

Case Study: IEE Participants

Internationally Educated Engineers (IEEs) Worksite-Based Performance Assessment Against Engineering Competencies (WPAC) Project

Internationally educated engineers (IEEs) participating in the WPAC pilot project also provided feedback for this evaluation through several sources. This case study provides a high level summary of the feedback received from the perspective of the IEEs.

All IEE participants indicated that the WPAC project generated substantial benefits for them in terms of providing 1) an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and abilities in a professional setting 1) a better understanding of the nature of engineering requirements and competencies in the Canadian workplace, and 3) a better understanding of the Canadian work culture.

IEE participants indicated that the stipend received was a critical element to the success of the pilot project. They indicated that they would likely not have been able to participate in the program to the full extent and would not have gained as much from the program if required to work full-time without pay over this period. Many of the participants have families with them in Nova Scotia that they support, and indicated that the requirement to work four months without pay would have introduced an additional hardship for their families. IEEs indicated that they would likely have needed to find additional alternate part-time employment over this time period to supplement their earnings, and would not have been able to fully participate in the work placement.

All IEE participants in the IEE WPAC pilot project indicated that the single greatest benefit of the WPAC project was gaining a better understanding of the Canadian work culture, followed by the networking and reference opportunities and an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and abilities in a professional setting. IEEs also cited development of communication skills in Canadian work place setting, updating their technical knowledge, becoming familiar with regulations and how to apply them to projects in the Canadian context as benefits.

In addition, the WPAC *competency assessment tool* was identified as providing an important guide for the IEEs in terms of core engineering competences and requirements along the pathway to licensure. In some cases, IEEs kept daily notes or a diary to assist in filling out the assessment tool to be reviewed with their employer.

As noted by, Mohammad Iranmanesh, a mechanical engineer specializing in marine engineering, keeping regular diary notes assist in completing the assessment tool. *“I was lucky to work on a bio gas recovery project so I could reference all the work and technical calculations I was responsible for to illustrate my engineering competencies throughout the work placement period.”* At the end of the work placement, the completed assessment, signed by participating employers acts as an important component of IEEs’ Canadian work portfolio.

The IEE WPAC Pilot Project Has Contributed to Longer Term Impacts

While the long-term impacts resulting from the IEE WPAC pilot project will not be realized in full until some date in the future, the project has already made significant progress in achieving long-run impacts directly attributable to activities undertaken that reduce barriers for internationally educated engineers. The results of this evaluation show that the IEE WPAC pilot project has demonstrated early success in workforce integration. At the time of this evaluation, half of the participating IEEs were offered employment following their work placement based their participation in the project and work performance. This number is expected to increase following the completion of all work projects. While this was not designated as a goal of the pilot program, this result speaks to the ability of the WPAC project to reduce barriers for IEEs and promote their integration into the workplace in their profession.

The results of this evaluation indicate that that the IEE WPAC project has the potential to greatly contributed to helping immigrants settle in Nova Scotia by providing IEEs with local work experience, an understanding of the Canadian work culture, networking opportunities and references. Overall, the IEE participants recognized the WPAC pilot project as being critical in gaining an understanding of the requirement along the pathway to licensure and helped them to identify gaps that need to be addressed prior to their readiness to apply for licensure. They also indicated that - as a result of the WPAC project, they have more confidence to job search more effectively. The references and introductions to other engineering firms they received as a result of this program will assist them in build their work-based networks. IEE participants also recognized that as a result of completing the assessment against competencies component with their employer, this document will form a part of their portfolio of work experience in the Canadian context, and will become part of their application for licensure in Nova Scotia.