



**DEC 31 2009**

OTTAWA  
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The Reverend Harvey Self  
Moderator, The 135th General Assembly  
The Presbyterian Church in Canada  
50 Wynford Drive  
Toronto ON M3C 1J7

Dear Reverend Self:

This is in response to your letter of November 20, 2009, addressed to the Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, concerning foreign credential recognition. I apologize for the delay in responding.

It is unfortunate that some highly qualified newcomers who choose to immigrate and are accepted into Canada are not able to work in their fields of expertise. We continue to see immigrants come to Canada who were selected on the basis of their education and skills, only to find that their credentials are not being fully recognized by regulatory bodies. One of our primary goals is to cut through the red tape involved in assessing foreign credentials so that immigrants can more easily access the labour market relevant to their expertise.

The Foreign Credentials Referral Office (FCRO) helps internationally trained individuals find information and access the services they need to put their skills to work quickly in Canada. The FCRO works closely with partners across levels of government to help ensure that the skills, training and credentials of newcomers are recognized in Canada by providing:

- a source for integrated and current information on the Canadian labour market and credential assessment, recognition and professional licensing processes; and
- the path-finding tools and referrals to relevant services for credential assessment, recognition and related support.

A key component of the FCRO is its Web site ([www.credentials.gc.ca](http://www.credentials.gc.ca)), featuring a search engine tool called “Working in Canada.” This tool helps individuals identify occupations in Canada for which they may be qualified, identify the regulatory body appropriate for their needs, and provide individuals with detailed labour market information, based on where they live (or plan to live). This tool is the first of its kind in Canada offered on a national scale and is available both in Canada and overseas, through the FCRO Web site and the Going to Canada Immigration Portal ([www.goingtocanada.gc.ca](http://www.goingtocanada.gc.ca)).

Service Canada also provides information, client referral and path-finding assistance to immigrants in Canada via a dedicated phone service (1-888-854-1805).

The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and Co-Chair of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers, and the Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, recently endorsed a new framework to enhance foreign qualification recognition for internationally trained workers called the *Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications*. Foreign-trained workers who submit an application to be licensed or registered to work in certain fields will be advised within one year whether their qualifications will be recognized.

The *Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications* is part of the Government of Canada's strategy to have the best educated, most skilled and most flexible workforce in the world. Recognizing foreign credentials is part of the strategy, and foreign qualification recognition is the process of verifying that knowledge, skills, work experience and education obtained in another country are comparable to the standards established for Canadian professionals and tradespersons.

The Economic Action Plan committed \$50 million to work with the provinces and territories to address barriers to credential recognition in Canada. This investment will do four things:

- develop the principles of timeliness, transparency, fairness and predictability that the federal, provincial and territorial governments set out to guide the process;
- develop standards for the timely handling of requests;
- identify the priority occupations for developing recognition standards; and
- help people who want to come to Canada start the assessment process before they arrive.

To learn more about Canada's Economic Action Plan, visit [www.actionplan.gc.ca](http://www.actionplan.gc.ca). The Framework is available on the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada Web site at: <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/publications/fcr/pcf.shtml>. For more information about foreign qualification recognition, call 1 800 O-Canada, or visit [www.servicecanada.gc.ca](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca) or your local Service Canada Centre.

With regard to the foreign skilled worker (FSW) class, on April 8, 2008, the former Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) announced new ministerial instructions, including the creation of a priority occupational list, for application in the FSW class received after February 27, 2008. CIC consulted with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Health Canada, the provinces and territories, over 150 stakeholder organizations and 500 others who provided input. From this, CIC identified the most common and acute labour market pressures across the country.

Based on these consultations, the Minister issued instructions on November 28, 2008, as part of an *Action Plan for Faster Immigration*. These instructions apply to persons wishing to make applications in the FSW class. The instructions include a list of 38 occupations.

The eligibility criteria outlined in the *Action Plan for Faster Immigration* are meant to reflect Canada's labour market needs. The instructions can be adjusted over time, in consultation with provinces, territories and stakeholders, as the labour market changes.

Thank you for writing and expressing your concerns. I trust that this information is of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Duncan', with a stylized, cursive script.

S. Duncan  
Ministerial Enquiries Division