

DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

PROJECT

In 2007, the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, a unit of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), embarked on a project entitled the Pan-Canadian Quality Standards in International Academic Credential Evaluation,¹ which provided for a diagnostic study to investigate the consistency and portability of assessments across Canada. Subsequently, a number of recommendations have been proffered, and these have formed the basis of Phase 2 of the project.

In April 2010, CICIC undertook this second phase with funding provided through Human Resources and Social Development Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition Program. One of the activities called for the development of a communication strategy to improve public awareness, especially among employers, regarding the role of assessment agencies.

CONTEXT

During Phase 1, a series of focus groups were conducted as part of the research and concluded that the majority of employers have relatively little knowledge about the role and function performed by academic assessment agencies. This is especially problematic as employers are the largest potential users of evaluation services. Moreover, small and medium sized enterprises are likely to benefit the most from third-party expertise as they generally lack the human resource capacity required to carry out academic credential assessments internally.

Furthermore, the focus groups also recommended that improved information be provided to immigrants intending to work in regulated professions. (Ideally, from their application to immigrate to Canada these individuals should be encouraged to contact the appropriate regulatory body to determine what steps are required to meet entry-to-practice standards. In this way, duplication of efforts and unnecessary costs can potentially be avoided.

Encouraging a greater proportion of organizations to make use of assessment agencies fosters greater confidence among employers in hiring those with internationally obtained credential and there increases the number of potential job opportunities for skilled immigrants.

CICIC is therefore looking for a bilingual consultant who will develop a communication strategy aimed at improving the public profile and knowledge regarding academic credential assessment and project activities/objectives. Improved information on the operational activities of academic credential assessment agencies abiding by and committed to international standards² and the new pan-Canadian QAF³ will help promote consistency, and ultimately portability, of academic credential evaluations conducted in Canada.

¹ The report for the project is available at http://evaluation.cicic.ca/37/Phase_1.html.

² See www.cicic.ca for more background information and the Lisbon convention.

³ See http://evaluation.cicic.ca/39/Quality_Assurance_Framework.html for more information

Please note that this document has not been copyedited

The consultant will work closely with the project manager and will be guided by the Communication Strategy Working Group (which will be composed of individuals from various backgrounds who perform academic evaluation).

Deliverables

The consultant will

- (a) Develop a communication strategy to help disseminate overall information on the project and increase communication between various groups such as academic-credential assessment agencies, regulatory bodies, professional associations, and educational institutions. The objective will be to promote and market:
 - The findings and recommendations of the Phase 2 project on the Pan Canadian Quality Standards in Academic International Credential Evaluation;
 - The profession of academic credential assessor;
 - The importance of academic credential assessment for immigrants, employers, foreign-trained students, professionals, and trades.
 - Communication between various groups that perform academic credential assessment. Strategies will include:
 - information-sharing methods based on best practices and operational activities
 - methods or means to encourage formal training
 - methods or means to encourage professional development activities, such as workshops.
 - participation in conventions and conferences.
- (b) Develop a concept to merge all Web sites maintained by the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials into one cohesive Web site. The Web sites are:
 - Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials: www.cicic.ca
 - The pan-Canadian Quality Standards in International Academic Credential Evaluation project: www.evaluation.cicic.ca
 - The social network: www.social-network.cicic.ca
 - The terminology guides: (tbd)
 - The country profiles: (tbd)
- (c) Attend the National Workshop of Academic Credential Evaluators (to be held in the fall of 2011) and prepare final recommendation on a communication strategy.
- (d) Prepare periodic progress reports (in the proposal, the Proponent should provide a timeline defining the issues that each progress report will address: e.g. the August progress report will focus on a strategy to link all websites together)
- (e) Prepare a final report, with recommendations and possible implementation scenarios.

FUNDING

- The consultant must include a budget for the completion of the project that is inclusive of all fees, costs, services, expenses, and taxes other than the federal goods and services tax (“GST”) or the harmonized sales tax (“HST”). GST and HST expenses may be noted in addition to the total in the budget.
- The budget must include a short breakdown of the fees, costs, services, expenses, and taxes included in the total.
- Expenses for the National Workshop of Academic Credential Evaluators will be covered separately by CICIC under the CMEC expense guidelines.
- Should the consultant require communication with stakeholders throughout the course of its research, the consultant must be prepared to provide translation and/or interpretation when necessary. Costs pertaining to translation and/or interpretation should be outlined in the budget.
- The consultant should also present a price estimate for the services rendered by the firm he or she will select in consultation with the Communication Strategy Working Group. Please note that CCMEC **will** enter into a separate contract with the selected firms.

CONTACT

If interested, please send a short proposal and an electronic copy of your résumé **by May 13, 2011** to:

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