

# Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists Workforce Integration Project Findings and Recommendations



## Background

Funded by the Government of Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition Program, the Workforce Integration Project aims to identify future actions that will assist international occupational therapy graduates with integrating into the Canadian workforce.

## Project Findings:

A number of issues were identified that result in international graduates becoming marginalized from Canada's occupational therapy workforce. These issues relate to immigration policy, credential recognition, and the workforce itself.

## International graduates may...

- face long waiting lists to immigrate to Canada.
- experience problems identifying professional registration requirements.
- fail to meet registration criteria relating to credential assessment, language fluency and/or successfully completing the national certification exam.
- have problems finding and/or accessing appropriate programs and resources to meet registration requirements.
- need assistance to understand cultural, legal, and ethical considerations of Canadian occupational therapy practice.
- have difficulty connecting with employers, occupational therapists, and professional resources.
- experience problems finding employment.
- face discrimination.

## Priority areas for action

When international graduates are unable to enter Canada's occupational therapy workforce, we lose valuable human resources and capacity. The Workforce Integration Project identified the following areas for future action to address the barriers preventing full workforce participation of international occupational therapy graduates:

- Advocate for the need for internationally educated occupational therapists in Canada.
- Provide clear and accessible information regarding requirements to immigrate and work in Canada.
- Coordinate and centralize standards and processes for working as an occupational therapist.
- Consider alternate competency assessment methods for practice as an occupational therapist in Canada.
- Increase access to academic upgrading and language training to help international graduates meet registration requirements.
- Improve national certification examination preparation resources, assistance and access.
- Offer opportunities for international graduates to work as support workers if unable to practice as an occupational therapist.
- Help international graduates become linked with employers, occupational therapists and professional resources.
- Assist international graduates to understand the Canadian health and social system and cultural, legal and ethical considerations for practice.
- Provide resources to assist international graduates in the workplace and with career planning.
- Promote the value of a diverse workforce for quality occupational therapy services.
- Continued research to evaluate and improve resources and processes relating to the workforce integration of international graduates, including tracking their progress with credential recognition and working as an occupational therapist in Canada.

## For more information

Visit [www.caot.ca](http://www.caot.ca) or contact Pamela Burnett Hicks, Workforce Integration Project Coordinator, at (800) 523-2268, ext. 244 or [pburnett@caot.ca](mailto:pburnett@caot.ca).

\* A national advisory committee has provided input into the Project objectives, methods and recommendations. Members include representatives of: Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations, Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy University Programs, Professional Alliance of Canada, Canadian Occupational Therapist Assistant /Physiotherapist Assistant Educators' Council, Canadian Health Professionals Secretariat of the National Union and the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, as well as occupational therapy employers and international graduates.

## Occupational Therapy in Canada

[www.caot.ca](http://www.caot.ca)

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists



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