○4	○5	○8	○9
c) Information about the length of the licensing process	○1	○2	○3	○4	○5	○8	○9
d) Information about resources for applicants (for example, a guide to help you prepare for exams, orientation sessions)	○1	○2	○3	○4	○5	○8	○9
e) Information about how you can see your records (for the licensing process)	○1	○2	○3	○4	○5	○8	○9
f) Information about the appeal process	○1	○2	○3	○4	○5	○8	○9
g) Information about how the regulatory body assesses your qualifications	○1	○2	○3	○4	○5	○8	○9
h) Information about bridging programs	○1	○2	○3	○4	○5	○8	○9
i) Other (please specify): _____	○1	○2	○3	○4	○5	○8	○9

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January 20, 2010

Part D: Assessing Your Qualifications

Assessing qualifications includes, for example:

- Assessing whether your degree is equal to a degree from an Ontario university
- Assessing your skills
- Assessing what you already know
- Examinations

This part of the survey will help us understand how *your* qualifications were assessed.

[Ask all]

D1. Who assessed your qualifications?

(Select all that apply)

Regulatory body for the profession	❏1
Other organization (please specify below): _____	❏2
I don't know	○99

[Ask if D1=1]

D2. Did the regulatory body tell you about the documents you needed to provide so that it could assess your qualifications?

(Select one answer only)

Yes	○1
No	○2
I don't know	○9

[Ask if D1=2]

D3. Did the organization tell you about the documents you needed to provide so that it could assess your qualifications?

(Select one answer only)

Yes	○1
No	○2
I don't know	○9

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January 20, 2010

[Ask all]

D4. How long did it take you to get the documents (for example, transcripts from your school, letter from your work supervisor)?

(Select one answer only)

Less than 1 month	$\circ_1$
Between 1 to 6 months	$\circ_2$
Between 6 to 12 months	$\circ_3$
More than 1 year	$\circ_4$
I don't know	$\circ_9$

[Ask all]

D5. Were you given (or told how to get) the criteria that were used to assess your qualifications or your work experience?

(Select one answer only)

Yes	$\circ_1$
No	$\circ_2$
I don't know	$\circ_9$

[Ask all]

D6. Did you have to take any examinations to become a/an [Insert from A4]?

(Select one answer only)

Yes	$\circ_1$	
No	$\circ_2$	
I don't know	$\circ_9$	

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January 20, 2010

[Ask if D6=1]

D7.   How easy or difficult were the examinations?

In the chart below, please select a rating (from "Very Easy" to "Very Difficult") for each kind of examination you had to take.

[Programmer: Please randomize. Also for d) other, please allow for multiple responses, and add fields for rating these responses.]

	Very Easy	Easy	Neither Easy Nor Difficult	Difficult	Very Difficult	Not Applicable	I don't know
a) An exam that asks multiple-choice questions	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_3$	$\circ_4$	$\circ_5$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
b) A practical exam (for example, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations)	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_3$	$\circ_4$	$\circ_5$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
c) An exam that asks for essay answers or short answers	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_3$	$\circ_4$	$\circ_5$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
d) Other, please specify: _____							

[Ask if D6=1]

D8.   What difficulties did you have in the examinations?

(Select all that apply)

I had difficulty with the language	$\square_1$
I was not prepared	$\square_2$
The exams were long	$\square_3$
I have special needs, and I did not get the help I needed	$\square_4$
Other (please specify): _____	$\square_6$
I did not have any difficulties	$\square_{99}$

[Ask if D6=1]

D9.   What resources did you use to prepare for your exams?

(Select all that apply)

Material provided by the regulatory body	$\square_1$
Bridging programs	$\square_2$
Training in English or French	$\square_3$
A guide to help prepare for the examination	$\square_4$
Sample exam questions	$\square_5$
Other (please specify): _____	$\square_6$
None	$\square_{99}$

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

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[Ask if D9 ≠ 99]

D10. Were these resources helpful when you prepared for your exams?

	Yes (helpful)	No (not helpful)	Not Applicable	I don't know
Materials provided by the regulatory body	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
Bridging programs	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
Training in English or French	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
A guide to help prepare for the examination	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
Sample exam questions	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
Other (please specify): _____	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$

Part E: Requirements for Getting a Licence (Education, Work Experience, and Language Skills)

This part of the survey asks about some of the requirements you have had to meet while working to become a/an [Insert from A4] in Ontario (whether or not you succeeded or are still trying to get your licence). Specifically, the questions ask about education, work experience, and language skill.

[Ask All]

E1.   Please tell us what you had to do to get a licence in your profession in Ontario.

(Select all that apply)

Get more education	❑$_1$
Get work experience	❑$_2$
Improve my ability in English or French	❑$_3$
Other (please specify): _____	❑$_6$
None	❑$_{99}$

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January 20, 2010

[Ask if E1=1]

E2. **How many extra education courses did you need, in order to get a licence for your profession in Ontario?**

(Select one answer only)

Between 1 and 5 courses	○1
Between 6 and 10 courses	○2
More than 10 courses	○3
Other (please specify): _____	○4
I don't know	○9

[Ask if E1=1]

E3. **How much time did it take to finish these extra education courses?**

It took me _____ [Programmer note: insert a drop-down menu. The drop-down would have one continuous list with "more than 5 years", 5 years, 4 years, 3 years, 2 years, 1 year; 11 months and so on to 1 month; and 3 weeks, 2 weeks, 1 week. Users can only select one.]

[Ask if E1=1]

E4. **What were the fees for these extra education courses that you had to complete?**

(Select one answer only)

Less than $5,000	○1
Between $5,001 and $10,000	○2
Between $10,001 and $25,000	○3
More than $25,000	○4
I don't know	○9

[Ask if E1=1]

E5. **Did you get any grants or loans or other financial help from government organizations or other organizations to get this extra education?**

(Select one answer only)

Yes	○1
No	○2
I don't know	○3

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January 20, 2010

[Ask Group 2 only]

E6. Some regulatory bodies offer bridging programs to applicants trained outside of Canada. Did you complete a bridging program?

(Select one answer only)

Yes. I chose to complete a bridging program	$\circ_1$
Yes. I had to, because it was a requirement for getting a licence	$\circ_2$
Not yet, but I am considering it	$\circ_3$
No. I did not need it	$\circ_4$
No. There was no bridging program available for my profession	$\circ_5$
I don't know	$\circ_9$

[Ask if E6 = 1 or 2]

E7. What were the fees for the bridging program you took?

(Select one answer only)

Less than $5,000	$\circ_1$
Between $5,001 and $10,000	$\circ_2$
Between $10,001 and $25,000	$\circ_3$
More than $25,000	$\circ_4$
I don't know	$\circ_9$

[Ask if E1=2]

E8. Were there any challenges in getting the work experience you needed? If there were, please describe them in the box below.

$\circ_{99}$ I prefer not to answer

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January 20, 2010

[Ask if E1=2]

E9.   What was the length of your work experience?

(Select one answer only)

Less than 3 months	$\circ_1$
Between 3 and 6 months	$\circ_2$
Between 6 and 12 months	$\circ_3$
Between 12 and 24 months	$\circ_4$
Between 24 and 36 months	$\circ_5$
More than 36 months	$\circ_6$
I don't know	$\circ_9$

[Ask Group 2 if E1=2]

E10.   You may have got some of your work experience in the country where you got your first professional training. If you did, has this experience counted towards the work experience you need to be a/an [insert from A4] in Ontario?

(Select one answer only)

Yes, completely	$\circ_1$
Yes, partially	$\circ_2$
No	$\circ_3$
I do not have work experience in the country where I got my first training for my profession	$\circ_4$
I don't know	$\circ_9$

[Ask Group 2 if E1=3]

E11.   What language skills were required for your profession in Ontario?

(Select one answer only)

No requirements about language skill were specified	$\circ_1$
Reasonable fluency in either English or French	$\circ_2$
Acceptable score on a language test	$\circ_3$
Acceptable score on a profession-specific language test	$\circ_4$
Other (please specify): _____	$\circ_5$
I don't know	
None	$\circ_9$

Part F: Appeal Process

During the licensing process, you can ask for an appeal (a re-evaluation) of some decisions or results (for example, if your application is rejected, or if you get a low score on an exam). This section asks about any appeals you asked for.

[Ask all, except if A1=6]

F1. **Have you ever asked for an appeal (for example, an appeal of the assessing of your qualifications, or an appeal of your exam results)?**
(Select one answer only)

Yes, and I was given an opportunity to appeal	$\circ_1$	Continue
Yes, but I was not given an opportunity to appeal	$\circ_2$	Continue
No. I did not need to ask for an appeal	$\circ_3$	Go to G1
No. I did not know I could ask for an appeal	$\circ_4$	Go to G1
No. I had other reasons for not asking for an appeal	$\circ_5$	Go to F3
I don't know	$\circ_9$	Go to G1

[Ask if F1=1 or 2]

F2. **Why did you ask for an appeal?**
(Please enter your answer in the box below.)

$\circ_{99}$ I prefer not to answer.

[Ask if F1=5]

F3. **Why did you not ask for an appeal?**
(Please enter your answer in the box below.)

$\circ_{99}$ I prefer not to answer.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

[Ask if F1=1 or 2]

F4. How long did the appeal process take?

It took me _____ [Programmer note: insert a drop-down menu. The drop-down would have one continuous list with "more than 3 years", 3 years, 2 years, 1 year; 11 months and so on to 1 month; and 3 weeks, 2 weeks, 1 week. Users can only select one.]

[Ask if F1=1 or 2]

F5. Was your appeal successful?

(Select one answer only)

Yes	$\circ_1$	
No	$\circ_2$	
I don't know	$\circ_9$	

[Ask if F5=2]

F6. Did the regulatory body (or the other organization dealing with your appeal) give reasons for their decision?

(Select one answer only)

Yes	$\circ_1$	
No	$\circ_2$	
I don't know	$\circ_9$	

[Ask if F6=1]

F7. What reasons were given for the decision?
(Please enter your answer in the box below.)

$\circ_{99}$ I prefer not to answer.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Part G: Who and What Helped You?

In this part of the survey, we ask you about organizations and resources that may have helped you during the licensing process. We also ask about helpful and challenging experiences you had.

[Ask all, except if A1=6]

G1. **During the licensing process in Ontario, who have you tried to get help from?**

(Select all that apply)

[Programmer: For "Other", please allow for multiple responses.]

Professional associations	❑1
Regulatory bodies	❑2
Educational institutions (for example, schools, colleges, and universities)	❑3
Organizations that help immigrants	❑4
Employers	❑5
Other, please specify: _____	❑97
None	○98
I don't know	○99

[Ask if G1 ≠ 98 or 99]

G2. **Were these people or organizations helpful?**

Programmer: Please only include G1 responses that have been selected.

	Yes (helpful)	No (not helpful)	Not Applicable	I don't know
Professional associations	○1	○2	○8	○9
Regulatory bodies	○1	○2	○8	○9
Educational institutions (for example, schools, colleges, and universities)	○1	○2	○8	○9
Organizations that help immigrants	○1	○2	○8	○9
Employers	○1	○2	○8	○9
Other (please specify): _____	○1	○2	○8	○9

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

[Ask all]

G3. **The chart below lists many resources. How useful were these resources in helping you during the licensing process in Ontario? Please select a rating for each resource (from "Very Useful" to "Not Useful At All").**

Programmer: Please randomize

Resource	Very Useful	Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful	Not Useful At All	Not Applicable	I don't know
a) Information from the regulatory body	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_3$	$\circ_4$	$\circ_5$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
b) Bridging programs	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_3$	$\circ_4$	$\circ_5$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
c) Resources to help you prepare for examinations	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_3$	$\circ_4$	$\circ_5$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
d) All kinds of support programs for immigrants	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_3$	$\circ_4$	$\circ_5$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
e) Work opportunities provided by employers	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_3$	$\circ_4$	$\circ_5$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
f) Networks of professionals	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_3$	$\circ_4$	$\circ_5$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
g) Opportunities to be helped by a mentor	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_3$	$\circ_4$	$\circ_5$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
h) Language training in English or French	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_3$	$\circ_4$	$\circ_5$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
i) Information and services provided by Global Experience Ontario or HealthForce Ontario	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_3$	$\circ_4$	$\circ_5$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
j) Information or support from peers and family members	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_3$	$\circ_4$	$\circ_5$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
k) Help paying for the cost of education	$\circ_1$	$\circ_2$	$\circ_3$	$\circ_4$	$\circ_5$	$\circ_8$	$\circ_9$
l) Other (please specify below): _____							

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

[Ask all]

G4. **What were the three experiences that have helped you the most during the licensing process? Please describe these experiences in detail in the box below.**

1.
2.
3.

[Ask all]

G5. **What were the three biggest challenges for you during the licensing process? Please describe these challenges in detail in the box below.**

1.
2.
3.

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January 20, 2010

Part H: Personal Information

[Ask all]

H1. **What is your age category?**

(Select one answer only)

18 to 24 years of age	$\circ_1$	Continue
25 to 34 years of age	$\circ_2$	Continue
35 to 44 years of age	$\circ_3$	Continue
45 to 54 years of age	$\circ_4$	Continue
55 to 64 years of age	$\circ_5$	Continue
65 years of age or older	$\circ_6$	Continue
I prefer not to answer	$\circ_9$	Continue

[Ask all]

H2. **What is your gender?**

(Select one answer only)

Male	$\circ_1$	
Female	$\circ_2$	

[Ask all]

H3. **Where do you live now?**

(Select one answer only)

Ontario	$\circ_1$	Continue
In Canada outside of Ontario	$\circ_2$	Go to H5
Outside of Canada	$\circ_3$	Go to H7

[Ask if H3 = 1]

H4. **What are the first three digits of your postal code? (For example, M6G)**

__ __ __

$\circ_{99}$ I prefer not to answer.

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

[Ask if H3 ≠ 3]

H5. **What is your current status in Canada?**

(Select one answer only)

Canadian by birth, born in Canada	○1	
Landed immigrant	○2	
Canadian citizen born outside of Canada	○3	
Refugee visa	○4	
Work visa	○5	
Student visa	○6	
Visitor visa	○7	
Other (please specify): _____	○8	
I don't know	○99	

[Ask if H5 ≠ 1]

H6. **How long have you lived in Canada?**

I have lived in Canada for _____ Programmer note: insert a drop-down menu. The drop-down menu would have one continuous list with "more than 10 years", 10 years, 9 years, 8 years, 7 years and so on to 1 year; 11 months and so on to 1 month; and 3 weeks, 2 weeks, 1 week. Users can only select one.

[Ask all]

H7. **In which language are you the most fluent?**

Select one answer only)

English	○1	Continue
French	○2	Continue
Other (please specify): _____	○2	Continue

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

[Ask all]

H8. Which statement best describes your current job?

(Select one answer only)

I am employed in my professional field	$\circ_1$
I am employed in a related field	$\circ_2$
I am employed in a field unrelated to my professional field	$\circ_3$
I am a paid intern in my profession	$\circ_4$
I am a paid intern in a related field	$\circ_5$
I am a paid intern in a field unrelated to my profession	$\circ_6$
I am unemployed and looking for work	$\circ_7$
I am unemployed and not looking for work	$\circ_8$
I am doing unpaid work (volunteer work, internships, etc.)	$\circ_8$
Other (please specify): _____	$\circ_{99}$

[Ask all]

H9. Please select *your* current salary level.

(Select one answer only)

Below $25,000	$\circ_1$	Continue
$25,000 to $39,999	$\circ_2$	Continue
$40,000 to $59,999	$\circ_3$	Continue
$60,000 to $79,999	$\circ_4$	Continue
More than $80,000	$\circ_5$	Continue
I prefer to not give this information	$\circ_8$	Continue
I don't know	$\circ_{99}$	Continue

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

![malatest Program Evaluation & Market Research]

Part I. Invitation

In this final part of the survey, we invite you to:

- Tell us anything more that you would like to say about getting a professional licence in Ontario.
- Tell us if you would like a summary of the survey results.
- Join a focus group (if you live in Ontario).

[Ask all]

I1. Do you wish to say anything about the licensing process in Ontario that you haven't said earlier in this survey?

If you do, please enter it in the box below.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                     │
│                                                     │
│                                                     │
│                                                     │
│                                                     │
│                                                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

     ○99   No. I have nothing more to add.

[Ask all]

I2. If you wish to get a summary of the survey results, please enter your email address in the box below.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                     │
│                                                     │
│                                                     │
│                                                     │
│                                                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

     ○999   No thanks. I do not want a summary of the survey results.

[Ask if H3=1]

I3. We will conduct focus groups to get more information about people's experiences in the licensing process in Ontario. If you wish to join a focus group, please contact our Study Coordinator at 1-800-598-0161 or ofcsurvey@malatest.com.

["END" SCREEN FOR ALL RESPONDENTS]

Thank you for helping us with this important survey.

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR'S GUIDE

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
Getting Your Professional License in Ontario:
The Experiences of International and Canadian Applicants

Focus Group Moderator's Guide

Introduction	5 min

Welcome! I'd like to thank you all very much for coming to this discussion group today.

My name is _____. I am a researcher with R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd, a Canadian research and evaluation company.

Our purpose is to get your insights and understanding of the challenges and issues facing internationally and Canadian trained individuals in the registration process.

We are hearing from individuals through a series of discussion groups across Ontario. As you all know, we have also done surveys with internationally and Canadian trained individuals.

This research is part of a larger research project called *Getting Your Professional Licence in Ontario: The Experiences of International and Canadian Applicants.* The project is led by the Office of the Fairness Commissioner. The Office of the Fairness Commissioner is an arm's-length agency of the Ontario government. Its mandate is to ensure that certain regulated professions have registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair.

First of all, I would like to take a minute to explain how we will proceed with this discussion:
  ➢ The focus group should take about one hour and a half.
  ➢ The session will be audio and/or video taped. The recording equipment is [equipment location]. We tape focus groups to make sure the results we present are accurate. [Indicate mirror and observers.]
  ➢ Anything you say will remain confidential—that is, your name will not be associated with anything you say, and we will just use first names.
  ➢ I'd like to point out that there are no right or wrong answers and that I am not looking for group agreement on each topic. We would like to hear a diversity of answers and perspectives.

So, if everyone is comfortable, we will now get started.

Self-Intro   **5 min**

Let's start the discussion by going around the table and having everybody introduce themselves. Please tell us your name (first name only is sufficient), the profession for which you have experience in and briefly about your experience working in Ontario or your home country in your field.

A. Licensure and Registration   **25 min**

1. How many of you have tried to become licensed/registered to practice in your field in Ontario? How many have been successful? How many of you are internationally trained/domestically trained?

2. How did you get information about the licensing process? Was this information reliable/useful? What information did you need to get?

3. What was your experience with the following; if applicable:
    a) Application process;
    b) Fees related to registration (regulatory body, credential assessment agency, exams, etc);
    c) Exams (Probes: Availability etc.)
    d) Interview Process;
    e) Work/Life balance (Probe: Balance between working fulltime and completing the registration/licensing process.)

If some participants have not attempted to become licensed:
4. Why have you not attempted to become licensed/registered in Ontario? What are the reasons why you have chosen not to continue in the process? What would change your mind?

5. Have you considered moving to another province to become licensed/registered in your field? Why/Why not? Do you have any friends/family that have moved?

B. Qualifications Assessment   15 min

1. Have any of you had to get your qualifications or experience assessed by a third party/regulatory body?

2. Can you please describe your experience of getting your qualifications and experience assessed?

3. What was helpful in the process of getting your qualifications assessed? What would have been useful to you?

C. Support Programs   10 min

1. Have any of you taken a bridging or support program/course specifically to help you obtain your license/registration and/or work in your field in Ontario?
   - If yes, why did you take the program or course? Did it meet your expectations? Why or why not? What was your experience with preceptors/instructors?
   - If no, why not?

2. Have any of you taken a language program to help you obtain your license/registration? What was your experience with the program? Did it benefit you?

D. Work Experience Requirements   10 min

1. Did you require Ontario work experience to obtain your licence? How did you get this experience?

   Probe: How did you connect with an employer/ or supervisor/mentor to fulfill your work experience requirement? What was your experience with working with employers/managers/supervisors/coworkers?
   Probe: What were the most helpful things about this experience?

Getting Your Professional License in Ontario
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

E. Appeals   10 min

1. Have any of you ever appealed the decision made by a regulatory body? What was decision? Can you share your experience of the appeal process?
2. What was helpful during the appeal process? What else would have been helpful?

F. Final Comments   5 min

1. In general, what things were most helpful as you went through the assessment and licensing process?
2. Based on your experience where and how could the process be improved?

G. Thank you and Wrap-Up   5 min

Before we end the discussion, are there any other comments or points that anyone would like to discuss?

I would like to thank you very much for your participation in this focus group. You have been very helpful to us and we appreciate your input.

APPENDIX D: OTHER LANGUAGES

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Office of the Fairness Commissioner
January 20, 2010

Acholi	Hindi	Punjabi
Afrikaans	Hungarian	Pushtu
Albanian	Ibanag	Romanian
Amharic	IGBO	Romanian
Arabic	Ilocano	Russian
Armenian	Italian	Serbian
Belarusian	Japanese	Serbo - Croatian
Bemba	Kannada	Sinhalese
Bengali/Bangla	Kashmiri	Slovak
Bosnian	Khasi	Slovenian
Brazilian Portuguese	Kiswahili	Spanish
Bulgarian	Konkani	Spanish
Cantonese	Korean	Swedish
Cebuano	Krio	Swiss
Chinese*	Kurdish	Syrian
Creole	Latin	Tagalong
Croatian	Lebanese	Taiwanese
Danish	Lithuanian	Tamil
Dari	Lwo	Telugu
Dutch	Macedonian	Thai
Edo	Malayam	Tigrina
Farsi	Mandarin	Turkish
Fujian	Marathi	Ukrainian
German	Mende	Urdu
Greek	Pampango	Uzbek
Gujarati	Persian	Vietnamese
Hebrew	Polish	Visayan
Hiligaynon	Portuguese	Yoruba

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