

Working Title Educational Assessment Consultant (IQAS)		Name	
Position Number	Reports to Position No., Class & Level PS4	Division, Branch/Unit Workforce Strategies, Newcomer Supports, IQAS	Ministry Labour
Present Class Dept		Requested Class PS3	
ID	Program Code	Project Code (if applicable)	

PURPOSE:

Outcome three of Alberta Labour's Business Plan 2018-21 is that workers and newcomers are well-prepared to participate in Alberta's dynamic labour market. The International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) contributes to this outcome.

IQAS evaluates foreign educational credentials and issues assessment certificates that indicate how those credentials compare to Canadian educational standards. The certificates help newcomers access Alberta's job market, educational institutions, professional regulator organizations and immigration programs. IQAS supports Alberta's employers, professional regulatory organizations, and post-secondary institutions in making informed, fair and consistent qualification recognition decisions. Maintaining program integrity, fairness and accuracy of assessment outcomes, while ensuring application processing is effective, efficient, and timely, is crucial to provision of quality services..

IQAS is also responsible for fulfilling the requirements of Alberta's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRRC). As per the MOU and in accordance with the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, IQAS issues Educational Credential Assessments (ECA) for immigration purposes that affect applicants' ability to immigrate to Canada.

The Educational Assessment Consultant is responsible for ensuring consistency, fairness and accuracy of assessments of international credentials. The work of Educational Assessment Consultants plays a critical role in facilitating better recognition of immigrant educational credentials and the equitable access to employment and further education in Alberta for immigrants. The assessment certificates issued through IQAS have a direct impact on the integration and success of immigrants. This work is a key component of the implementation of the *Alberta's Foreign Qualification Recognition Plan*.

The Educational Assessment Consultant evaluates educational credentials earned outside of Canada by first researching how those credentials fit within the home countries' educational systems and frameworks, if they are recognized within those countries and the extent to which they are generally accepted in other countries. The Educational Assessment Consultant then analyzes and decides how those credentials compare to educational levels, programs, grades and credits available and awarded in Canada. These decisions affect an applicant's ability to meet educational requirements of a job, professional licensure, admission requirements of educational program, or the achievement of points required to be accepted for immigration.

The Educational Assessment Consultant is responsible for all steps in the assessment process and makes the final assessment outcomes decisions. The Educational Assessment Consultant utilizes their specialized knowledge and applies IQAS general methodology in the evaluation of unique international credentials to develop unique assessment outcomes. To formulate assessment decisions the Educational Assessment Consultant works with variety of stakeholders in Alberta,

PURPOSE:

Canada and worldwide and analyses information obtain through multiple sources. The Educational Assessment Consultant assesses credentials from countless educational programs from more than 100 countries.

To ensure the most effective and efficient operation of IQAS, the Educational Assessment Consultant supports the IQAS leadership team in evaluating and improving processes and policies, by proactively providing suggestions for changes and actively participating in operational excellence reviews. The Educational Assessment Consultant manages positive working relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders in Canada and across the world, including immigrants, employers, educational institutions, professional licensing bodies, immigrant serving organizations, and federal/provincial governments to promote understanding and recognition of international credentials. The Educational Assessment Consultant seeks the fair and reasonable resolution to all disputes of assessment outcomes from applicants and stakeholders.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES:

1. Provides services to Albertans and future immigrants to support fair recognition of their international education and to help newcomers participate in Alberta's labour market.

Activities:

- Evaluate international education credentials and issue assessment certificates to individuals with international education to support fair and accurate recognition of their international credentials. Develop a final assessment outcome decisions. Accountable for the quality of assessment decisions issued to clients.
- Complete different types of assessment applying required specific methodology and procedures. Within the domestic stream Basic, Educational and Specialized Assessments; within the immigration stream: Educational Credential Assessments (ECA) for immigration purposes.
- Use an in depth professional understanding of credential assessment methodology and guidelines to fairly and accurately assess unique credentials and educational patterns.
- Based on extensive knowledge of different educational systems determine the comparative level of education and/or conversion of grades affecting applicants' ability to meet educational requirements of a job, licensure, and admission to an educational program or the achievement of points required to be accepted for immigration. Assessment outcomes also affect stakeholders, such as employers, licensing bodies and educational institutions who rely on the accuracy of IQAS evaluations.
- Use a wide variety of resources and research information on educational programs in other countries and in Canada to identify the program that compares most favourably with the international educational program. Confirm the recognition of educational institutions, nominal admission requirements, content, level, functionality and the duration of the educational programs.
- Conduct research to support the development of assessment outcomes / precedents when guidelines do not exist for new or never before assessed credentials.
- Examine educational documents for consistency, accuracy and authenticity to ensure IQAS assessments provide reliable information to employers and regulatory organization that ensures safety of the public.
- Work collaboratively with Ministries of Education, accreditation authorities, educational institutions and other related bodies in other countries to obtain information required to establish assessment decisions.
- Assess a wide variety of credentials from different disciplines of study and different levels of education (secondary, undergraduate and graduate programs, professional technical qualifications) from countless programs from more than 100 countries.
- Use language expertise to review educational documents and reference material in the original language.

2. Develop operational policies and procedures to achieve successful outcomes and meet key departmental performance targets.

Activities:

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES:

- Complete projects to improve systems and processes to ensure that IQAS is innovative, effective and utilizes operational excellence principles. Implement change management strategies to support improvements as part of ongoing business.
- Participate in divisional/departmental projects to improve process, training, communication or policy.
- Provide recommendations for improvement of guidelines and processes based on research and collaboration with the network of assessment agencies. Implement best practice standards and guidelines in the assessment of international credentials. Prepare guideline documents for the assessment of a variety of programs, educational patterns and systems.
- Identify trends and issues and formulate recommendations to ensure high standards and consistency.
- Proactively identify and resolve program delivery issues and clients/stakeholder complaints.
- Efficiently manage a large queue of applications.
- Manage security and accuracy of information by ensuring that the IQAS database and electronic resources with specialized corporate knowledge and personal information are secured and current.

3. Work collaboratively with internal and external parties to ensure effective delivery of IQAS services and to strengthen the foreign credentials recognition system in Alberta and Canada

Activities:

- Provide information about assessment of international credentials, methodology and policy guidelines to clients, general public and stakeholders including: employers, professional licensing bodies, immigrant serving agencies, post-secondary institutions, and provincial/federal governments.
- Collaborate with domestic and international stakeholders and assessment agencies to ensure IQAS policies are updated and responsive to changing educational systems.
- Develop and manage a network of resource contacts in government, assessment agencies, regulatory organizations and educational institutions in Alberta, Canada and around the world.
- Gather input from stakeholders, identify issues, resolve challenges and prepare recommendations for future policy changes.
- Prepare and deliver presentations and workshops to target audiences in Alberta.
- Provide content and support for briefing notes, action requests, and information resources.

Undertake special projects or perform on-going functions related to this role.

SCOPE:

This job directly impacts the development and achievement of the department Business Plan's goal to help address current and future skills shortages by attracting skilled newcomers through effective recognition of qualifications for workers coming from outside Canada. The Educational Assessment Consultant is instrumental in completing accurate assessment of international credentials and is accountable for making sound assessment decisions that provide fair and credible recognition of foreign educational credentials in Alberta/Canada. So that current and prospective immigrants receive reliable, timely and useful assessments that support their integration into the labour force, or their application for immigration to Canada.

Externally, the Educational Assessment Consultant decisions directly affect the ability of applicants to obtain employment, admission to post-secondary institutions, registration with professional licensing bodies, or to immigrate to Canada. The services directly impact a wide range of stakeholders including employers, post-secondary institutions, professional licensing bodies, agencies / groups providing services to immigrants and federal/provincial/territorial governments. Stakeholders rely on the outcomes of IQAS assessments when determining applicants' eligibility and credentials authenticity. As content expert, an Educational Assessment Consultant assists IQAS applicants and stakeholders in understanding assessment policies and promotes the fair recognition of international education.

SCOPE:

Internally, the Educational Assessment Consultant is responsible for independently making decisions on the assessment outcomes while analysing complex information on thousands of international educational programs from more than a hundred countries and comparing to Canada's educational standards. Annually the Educational Assessment Consultant completes approximately 800 assessments. The Educational Assessment Consultant is accountable for the quality assurance of issued assessment certificates and assessment decisions. The Educational Assessment Consultant uses their specialized knowledge and existing general methodology guidelines to direct research and analyse information on unique credentials and develop unique assessment outcomes and new precedents/recommendations. In addition, to arrive at assessment outcomes the Educational Assessment Consultant needs to be able to solve problems, think outside of the box and find creative solutions to complex circumstances. As a team member, the Educational Assessment Consultant plays an important role in the day to day services offered by IQAS and in the direction and overall functioning of IQAS through the development of guiding principles, communication materials, and operational policies relating to educational assessment. This function supports Alberta Government's commitment to service excellence standards.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ABILITIES:

- Completion of a university degree in a related field (such as, but not limited to Social Sciences, Education, Languages).
- Experience in the application of research methodology to analyze information is necessary. Experience in educational credential research and assessment. A command of a second language is considered an asset.
- Knowledge of evaluation practices, methodology and protocols. Approximately one year of intensive on-the-job training is needed to function effectively as an Educational Assessment Consultant.
- Knowledge of past and current educational systems of the world, including the structure of educational programs in Canada.
- Strong research and analytical skills to find, collect, evaluate information. Skills to extract relevant information from complex material in order to formulate broad concepts.
- Ability to formulate recommendations and make well informed decisions to issue assessment outcomes.
- The ability to develop and maintain effective working relationships with diverse stakeholders in Alberta, Canada and abroad.
- Negotiation, mediation and conflict resolution skills to work effectively with clients and stakeholders, taking into account various cultural and business perspectives.
- Ability to communicate effectively with diverse groups, which includes ability to deliver presentations.
- Knowledge of international economic, social, political issues and their impact on educational systems.
- Language skills to support assessments of credentials issued in languages other than English (an asset).
- Aptitude and skill sets to work independently as well as with a team and to contribute to a positive team environment.
- Well-developed organizational and time management skills to operate in a fast pace environment.
- Ability to analyze and resolve issues, and to develop recommendations in a timely manner.
- Ability to work effectively with branch, division and other ministry and cross ministry staff to address issues and initiatives.
- Creativity and problem solving, innovative thinking, openness to change and planning skills are keys to delivering assessment services.
- Adept skills in effectively using software applications and internet searches.
- All employees are responsible and accountable for working in a safe manner that will not put themselves, their co-workers, clients or visitors at risk.

CONTACTS:

The Educational Assessment Consultant communicates daily with internal and external stakeholders while seeking and discussing information necessary to formulate assessment decisions. The Educational Assessment Consultant, also works closely with diverse group of stakeholders to support fair and accurate recognition of international credentials and understanding of assessment methodology. The Educational Assessment Consultant communicates with:

- current and prospective immigrants, IQAS applicants,
- Alberta Education, Advanced Education, and Community and Social Services, Human Resources in GoA departments, and Workforce Strategies staff,
- employees of provincial/federal governments,
- immigrant serving agencies,
- employers, professional regulatory organizations and post-secondary institutions in Alberta/Canada and internationally.

N/A

- Since 2015, IQAS has been affected by significant changes which require an organizational and operational adjustment in order for the program to stay efficient and effective. This includes additional accountability for the Education Assessment Consultant's role..
- In 2015, IQAS signed an MOU with IRCC to become a designated agency to issue assessments for immigration purposes, which requires that IQAS comply with the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* and its Regulations. The designation for IQAS broadened the scope, impact and focus of IQAS assessments.
- Fair and accurate assessments issued by the Educational Assessment Consultant have a direct impact on the Immigration success of applicants.
- The designation also resulted in increased demand for IQAS assessments. Between the 2015/2016 and 2017/2018 fiscal years, applications for IQAS assessments increased by almost 50%, and further increases are expected in 2018/2019 and beyond.
- In order to address the growing demand and increase program efficiency and effectiveness, IQAS initiated an Operational Excellence project to review its assessment process. Operational Excellence analysis showed that an ongoing increase in service demand is compromising the value of quality control function currently in place, which includes checking and approving every assessment outcome. Therefore, the recommendation is to change the current quality control function and have Educational Assessment Consultants make final assessment decisions.
- The existing quality control function is unsustainable, inefficient and ineffective. In addition, more Team Leads positions would need to be added to perform this function at the volume being processed.
- The current quality control system will be replaced by a strategic and proactive quality assurance process.

In summary, the Educational Assessment Consultant has now an increased accountability and responsibility related to:

- Introduction of a new immigration stream – responsibility to issues Educational Credential Assessments (ECA) for Immigration purposes, as per Alberta's MOU agreement with IRCC.
- Change in operational functions and structure resulting in the Assessment Consultants making final decisions on assessments
- Full accountability for assessments issued in ensuring that IQAS assessments are fair, consistent, and accurate.