SKILL AND CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION AND THE REGULATED PROFESSIONS IN QUÉBEC

PROMISES, CHALLENGES AND SOME SOLUTIONS

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at the Conference of the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment
Fredericton, New Brunswick
16 October 2006
Presentation Outline

- Basic assumptions or realities
- The situation for Québec
- Key moments in the mobilization of Québec’s stakeholders
- Professional Recognition Statistics
- The focus for the future
- Continuing Challenges of skill and credential recognition
- Critical elements for success
- Appendix A – The Professional System and qualification recognition in Québec
- Appendix B – The Québec Interprofessional Council Action Plan (2001)
Basic assumptions or realities

- The need of internationally-trained professionals
  - Shortages affecting access to services
    - A «protection of the public» problem in itself
  - Demography
  - Social and Economic growth
    - Competitiveness
Basic assumptions or realities (cont’d)

Protection of the Public is a legitimate public policy too

- Risks and gravity of the prejudice to physical, psychological and patrimonial integrity associated with some activities
- Prevention
  - Training and other competency requirements
  - Surveillance of the practice
- Disciplinary measures
There is a possibility of differences/gap in training

- Practicing a profession is, in part, a cultural act
  - Communication with clients
  - Communication with colleagues and experts
  - Organization of services and work environment
  - Ethics
  - Legal framework
  - Technological platform
- How to respond to the need of gap training is critical
Basic assumptions or realities (cont’d)

- The magic tools (cheap, reliable and efficient) are not there yet
  - Whether using a comparing (deducing the competency) or measuring approach
  - To “see the person instead of the papers” is not as easy as it sounds
  - Especially when evaluating work experience
- Being assessed based on a regulation is generally not seen as pleasant or positive
Integration is a process with many actors, each being responsible for the whole:

- From the Immigration Officer abroad to the potential employer here
- One action cannot stand alone
- The credibility of the entire welcoming society lies at each stage and on an efficient sequence
  - Ex.: partial recognition requires for, the next step, a reasonable offer for gap training
  - Avoid deception of immigrants
Basic assumptions or realities (cont’d)

- Immigrants selection and integration is a mandate of the State
- The need to work together
  - A shared vision
    - Objectives
    - Attitudes
    - Assumptions
  - Mutual respect between actors
    - Understand and respect each jurisdiction and expertise
Basic assumptions or realities (cont’d)

The need to work together (cont’d)

- Active multilevel dialogue
  - Between head of each system (Immigration, Education and Labour Ministries; Interprofessional Council; Immigrant support community)
  - Keep the shared vision alive and focused
  - Find solutions to organizational and systemic problems
- Between regulatory bodies and other actors
  - On the ground for each case
Basic assumptions or realities (cont’d)

The need to work together (cont’d)

- Act where it counts with the people who can deliver
  - In the community the immigrant wants to integrate
  - Economic and industrial frameworks are regional in Canada (5 very different economic regions)
  - Labour market issues varies from one region to another in Canada
  - Necessarily a regional/provincial focus and responsibility
  - Caution with Federal Government’s programs and services that are inspired by a coast to coast uniform vision
The situation for Québec

- Shortages affecting access to services
  - Need of recruitment abroad
  - Some Orders took the initiatives and launched missions abroad with the support of Government
  - Recruitment strategies and services put in place by Government

- Mobility Agreements
  - Growing pressure to compare and review standards
The situation for Québec (cont’d)

- More demand for accountability
  - Answering to the public we serve and protect

- General issues related to immigration
  - Human Rights, Equity, Fairness
  - Social and economic contribution
Key moments in the mobilization of Québec’s stakeholders

- Creation of the Consultation Group on immigration and admission to professional orders (2001)
  - Ministries of Immigration and Employment
  - Québec Interprofessional Council
  - Immigration Labour Adaptation Committee

- Adoption of an Action Plan by Professional Orders (2001)
  - Information
  - Efficiency and awareness of process – Tools
  - Accountability and transparency
  - Collaboration between Professional Orders
Key moments in the mobilization of Québec’s stakeholders (cont’d)

- Continuing Education and Qualification Recognition Governmental Policy (May 2002)
  - Ministries of Immigration, Education, and Employment
  - Québec Interprofessional Council
  - Immigration Labour Adaptation Committee
Key moments in the mobilization of Québec’s stakeholders (cont’d)

  - Consultation and report in March 2005

  - All relevant stakeholders appointed by Cabinet
  - Personal commitments from the Minister of Immigration and the Prime Minister
  - Action and solution driven
  - Comprehensive report in December 2005
Professional Recognition Statistics

Number of demands for equivalence received between 1997-1998 to 2004-2005

Years


Number of demands

0 500 1000 1500 2000 2500 3000 3500 4000

- Total numbers of demands
- Law, Management and Business
- Engineering and Sciences
- Health and Human Relations
Professional Recognition Statistics
Decisions by the Professional Orders
between 1997-1998 and 2004-2005

- Complete equivalence granted  34,6 %
- Partial equivalence granted  47,6 %
- Acceptance rate  82,2 %
- No equivalence granted  17,8 %
The focus for the future

- Priority on professions experiencing shortages
  - Ex.: Health, Engineering, Technology

- Better information
  - Requirements for practice
  - Work environment
  - Labour market

- Better assessment and recognition
  - Developing partnership with external expertise
    - Better information on foreign training programs
  - Developing more adequate and efficient tools
    - Competency charts
    - Exams designed in relation with competency chart and with a bridging program divided by modules
    - Bridging programs for groups presenting the same profile
The focus for the future

- Counselling and orientation of the candidates
  - Government and Professional Orders
    - Processes
    - Resources
    - Programs
- Targeted recruitment abroad
  - Countries with more comparability
- Partnership with training institution
  - Assessment
  - Development of bridging programs
Continuing Challenges of skill and credential recognition

- **Time**
  - Development of credible and efficient tools
  - Development of programs
  - Changing regulations and policies
  - Recruitment

- **Resources**
  - Scarcity of government funds
  - Investment vs. expense
  - Resources of Professional Orders come mainly from licensees and are devoted to surveillance of the practice
Continuing Challenges
of skill and credential recognition
(cont’d)

- Ongoing legitimacy and efficiency challenge
  - Adoption by the Professional Orders of Québec of a Declaration on Principles and Good practices for the recognition of equivalence of skills and credentials (February 2006)
  - Comprehensive evaluation and review process until March 2007
Critical elements for success

- Need of a champion in every areas and partners
- Inclusive and respectful approach between partners
- Active multilevel dialogue
- Bring the regulatory bodies together
- Need of sustained leadership supported by a clear political commitment
- Realistic but positive message by all
- Sufficient investment of resources by Government
A useful link...

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APPENDIX A

- The Québec Professional System - Principles
- The Québec Interprofessional Council
- The Office of the Professions
- Qualification recognition – Principles and conditions
The Québec Professional System - Principles

- Protection of the Public
  - Risks and gravity of the prejudice to physical, psychological and patrimonial integrity
  - Training and other competency requirements
  - Surveillance of the practice
  - Disciplinary measures

- One basic model for institutions and procedures
  - *Professional Code*, in force since 1974
The Québec Professional System - Principles

Betting on the expertise of professionals for:
- Self-regulation
- Self-discipline
- Self-management
- Self-finance

Accountability and transparency
- Presence of representatives of the Public
- Main Regulations approved by the Government and made public
- Public reporting on activities
- Overseeing governmental body
The Québec Interprofessional Council

Founded by the Orders in 1965
- Need to exchange views on issues of common interest
- Need of a collective voice
- Voluntary membership

Recognised by the *Professional Code* in 1974
- Association of Orders
- Collective voice
- Advisory status to the Government
- Collaboration, training and services
- Mandatory membership and financing

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The Office of the Professions

- Surveillance of Professional Orders in ensuring the protection of the public
  - Investigate on a Professional Order in financial difficulties (as authorized by the Minister)
- Designation of representative of the public on the Board of Directors of the Professional Orders
- Advisory status to the Minister and to the Government
- Legislative and Regulations processes
  - Study and draft bills and some regulations
  - Examine and comment or approve some regulations coming from the Professional orders
Qualification Recognition - Some principles

The Right to obtain a permit
- Established by the *Professional Code*
- If the conditions are met
- Orders do not control supply or demand
- Orders are responsible for the recognition process

Standards, conditions and process
- In a Regulation approved the Government and made public
Qualification Recognition - Conditions

General condition of the *Professional Code*

- The need to be specifically trained for professional practice
- Diploma (degree or program) giving access to a permit
  - recognised by Regulation of the Government
- 390 diplomas or programs are recognised for the 50 different professional permits
  - Curriculum monitored by a statutory joint committee on training (Orders and Colleges or Universities)
Qualification Recognition - Conditions (cont’d)

- Proficiency in French according to the *Charter of French Language* (and all previous language laws since the 60s in Québec)
  - Communication skills are an integral part of the professional competency
  - The professional must be able to communicate efficiently with its client and its colleagues.
  - Québec is in majority a French speaking society.
Qualification Recognition - Conditions (cont’d)

Equivalency

- Mandatory regulation on standards and process for equivalence of diplomas or training
- Legal basis for equivalence:
  - Level of knowledge and skills equivalent to the level that may be attained by the holder of a recognised diploma giving access to the permit
- Issues related to information and documents
  - Availability, sufficiency and validity
Qualification Recognition - Conditions (cont’d)

Analysis-Evaluation

- Different types of requirements:
  - Level of education
  - Subjects covered
  - Number of hours or credits
  - Internship
  - Work experience
  - Specific training (ethics or else)
  - Exam (knowledge, performance, simulation)
Qualification Recognition - Conditions (cont’d)

Analysis-Evaluation

- Possible complementary factors for evaluation (if not a requirement):
  - Education
  - Internship
  - Work experience

- More Orders are developing competency charts
  - Mainly college and technical level professions
  - Not all yet in use in qualification recognition
  - Universities fall behind in the competency approach
Qualification Recognition - Conditions (cont’d)

Decision

- By the Bureau or a special committee
- Complete equivalence granted
- Partial equivalence granted
  - Information is given to the candidate on what is needed to complete his profile and on the programs and resources available
  - Issues about access to specific training and internship (gap training)
- No equivalence granted
Qualification Recognition - Conditions (cont’d)

Review of the decision

- By the Bureau, after representation made by the candidate
The QIC Action Plan

A commitment and statement

- Adopted unanimously in December 2001 by the Assembly of the 45 Orders
  - First step to build a partnership (trust)
- Endorsed in February 2002 by the Consultation Group on immigration and admission to professional orders
- Announced in April 2002 in a joint press conference of the Québec Minister of Immigration and the President of the Interprofessional Council
- On top of actions by specific Professional Order
The QIC Action Plan (cont’d)

1. Working together
   - Mainly through consulting and working groups (focused on action and solution)
     - To maintain partnerships
     - To help each other achieving our goals
     - To monitor actions collectively
   - With the Québec Ministries of Immigration and of Employment
   - With the Immigrants support Groups
   - With the Colleges and Universities
   - With the employers
The QIC Action Plan (cont’d)

2. Information

- Adaptation of the information (plain language)
- Production of more information material
- Tour of the Immigrant support Groups
- A realistic but positive message
The QIC Action Plan (cont’d)

3. Efficiency and awareness in the process
   - Gathering and sharing between orders of efficient and good practices
   - Training sessions on other tools and resources relevant to qualification recognition
   - Intercultural relations training for people responsible for processing requests for equivalency
4. Accountability and transparency

- Adoption of a Declaration on Principles (February 2006)
  - Equality, fairness, objectivity, transparency, openness, periodic review
- Survey of good practices (February 2006)
- Collecting detailed data on the requests, the performance of the process and its outcome