

Accepting the List of Designated Programs for the Federal Government's Educational Institution Eligibility Policy Framework

Through licensing, the Government of Alberta recognizes and/or designates Post-Secondary Institutions for participation in Federal programs (i.e. Canada Student Loans and Grants, Post-graduation Work Permits, Study Permits). The federal government accepts Provincial authority to grant recognition and/or designation and proposes regulatory changes through the Educational Institution Eligibility Policy Framework for students attending institutions designated by provinces and territories.

Licensed status allows students to be eligible for student financial assistance in the form of federal and provincial loans, grants or bursaries. It is also used by government departments and agencies to decide which institutions or programs will receive which rights, benefits or assistance from the provincial and federal governments.

With the exception of Alberta, all other provinces and territories in Canada assign their licensed status to institutions. The Alberta government has an innovative market responsive system that licenses individual programs rather than institutions as a whole. This assures local labour market relevance for the program type and location.

Presently in Canada, with the exception of Quebec, foreign graduates of public institutions are eligible to work in Canada for a varying period of time if they achieve a certificate, diploma or degree from a 'Participating (or recognized) Canadian Post-Secondary Institution'. Foreign graduates of private educational institutions are not eligible to obtain employment in Canada unless the private institution confers degrees.

If the private post-secondary institution does not confer degrees, instead granting diplomas or certificates, foreign students graduating from these programs are not eligible to work in Canada at all; even if the program they graduated from or the skills which they developed fully meet Canada's labour needs.

Private post-secondary institutions operating in Quebec attract foreign and graduate them to work in the Canadian labour market. Private institutions in other jurisdictions can similarly provide foreign graduates to help resolve labour shortages.

By practicing a policy that prevents foreign graduates of private institutions from working in Canada, the federal government eliminates a potential inflow of workers who could easily transition into employment in Canada's market place and help resolve our labour shortage.

In order to reconcile the disparity, provincial governments must submit a list of provincially licensed institutions to the federal government for designation consideration within the Educational Institution Eligibility Policy Framework.

The Government of Canada should recognize designation by program as a responsive methodology assuring local labour market relevance for post-secondary program type and location. And, rather than forcing jurisdictions that are already applying this methodology to revert back to less responsive licensing practices (i.e. licensing by institution), to accept the list of designated institutions provided by each province based on the current licensing requirement of the province.

Recommendation

That the federal government accept the list of post-secondary educational designated institutions provided by each province based on the current licensing requirement of that province.