

The purpose of this article is to provide employment (not visa or emigration) information, advice and counsel to Irish Graduate Engineers who, having secured a valid Canadian work permit, plan to move to Canada to pursue a career as a professional engineer.

While Canada offers excellent long-term career-growth engineering opportunities, my most importance advice for Engineers planning the move to Canada is to emphasize the importance of advance preparation in the registration/licensing process as early as possible before departure. Some recent arrivals from Ireland have arrived with very little research or knowledge of the Canadian Engineering licensing landscape and consequently lost valuable time to access successful career opportunities while being underemployed waiting for accreditation.

The following provides background information:

1. Professional Engineer Licensing Bodies ("PELB")

Canada consists of 10 Provinces and 3 Territories. Each jurisdiction establishes and manages its own separate and distinct professional standards, accreditation, registration, licensing and regulatory body. PELB are fragmented on a Provincial and Territorial (not national) basis. Each jurisdiction operates a comprehensive website offering relevant and detailed resource information for that jurisdiction. Perhaps the most relevant jurisdictions for new arrivals from Ireland include Ontario (www.peo.on.ca) and Alberta (www.apegga.org) while other Canadian jurisdictions offer excellent long-term career opportunities in all engineering disciplines. Before you move, it is strongly recommended that you visit the PELB website for your target jurisdiction and learn about the engineering licensing process.

In general, the Canadian attitude towards immigration, visas and work permits is positive, on the basis that New Canadians are the talent pool for building a skilled and diverse Canada. In recent years, the profession has become even more accessible for international engineering graduates seeking to become licensed. For more details visit [The Roadmap to Engineering in Canada website](#) (Engineers Canada) and check out the Professional Engineers of Ontario ("PEO") brochure [Valuing Newcomers: A Guide to Licensure for International Engineering Graduates](#).

2. P. Eng. Designation

In each jurisdiction, the "P.Eng." (Professional Engineer) designation represents the highest standards of engineering knowledge, experience and professionalism. To become a P.Eng. in Canada, you must be licensed in the provincial/territorial jurisdiction in which you are practising. Only those individuals who have demonstrated that they possess the necessary qualifications and have been licensed by the Professional Engineers licensing body in the jurisdiction can use the title.

3. Application Process

It is recommended that you begin the licensing/registration process **before departing from Ireland**. Some new arrivals have waited until after their arrival in

Canada to begin this process which resulted in a delay of several months while being underemployed. You will be required to:

- Provide documentary evidence of your qualifications for assessment; and
- Pay the appropriate fee to initiate your application for licence.

An early start is designed to reduce the time it takes for you to receive your licence. It also helps you determine if your academic qualifications meet engineering standards for licensure before you immigrate. Details on the licensure process for each jurisdiction are available on each website. Application packages are available electronically in PDF format.

Applicants must submit the completed application form with the supporting documentation requested and payment of the application fee.

You must also provide your detailed course descriptions (a syllabus) and an experience record for review.

Applicants are not required to be a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant, making it easier for those from outside of Canada to apply for and obtain a licence.

In addition, newcomers to Canada and Canadian engineering graduates may be eligible to apply for their engineering licence at no cost through the PELB Financial Credit Program.

Applicants may also register for an Engineering Intern ("EIT") Program which provides guidance and assistance to engineering graduates as they acquire the 48 months of acceptable engineering work experience, including annual reviews of experience to ensure that an applicant is "on the right track" for licensing.

If you already hold a P. Eng. Licence from another Canadian engineering association/order, a national mobility agreement between all the provinces and territories allows you to move between provinces and territories without having to repeat the entire licensing process. Applicants who are licensed as professional engineers in good standing in another Canadian engineering association/order are not required to submit transcripts or write the Professional Practice Examination.

The academic qualification assessment should take no longer than two months to complete following receipt of all the required documents. Note, however, that the PELB's are notoriously bureaucratic organizations, so complete information and documentation is required.

Once your documents have been assessed, you will be advised of examinations that you may be required to write, in the event your academic qualifications are assessed to be deficient, or in order to confirm that they are equivalent to the academic requirements for licensure. As a general guideline, graduates from the major engineering schools in Ireland may be required to sit the Professional Practice Examination ("PPE"). However, graduates from Irish technology schools may be required to take as many as ten examinations spread over a twelve-month period. It can be very frustrating for a new arrival to learn that the Engineer qualification in Ireland does not necessarily qualify you to immediately commence

employment as an Engineer in Canada – you may be limited to applying for a Technician or Technologist position (or work in another field) while you complete your studies. Again, it is critical that you research the rules before you leave Ireland.

As soon as you arrive in the Canadian jurisdiction, you may continue the licensure process without paying an additional fee for the licence application.

4. PEO Academic Requirements

As an example, in Ontario, the PEO's licensing requirements include an educational component. To obtain your professional engineer licence, you must have a bachelor's degree in engineering from a Canadian University program accredited by the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board (CEAB), a working Board of Engineers Canada (EC), or equivalent academic qualifications. If your bachelor's degree in engineering was obtained from a non-CEAB-accredited program, your qualifications will be assessed against the Canadian Engineering Qualification Board (CEQB) criteria in your engineering discipline.

If you do not have an undergraduate degree in engineering from a program accredited by the CEAB, your academic background will be assessed by PEO to determine whether it is equivalent to the established standards. PEO will assign technical examinations to give you an opportunity to confirm (Confirmatory Examination Program) that your academic preparation is equivalent or to remedy any identified deficiencies (Specific Examination Program).

If you have been assigned a Confirmatory Examination Program and have more than five years of engineering experience, PEO may grant you an interview with its Experience Requirements Committee ("ERC") to determine if your experience provides any basis to warrant examination relief.

The minimum educational level stipulated by the Professional Engineers Act is:

- A three-year diploma in technology from a College of Applied Arts and Technology; or
- A Bachelor Degree in a relevant science area; or
- Academic qualifications deemed by the Council to be equivalent to a diploma or degree;

If your overall academic preparation is assessed by PEO to meet the minimum level stipulated by legislation (this includes graduates of a technology or science program), you will be assigned a Specific Examination Program. But if you have more than 10 years of overall engineering experience, you will be invited to attend an interview with PEO's ERC to determine if your experience provides any basis to warrant exam relief.

For more information on PEO's academic requirements for licensure, please contact PEO at refer to the PEO website.

5. The Right to Practise

Each jurisdiction has its own separate and independent regulatory body.

The Professional Engineer ("P.Eng") licence gives the right to practise professional engineering in the jurisdiction. As an example, to be licensed by Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO), you must:

- Be at least 18 years old;
- Be of good character;
- Meet PEO's stipulated academic requirements for licensure (hold an undergraduate engineering degree from a Canadian Engineering Accreditation board (CEAB)-accredited program, or possess equivalent qualifications);
- Fulfill the engineering work experience requirements (demonstrate at least 48 months of verifiable, acceptable engineering experience, at least 12 months of which must be acquired in a Canadian jurisdiction under a licensed professional engineer); and
- Successfully complete PEO's Professional Practice Examination (PPE).

When you arrive in Ontario, if you have already had your academic qualifications assessed (as described above), you should contact the PEO immediately upon arrival to continue the licensure process. You will be asked to provide proof of:

- Your full legal name;
- Your PEO file number (this appears on all PEO communication to you);
- Your permanent residency status in Canada.

Details on the licensure process are available on each regulator's website.

Application packages are generally available electronically in PDF format.

Applicants must submit the following:

- The completed application form with the supporting documentation requested; and
- Payment of the application fee (see website).

You must also provide your detailed course descriptions (a syllabus) and an experience record for review.

6. When You Arrive in Canada

If you have already had your academic qualifications assessed (as described above), you should contact the PELB when you arrive to continue the licensure process. Each PELB publishes guideline salary data.

7. Your Job Search

The processes to find employment in Canada are very different than in Ireland in several fundamental respects including resume structure; interview approaches and techniques; and the heavy reliance on networking initiatives. Perhaps the greatest mistake made by new arrivals is to rely on internet job-sites using an Irish-format resume only to secure a poor response rate. The best approach is make contact with engineers who have successfully made the career transition from Ireland. Their feedback can save you several months of lost time and wasted effort. Several websites (e.g. Eamonn O' Loughlin Irish Canadian Immigration Centre; Ireland

Canada Chamber of Commerce Toronto) and Facebook sites (e.g. Irish Canadian Immigration Centre; Moving2Canada; Irish & new in Toronto; Irish in Calgary; Irish in Vancouver etc.) provide excellent resource information.

BIOGRAPHY

Gerry O' Connor, was born in Dublin, Ireland. Following graduation from Blackrock College and University College, Dublin, he immigrated to Toronto, Canada, in 1971.

During his successful Canadian business career, he has held a number of senior corporate positions, including responsibility for the Human Resource function within Canada for a large US multinational.

Gerry is a past member of the Board of Directors, The Toronto Region Board of Trade, Canada's largest local Chamber of Commerce with more than 10,000 members, servicing more than 200,000 professionals, and providing a broad range of services to corporate and small business entrepreneur members.

On a voluntary basis, since February, 2012, Gerry designed and delivered the weekly Employment Workshop for New Arrivals from Ireland at the Eamonn O' Loughlin Irish Canadian Immigration Centre, Toronto. Attendance has exceeded 1,300, including graduate engineers.