

WORK CENTRAL AB

Credential Recognition

Getting Your International Qualifications Recognized in Alberta

A Career Resource from Work Central AB

Getting Your Foreign Credentials Recognized

If you trained or worked in a regulated profession outside Canada, you'll likely need to go through Foreign Qualification Recognition (FQR) before you can work in that field in Alberta. This guide explains how the process works and where to get support.

1. Regulated vs. Non-Regulated Occupations

- A **regulated occupation** requires a licence, certification, or registration from a Professional Regulatory Organization (PRO) before you can legally practice - examples include physicians, nurses, engineers, teachers, and many skilled trades.
- A **non-regulated occupation** does not require a licence, though employers will still assess your international education and experience against Canadian standards during hiring.
- Use Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition Tool, or check directly with the relevant Alberta regulatory body, to confirm whether your occupation is regulated.

2. How Foreign Qualification Recognition Works

Foreign Qualification Recognition (FQR) verifies that the education, skills, and experience you gained in another country meet the standards required to practice safely and competently in Alberta. Your PRO reviews your credentials and identifies any gaps - additional coursework, supervised practice hours, or examinations - that you'll need to complete before becoming licensed.

3. Educational Credential Assessment

- Alberta's International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) compares your international education credentials to Canadian standards and issues an assessment certificate, useful for both immigration applications and job searches.
- World Education Services (WES) is another widely accepted credential assessment organization used across Canada, including by many Alberta employers and regulators.
- Which assessment you need depends on your specific occupation and the requirements of your regulatory body - confirm before paying for an assessment.

4. Steps to Get Started

Recommended Process

- Identify whether your occupation is regulated in Alberta.
- Contact the relevant Professional Regulatory Organization directly, ideally before you arrive in Canada, to understand their specific requirements.
- Gather transcripts, degrees, and reference letters, and arrange certified translations if needed.
- Complete any required credential assessment (such as through IQAS or WES).
- Complete any additional exams, bridging programs, or supervised practice hours required by your PRO.

5. Financial Support for Credential Recognition

- Foreign Credential Recognition Loans of up to \$30,000 are available federally to help cover licensing fees, qualifying exams, and training programs.
- Some non-profit organizations, such as Windmill Microlending, also offer loans specifically for newcomers navigating credential recognition.
- Local settlement agencies (see our Settlement Services guide) can often connect you with additional funding and bridging program options relevant to your field.

6. While You Wait

Credential recognition can take time - sometimes many months, depending on your occupation. In the meantime, consider related non-regulated roles in your field to build Canadian work experience and references, which can also strengthen your eventual licensing application.

7. Frequently Asked Questions

Common Questions

How long does credential recognition take? It varies widely by occupation - some non-regulated field assessments take weeks, while regulated professions like medicine or engineering can take a year or more.

Can I start the process before I arrive in Canada? Yes, and it's strongly recommended - contacting your regulatory body and starting a credential assessment before you land can save significant time.

What if my credentials aren't fully recognized? Your PRO will outline specific gaps - often bridging programs, supervised practice, or additional exams - to help you meet full licensure requirements.

Credential Recognition Checklist

- ✓ Confirmed whether your occupation is regulated in Alberta
- ✓ Contacted your relevant Professional Regulatory Organization
- ✓ Gathered transcripts, degrees, and certified translations
- ✓ Completed a credential assessment (IQAS, WES, or as required)
- ✓ Explored funding options such as Foreign Credential Recognition Loans

Keep Settling In With Work Central AB

See our Career Change Guide and Professional Development resources at workcentralab.ca/resources for more on building your career in a new field while credentials are in progress.