

LICENSE TO PRACTICE



What you need to know about becoming licensed as a Professional Engineer or Foreign Licensee in Alberta, Canada

**2010 Internationally
Educated Graduate Edition**



The Association of Professional Engineers,
Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta



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● Engineering in Canada and Alberta

The engineering system in Canada differs from most other countries. Engineering is a regulated profession in all Canadian provinces and territories similar to medicine, dentistry and law. This means that by law, you must be licensed as a Professional Engineer (P.Eng.) or Foreign Licensee to independently practice engineering or to call yourself an engineer. This differs from many countries in the world where it is not mandatory for all practicing engineers to be licensed. In Canada, if you are independently practicing engineering, or taking responsibility for that work, you must be licensed.

It's Different in Alberta, Canada

- Engineering in Canada is a regulated profession
- You MUST be licensed by APEGGA to independently practice engineering in Alberta

The practice of engineering is regulated by provinces and not by the federal government. That means you must be licensed in each province in which you independently do engineering work. A single national license does not exist. It also means you will need to contact the appropriate engineering regulatory body in each province in which you will be working. Being licensed in the Province of Alberta, for example, will not allow you to practice engineering in the neighbouring provinces of Saskatchewan or British Columbia nor anywhere else in Canada.

In the Province of Alberta it is The Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta, commonly referred to as APEGGA, that has been granted the authority and responsibility to regulate the practice of engineering within Alberta. This means that in order to obtain your P.Eng. or Foreign Licensee license in Alberta, you will need to apply to APEGGA and have APEGGA evaluate your qualifications. Once you become licensed with APEGGA, you are expected to practice skillfully, ethically and professionally and are subject to investigation and disciplinary action if you fail to do so. You will also need to comply with APEGGA's annual Continuing Professional Development (CPD) obligations. (www.apegga.org/Regulatory/CPD/toc.html)

APEGGA is the only body in Alberta, or Canada, that has the authority to issue P.Eng. and Foreign Licensee licenses to practice engineering in the Province of Alberta.

Important Note

Finding Employment and Working Under Supervision and Control in Alberta

While it is a requirement that you must be licensed as a P.Eng. or Foreign Licensee with APEGGA to independently practice engineering or call yourself an engineer in Alberta, there is an important exception. You are allowed to work as an engineer prior to being licensed as long as you are working under the direct supervision and control of a Professional Engineer (P.Eng.) licensed in Alberta. This means that employers can hire you to do engineering work in Alberta before you become a P.Eng. or Foreign Licensee as long as that work is being done under the supervision and control of someone who is licensed as a P.Eng.



● Professional Engineer (P.Eng.) or Foreign Licensee?

Professional Engineer (P.Eng.) is the designation APEGGA gives an individual who meets the five licensure requirements (see box) and is a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada.

Foreign Licensee is the designation APEGGA gives an individual who meets these same five licensure requirements but who is not yet a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada.

A Foreign Licensee is given a license to independently practice engineering in Alberta the same as a P.Eng. A Foreign Licensee is subject to the same ethical and practice standards as a P.Eng. and must also comply with the ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirement.

There is no requirement for you to be living in Canada or Alberta before beginning the application process or becoming licensed. In fact, you may begin your APEGGA application process while still living outside Canada. We encourage you to consider applying prior to your arrival in Canada.

If you are already a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada, you should apply for licensure as a Professional Engineer (P.Eng.). If you are not a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada, you should apply for licensure as a Foreign Licensee. The licensure criteria are identical for both categories. If you initially become licensed as a Foreign Licensee with APEGGA, and then obtain your permanent residence status, you simply need to provide us with proof of status and APEGGA will automatically convert your Foreign Licensee status to P.Eng. There are no additional fees to pay or forms to complete.

If you are hired as a temporary foreign worker, you can work as an engineer in Alberta as long as you are doing so under the supervision and control of a Professional Engineer (P.Eng.). While doing so, you may apply for licensure as a Foreign Licensee.

Criteria to Become Licensed as a P.Eng. or Foreign Licensee in Alberta, Canada

To become licensed as a Professional Engineer (P.Eng.) or Foreign Licensee in Alberta, you must meet five criteria:

1. Academic requirement
2. Experience requirement, including at least one year of equivalent Canadian engineering experience
3. Good character and reputation
4. English language competency
5. Knowledge of law, ethics and professionalism (National Professional Practice Examination)



● Licensing Criteria

Criterion 1: Academic Requirement

In order to become licensed as a P.Eng. or Foreign Licensee you must have the equivalent of an accredited four-year Canadian undergraduate degree in engineering. In some cases, APEGGA may assign written technical engineering examinations that you must pass to demonstrate this equivalency. In other cases, no written technical examinations are assigned. Whether or not you are assigned technical examinations will depend on the nature and type of

your degree, the date of your graduation and your overall work experience.

1a) United States ABET Degrees

If you have an ABET accredited undergraduate engineering degree, APEGGA will assign you the Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) examination. However, the FE exam may be waived if:

- You are licensed as a Professional Engineer (P.E.) with one of the US engineering state licensing boards, or
- You have a post-graduate engineering degree such as a Masters or PhD from an accredited Canadian, ABET, or mutual recognition agreement university if that post-graduate degree contains sufficient technical engineering content, or
- You have at least eight years of acceptable high-level engineering experience showing increasing technical competency and increasing levels of responsibility

1b) Mutual Recognition Agreements

APEGGA has ratified mutual recognition agreements with a number of countries that have developed engineering education accreditation systems similar, but not identical, to the Canadian accreditation system: United Kingdom (1989), Ireland (1989), Australia (1989), New Zealand (1989), Hong Kong (1995), South Africa (1999), France, Japan (2005), Singapore (2006), South Korea (2007), Taiwan (2007) and Malaysia (2009).

When APEGGA evaluates the academic qualifications of individuals with mutual recognition agreement degrees we use a looking to exempt approach. This means APEGGA is looking to exempt such individuals from the requirement to write confirmatory technical examinations.

As part of APEGGA's due diligence process, we require transcripts directly from your university. If no anomalies are found upon review of your transcripts, then no confirmatory technical examinations will be required. This means that if you have an undergraduate degree in engineering from one of these countries after the dates shown and if your degree is listed on the list of approved programs from that country, you will likely not be assigned any technical engineering exams by APEGGA.

● Licensing Criteria *continued*

1c) Engineering Degrees on Engineers Canada's List of Foreign Degrees

Most of the applications APEGGA receives from internationally educated graduates come from individuals with engineering degrees listed on the Engineers Canada List of international engineering degrees known as the List.

If your degree is on the List, APEGGA will start with a standard confirmatory assessment of the Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) examination or in some cases three technical examinations. Please refer to the APEGGA website for more information on the FE exam and the APEGGA technical exams.

However, this does not necessarily mean that you will have to write the FE or technical examinations. APEGGA recognizes that engineering work experience plays an important role and we may use your work experience to waive the confirmatory FE or technical examinations.

If you can provide evidence of at least 10 years of acceptable engineering experience, showing increasing technical competency and increasing levels of responsibility, APEGGA will usually waive the confirmatory FE or three technical examinations on that basis.

APEGGA also needs references to verify your work experience. References must be able to verify at least 10 years of your work experience. These references must be from engineers with a personal knowledge of your work experience. It is best if these references are from engineer supervisors.

Alternatively, APEGGA may also waive technical examinations if you obtained a post-graduate engineering degree such as a Masters or PhD from an accredited Canadian, ABET, or mutual recognition agreement university if that post-graduate degree contains sufficient technical engineering content.

1d) Engineering Degrees not on Engineers Canada's List of Foreign Degrees

Some of the applications APEGGA receives from internationally educated graduates come from individuals with engineering degrees not listed on the Engineers Canada List of international engineering degrees.

If your engineering degree is not on the List, APEGGA will start with a standard confirmatory assessment of the Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) examination or in some cases five technical examinations. However, these exams are often waived.

If you can provide evidence of at least 12 years of acceptable engineering experience, showing increasing technical competency and increasing levels of responsibility, APEGGA will usually waive the FE or five technical examinations on that basis.

APEGGA also needs references to verify your work experience. References must be able to verify at least 12 years of your work experience. These references must be from engineers with a personal knowledge of your work experience. It is best if these references are from engineer supervisors.

Alternatively, APEGGA may also waive technical examinations if you obtained a post-graduate engineering degree such as a Masters or PhD from an accredited Canadian, ABET, or mutual recognition agreement university if that post-graduate degree contains sufficient technical engineering content.



● Licensing Criteria *continued*

1e) No Undergraduate Degree in Engineering

If you do not have an undergraduate degree in engineering, you may still be eligible to apply to APEGGA. However, you will likely be assigned multiple written technical examinations. Alberta legislation allows an individual with at least two years of post-secondary education in an area that relates to engineering to be eligible to apply for licensure as a P.Eng. or Foreign Licensee, however such individuals may be assigned up to 24 technical examinations.

The actual number of examinations assigned in such cases will depend on the nature of your academic background. For example, if you have an ONC, HNC, HND, technology diploma, diploma from a polytechnic institute or a non-engineering degree, you will likely fall within this category.

In these cases, APEGGA will review the courses you took and compare them with the courses required for a Canadian engineering undergraduate degree. To receive credit for coursework, it must have been at a university level and taken through an engineering faculty.

APEGGA will take work experience into account and may reduce the examination assessment. However, individuals in this category will likely need to write some technical examinations. The exact number of examinations cannot be predetermined in advance as it depends on the specific courses taken together with the quality and quantity of work experience.

Criterion 2: Experience Requirements

You must have at least four years of acceptable engineering experience. Your experience must include at least one year of equivalent Canadian experience before you can become licensed as a P.Eng. or Foreign Licensee. APEGGA recognizes engineering experience outside of Canada as part of this four-year requirement. Your experience outside of Canada will need to be verified by references. Please refer to the APEGGA website for details. (www.apegga.org/Applicants/IEG/experiencerequirements.html)

You will also need to provide evidence of one year of equivalent Canadian experience. In most cases this will mean one year engineering work experience in Canada. This one year of Canadian engineering experience is required to ensure that you have sufficient exposure to Canadian codes, standards, climate conditions, ethics, culture, work environment and business practices. This Canadian experience must be obtained under the supervision and control of a Professional Engineer (P.Eng.).

As mentioned in the notice Finding Employment and Working Under Supervision and Control in Alberta (see page one), you may work as an engineer in Alberta under the supervision of a P.Eng. while obtaining your year of Canadian experience.

● Licensing Criteria *continued*

Criterion 3: Good Character and Reputation

You will be asked to answer questions regarding your character on the application for registration form. Your references will also be asked to comment on your character. Please refer to the APEGGA website for further details.

(www.apegga.org/Applicants/IEG/characterreputation.html)

Criterion 4: English Language Competency

This criterion is satisfied if English is your native language. If English is not your native language, you will need to satisfy this criterion by one of the methods described on our website.

(www.apegga.org/Applicants/IEG/englishlanguage.html)

Criterion 5: Knowledge of Law, Ethics and Professionalism

It is a requirement that all individuals applying for licensure as a P.Eng. or Foreign Licensee must demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of law, ethics and professionalism by passing the National Professional Practice Examination (NPPE). This applies to all applicants, both Canadian and non-Canadian.

The NPPE is not a technical engineering examination, rather it is designed to test your knowledge of ethics, professional practice, professionalism, law and legal concepts, regulatory authority requirements and legislation governing the practice of engineering in Alberta. Detailed information on the NPPE can be found on our website at www.apegga.org/Applicants/Examinations/pp.html.

You can apply to write the NPPE once you have submitted your application for licensure as a P.Eng. or Foreign Licensee. The NPPE is currently offered four times per year. Please refer to the APEGGA website for details.

The NPPE can be written outside Canada if appropriate examination security and logistical arrangements can be confirmed. You will need to arrange this with APEGGA well in advance of when the examination is held.





● Application Process and Document Requirements

You may apply to APEGGA while still living abroad.

You can submit your application to APEGGA using our online application system by visiting www.apegga.org and clicking on the “apply for membership online” button.

To apply, you must complete APEGGA’s application for registration form and submit it to APEGGA together with the necessary documents and the application fee payable in Canadian dollars. For further information please refer to our website at www.apegga.org/Applicants/Engineers/peng_general.html.

APEGGA must receive your transcripts and certificate of graduation directly from your post-secondary academic institutions. In the application package there is a document called “Request for Academic Documents”. Complete this form and send one to each of your post-secondary academic institutions. This form instructs the institution to forward your transcripts and certificate of graduation directly to APEGGA. Do not ask your institution to forward your transcripts and certificate of graduation to you. APEGGA must receive these documents directly from each institution.

In addition, you will need to provide us with your completed “Work Experience Records” outlining your engineering work experience. For further details, please refer to the APEGGA website at www.apegga.org/Applicants/Engineers/peng_general.html.

You will also need to provide us with the names and contact information of your references. We will require references spanning all your years of work experience. These references must be individuals with personal first-hand knowledge of your work experience. The references should be from engineers in the country in which you worked. The best references are engineer supervisors, however APEGGA may also accept references from engineer colleagues. References for your Canadian work experience must come from Professional Engineers (P.Eng.) with personal knowledge of your Canadian work experience and under whose supervision and control you worked.

More detailed information on the application process, as well as the application forms, can be found on our website at www.apegga.com/Applicants/IEG/toc.html.



● Frequently Asked Questions

May I work as an engineer in Alberta before I am licensed as a Professional Engineer (P.Eng.) or a Foreign Licensee?

Yes. You may work as an engineer and obtain your one year of Canadian experience required for licensure as long as you are working under the supervision and control of an individual who is licensed as a Professional Engineer (P.Eng.) in Alberta.

May I apply to APEGGA even if I am not working in Alberta or do not yet have one year Canadian experience?

Yes. You can even apply to APEGGA before you arrive in Canada. If you meet APEGGA's five licensure criteria, you will be licensed as a P.Eng. or Foreign Licensee. If you meet all the requirements for licensure except the one year of Canadian experience requirement, you will be eligible for enrollment as a Provisional Licensee.

What is a Provisional Licensee?

Provisional Licensee is a designation that APEGGA can grant to an individual who has met all the requirements for licensure except the one year of Canadian experience requirement. A Provisional Licensee must work under the supervision and control of a Professional Engineer (P.Eng.). The Provisional Licensee designation provides evidence to the public that once you obtain your one year of Canadian experience, you will become fully licensed as a P.Eng. or Foreign Licensee.

Why does APEGGA assign a technical confirmatory examination assessment if I already have a degree in engineering?

As part of APEGGA's core responsibility to protect the public of Alberta, APEGGA has the responsibility and obligation to ensure that all individuals have the required skills and education to practice engineering before they are licensed to independently practice engineering in Alberta. Because it is not possible to send visiting teams to every engineering university in the world to determine whether the quality of the education meets the standards necessary for registration as a Professional Engineer in Canada, APEGGA initially assigns a technical confirmatory examination assessment.

It is called a confirmatory assessment because by passing it you are confirming to APEGGA that the quality and level of your academic training is at the level required to independently practice engineering in Alberta.

It is also important to note that for the majority of internationally educated graduates that apply to APEGGA, the confirmatory assessment is waived based either on years of experience or an acceptable Masters or PhD postgraduate degree in engineering.

● Frequently Asked Questions *continued*

Why does APEGGA require one year of equivalent Canadian engineering experience before they will license me as a P.Eng. or Foreign Licensee?

As part of APEGGA's core responsibility to protect the public, APEGGA is obligated to ensure that all individuals have sufficient experience (including a minimum of one year Canadian experience) before they are licensed to independently practice engineering in Alberta. APEGGA requires evidence of sufficient exposure to Canadian codes, standards, climatic conditions, business practices, ethics, culture, and workplace

environment before we will license an individual to independently practice engineering as a P.Eng. or Foreign Licensee.

How long will it take for APEGGA to evaluate my qualifications?

If typically takes six to 12 months. The length of time depends in large part on the length of time it takes for APEGGA to receive original documentation from your university and the length of time it takes for APEGGA to receive completed questionnaires from your references.

Disclaimer

This document explains APEGGA's policies and procedures in general terms only. Each application is assessed on its own merits after receipt of all the relevant information. A decision in a specific individual's case may vary from the general comments in this document based on the particular facts of the case.

Contact Information

For further information, please refer to the APEGGA website at www.apegga.org.

If you have specific questions, please contact one of our staff:

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