



September 19, 2023

Irwin Glasberg, Fairness Commissioner

Office of the Fairness Commissioner

180 Dundas St. W.

Suite 300

Toronto, ON M7A 2S6

Subject: International Engineering Graduates and the job market

Dear Mr. Glasberg,

I am writing on behalf of the **Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE)**, an organization dedicated to advocating for the engineering profession and addressing the critical issues facing engineers in Ontario. We deeply appreciate the vital role that the Canada Fairness Commissioner's office has played in ensuring equitable opportunities for internationally trained professionals in Canada.

The purpose of this letter is to request a meeting with you to discuss how to improve access to the job market for international engineering graduates. We believe that your influence and support of this, concern could significantly contribute to rectifying the challenges faced by engineers who have trained internationally.

To provide context for this meeting, we would like to draw your attention to several key issues:

1. **Underemployment Among International Engineering Graduates:** According to the 2021 Canada Census, nearly 50% of immigrant engineering graduates in Canada are underemployed, a situation that not only underutilizes their skills but also represents a significant loss to the Canadian economy. Engineering should be a priority profession when creating pathways to address this issue. (See appendix A).
2. **Pay Disparity:** The 2021 Canada Census reveals a concerning pay disparity among professionals in the engineering field. Immigrant engineers, despite their qualifications and skills, often find themselves in positions with significantly lower pay compared to their Canadian-educated counterparts, with up to 49% less pay when working as an engineer for older age groups (See appendix B). For underemployed immigrants, the pay gap is even worse, with income of those aged 45-54 years up to 64% less than Canadian educated engineering graduates. Addressing this pay gap is crucial for ensuring fair compensation for all engineers. (See appendix A).
3. **The Ontario Bridge Training Program (OBTP):** OSPE has a successful history of operating Ontario Training Bridging Programs, which have effectively facilitated the integration of International Engineering Graduates into the Canadian job market. A similar program was previously funded through the Skills Development Fund (SDF), resulting in over 80% of program participants gaining employment. Regrettably, our most recent application for SDF funding was unsuccessful. Nevertheless, we strongly believe that the OBTP should receive continued funding starting from

2024, with the allocation of additional resources. With this support, we aim to assist the numerous skilled engineering graduates who are currently underemployed. We strongly encourage OBTP to provide access to associations that are supporting internationally trained professionals such as engineers to get licensed and employed in Ontario.

4. **New PEO Licensure Requirements:** International Engineering Graduates are currently facing challenges in meeting the new licensure requirements set by the Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO). While the elimination of the Canadian experience requirement is a welcome step, the reality is that International Engineering Graduates still need a means to demonstrate their competencies. Bridging programs are essential to fill this gap.

It is important to note that OSPE has a long history of working with hundreds of immigrants through its bridging program. Unfortunately, many organizations, including OSPE, have faced funding challenges.

We have recently learned that funding for these current providers has been extended until March 2024, but any future funding beyond that date remains uncertain. This means that we would be unable to apply for funding to help the underemployed get employed in jobs commensurate with their education and skills.

We believe that a meeting with you could provide a valuable platform to discuss these pressing issues and explore potential avenues for collaboration. Your advocacy on behalf of International Engineering Graduates can be instrumental in creating fair and equitable pathways to employment in the engineering profession.

We are flexible in terms of scheduling and would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet at your earliest convenience. Please let us know a date and time that would work for you, and we will make the necessary arrangements.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to the possibility of working together to improve the access to the job market for International Engineering Graduates.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Holko, P.Eng., MBA
Chair and President
Ontario Society of Professional Engineers



Sandro Perruzza
Chief Executive Officer
Ontario Society of Professional Engineers

Appendix A

Table 4: Median Salaries of 45-54 Year Old “Underemployed” Engineering Graduates (Ontario)

TYPE OF POSITION	MEN: CANADIAN DEGREE	MEN: INTERNATIONAL DEGREE	% DIFFERENCE (INTERNATIONAL: CANADIAN)	WOMEN: CANADIAN DEGREE	WOMEN: INTERNATIONAL DEGREE	% DIFFERENCE (INTERNATIONAL: CANADIAN)
Technical occupations related to natural and applied sciences	\$91,000	\$76,500	-16%	\$79,500	\$70,500	-11%
Middle management occupations in retail and wholesale trade and customer services	\$137,000	\$50,000	-64%	\$85,000	\$56,000	-34%
Technical occupations in the arts, culture and sports	\$139,000	\$97,000	-30%	\$115,000	\$83,000	-28%
Managers in manufacturing and utilities	\$155,000	\$111,000	-28%	\$202,000	\$97,000	-52%

Source: 2021 Canada Census

Table Source: Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, The Voice Magazine, September 2023 Edition

Appendix B

Table 1: Median Salaries of 45-54 Year Old Engineering Graduates Working in Engineering (Ontario)

TYPE OF ENGINEERING POSITION	MEN: CANADIAN DEGREE	MEN: INTERNATIONAL DEGREE	% DIFFERENCE (INTERNATIONAL: CANADIAN)	WOMEN: CANADIAN DEGREE	WOMEN: INTERNATIONAL DEGREE	WOMEN: INTERNATIONAL DEGREE
Civil	\$126,000	\$102,000	-19%	\$121,000	\$85,000	-30%
Mechanical	\$127,000	\$98,000	-23%	\$119,000	\$94,000	-21%
Electrical and Electronics	\$132,000	\$111,000	-16%	\$126,000	\$111,000	-12%
Chemical	\$138,000	\$99,000	-28%	\$119,000	\$60,800	-49%

Source: 2021 Canada Census

Table Source: Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, The Voice Magazine, September 2023 Edition