



BUILDING BRIDGES: Consistency, Portability, and Capacity of International Academic Credential Assessment in Canada

> ARUCC 2014

> June 16, 2014, Quebec City, QC

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- About the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials
- Broad context and recommendations from Phases I and II
- Building Bridges project (Phase III)
 - *Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)*
 - *Comparability tables*
 - *On-line distance education program*
 - *Webinars*
- Questions

THE CANADIAN INFORMATION CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL CREDENTIALS (CICIC)

Established in 1990

- a pan-Canadian **information and referral service** to individuals and organizations for the purpose of promoting international mobility and improving the recognition and portability of Canadian and international academic credentials;
- provides information on **postsecondary education** and **quality assurance** in Canada to assist in the recognition of Canadian qualifications;
- manages **labour mobility projects**, focusing on academic credential assessment and the teaching profession



CICIC: WHAT WE DO

Support the consistency and portability of academic credential assessments

- Pan-Canadian Quality Assurance Framework for the Assessment of International Academic Credentials

Work with a broad network of stakeholders

- postsecondary institutions
- regulatory bodies
- academic credential assessment services
- trades and apprenticeship offices

Provide information and referrals

- 1 million Web site visits and 8000 enquiries annually

Maintain information resources:

- 250 occupational profiles
- Canada's authoritative pan-Canadian database of recognized postsecondary institutions in all provinces and territories
- extensive information on Canada's education systems and quality assurance



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Toolbox for academic credential assessors:

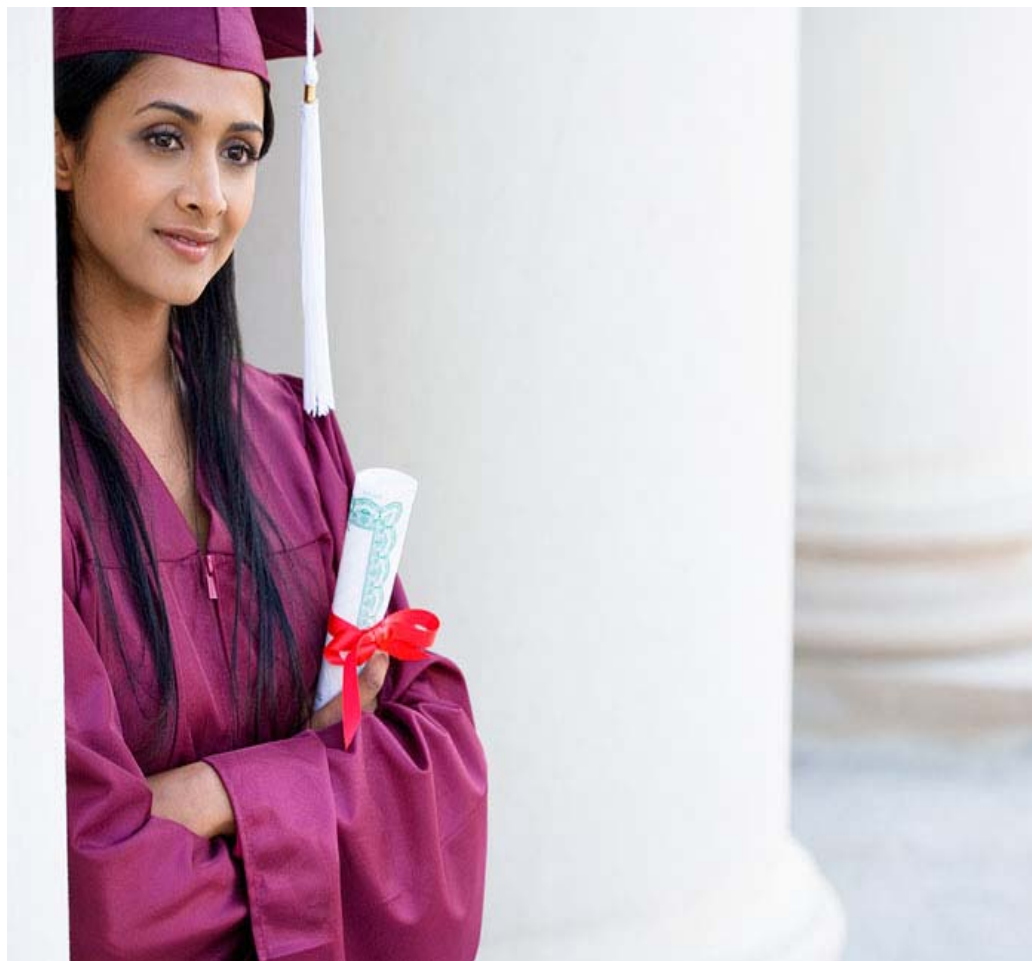
<http://cicic.ca/736/The-Academic-Credential-Assessment-Community-Tool-Box.canada>

- Recognized institutions
- Degree mills
- Country education profiles
- Professional development opportunities
- Links to national information centres

Project Web site:

<http://evaluation.cicic.ca>

CICIC Web site: <http://cicic.ca>



GOAL OF THE PROJECT

- To facilitate the assessment of academic credentials for international students' admission to Canadian colleges and universities
- To integrate internationally trained newcomers into the workforce in both regulated and unregulated professions



OVERVIEW OF PAST PHASES

PHASE I

Diagnostic research to examine the consistency and portability of academic credential assessments

PHASE II

Development of pan-Canadian quality standards and reference tools for academic credential assessors in assessment services, regulatory bodies, and postsecondary institutions

All reports are available at <http://evaluation.cicic.ca>.



REFERENCE TOOLS DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT ACADEMIC CREDENTIAL ASSESSMENTS

- ***Pan-Canadian Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)*** to help organization define practices and methodology related to the assessment of academic credentials
- ***Competency Profile for an Academic Credential Assessor*** listing some of the core and optional competencies
- Interactive **terminology guides** listing the terminology used in credential assessment in both francophone and anglophone contexts (<http://terminology.cicic.ca>)

Feasibility studies and pilot project

- Distance education program for assessors;
- On-line sharing of assessment results, resources, and methodologies;
- Creation of two country profiles (pilot project).



All resources are available at
<http://evaluation.cicic.ca>.

BUILDING BRIDGES: PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Build consistency and portability of academic credential assessments:

- implementation of the **QAF**
- creation of **Comparability tables** for 12 source countries

Support capacity-building in the field of academic credential assessment:

- medium-term capacity-building: creation of the program architecture for an **on-line distance education program**, including piloting the core course for such a program
- short-term capacity-building: creation of **webinars**

Facilitate immigrant integration into the labour force

Foster greater consistency and collaboration among assessors



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

What is the QAF?

- Developed by the assessment community based on international best practices
- Promote consistency of standards in credential assessment through the adoption of the QAF
- Provides guidance to organizations performing academic credential assessment and streamlines the practice
- Can be used by all institutions because it respects the autonomy and differing needs of each organization
- Three sections including a [Code of Good Practice in the Assessment of International Academic Credentials](#)



The QAF is available at:
<http://evaluation.cicic.ca>

WHAT FALLS UNDER THE CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE?

- **Fundamental principles:** non-discrimination, consistency, respect for provincial/territorial/institutional differences, internal quality assurance process
- **Transparency:** publish document and translation requirements, processing times, fees, appeal procedures
- **Assessment procedures:** situate the credential in its context and compare to Canadian standard using a range of criteria
- **Precedents:** use and review precedents and explain deviations from established precedents
- **Recognized institutions:** those formally approved by “competent authorities” OR widely accepted by others
- **Reporting:** provide a report to applicant and other institutions as required (with permission)
- **Fraudulent documents:** procedures to follow in cases of confirmed/suspected fraudulent documents
- **Other practices**



The QAF is available at:
<http://evaluation.cicic.ca>

GOVERNANCE OF QAF

Creation of the Steering Committee:

- Nine individuals from the assessment community including two ARUCC member institutions
- One permanent seat for the ARUCC executive

Responsibilities of the Steering Committee

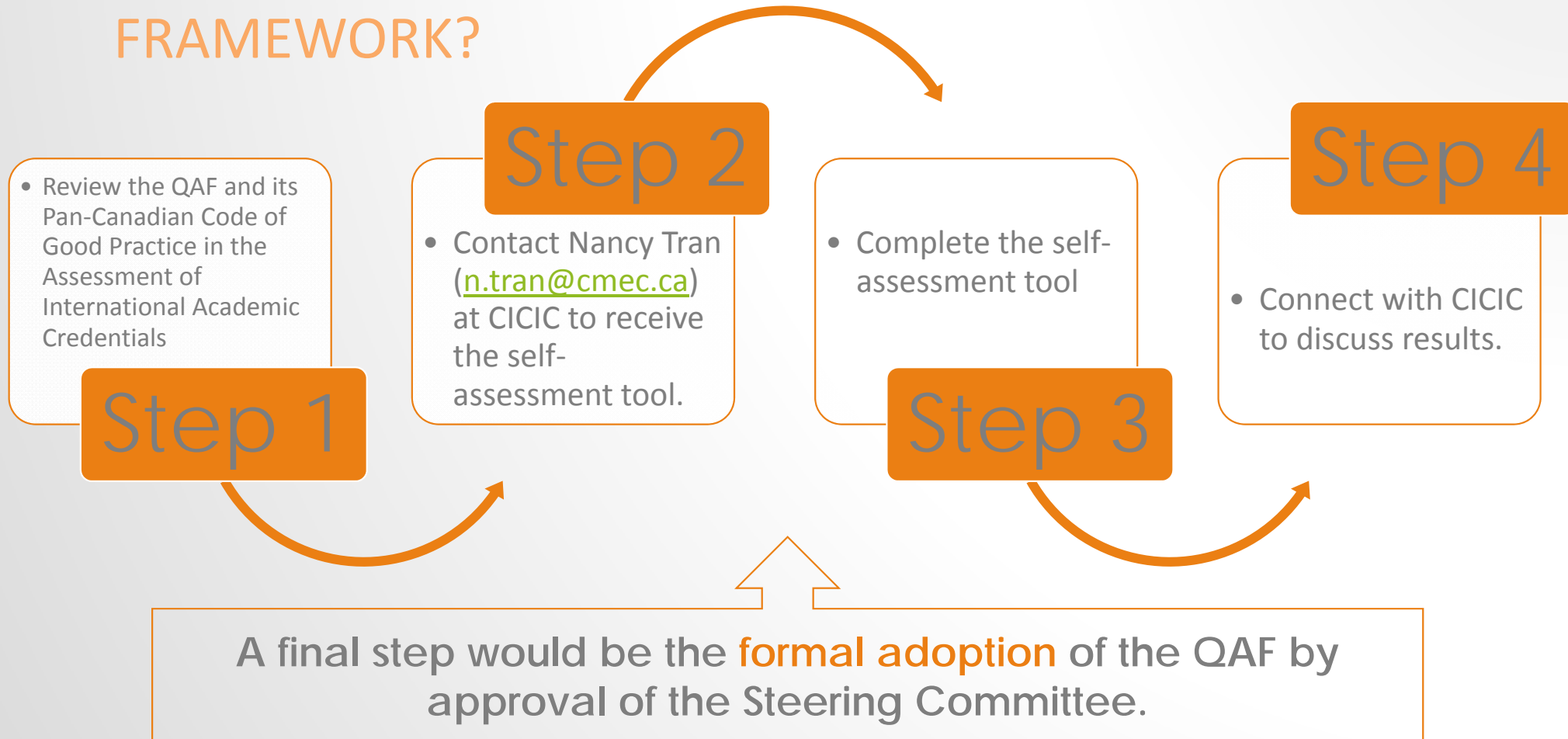
- Review the QAF periodically
- Review application from organizations wishing to adopt the QAF
- Provide support for organizations wishing to implement the QAF by developing useful tools to accompany the QAF Code of Good Practice
- Attend workshops and presentations to promote the use of QAF principles

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

Why is it important?

- Widespread compliance with a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) will ultimately help improve the consistency and portability of assessments performed across Canada
- Helps organizations improve best practices and methodology
- Promotes fairness, transparency, and timeliness of assessments
- Facilitates mutual recognition of organizations' assessment
- Demonstrates that assessment procedures are based on common practices used by other organizations

HOW CAN ORGANIZATIONS DEMONSTRATE COMPLIANCE WITH THE QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK?



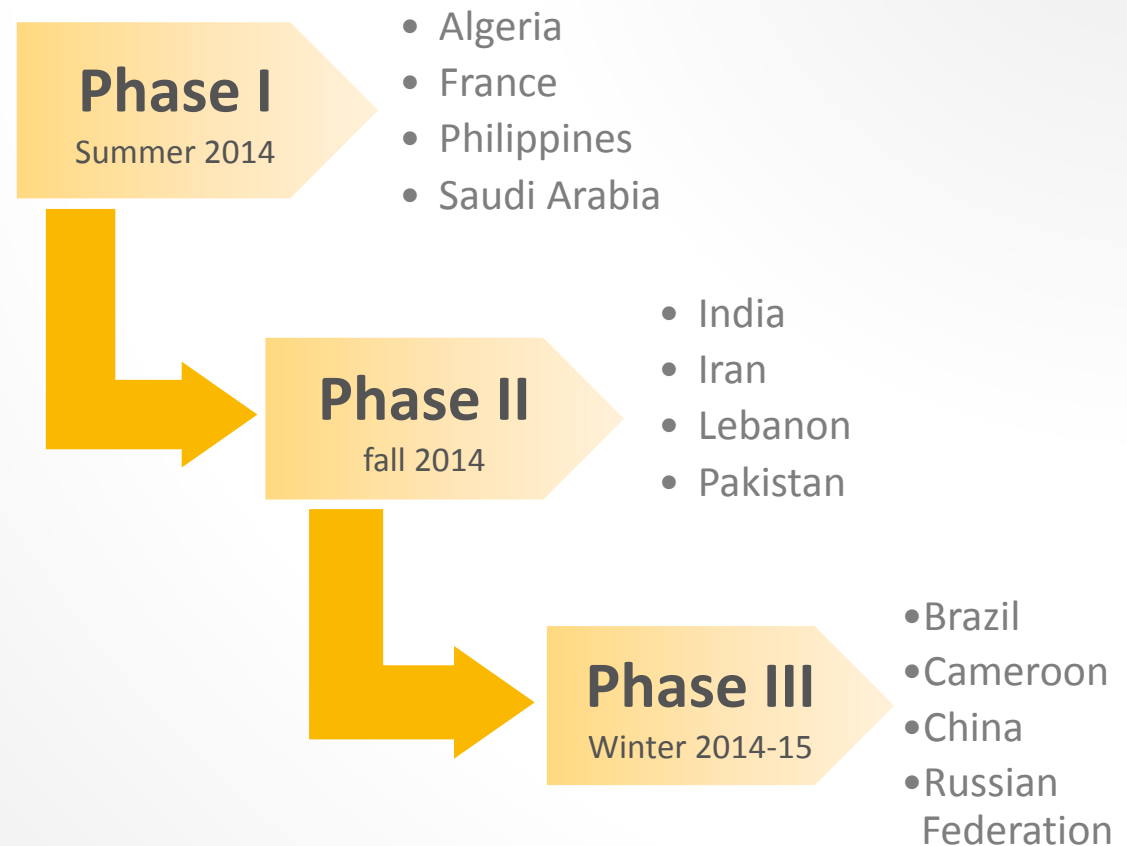
BUILDING BRIDGES – COMPARABILITY TABLES

Objective: Develop comparability tables for 12 key source countries to compare the credentials earned abroad with Canadian education systems.

Creation of a Comparability Tables Working Group comprised of 18 individuals, 7 of which represent educational institutions across the country.

Key Outcomes:

- Quick access to tables providing general overview of the range of standard assessment outcomes for different types of academic credentials
- Opportunity for an open dialogue between members to exchange and discuss existing policies and methodologies developed and used by their organization



BUILDING BRIDGES – ON-LINE DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Key objectives:

- Develop the program architecture for an on-line distance education program and run a pilot of the core course for such a program.
- Work with academic credential assessment experts and distance education providers to develop the architecture of the program
- Deliver, on a pilot basis, the core course for such a program. Expected pilot launch: **Winter 2015**

BUILDING BRIDGES – WEBINARS

Objective:

- Develop a series of webinars on current issues directly affecting practice of credential assessment in Canada.
- Work in collaboration with organizations and associations to recruit expert credential assessors, develop content, and host webinars to develop specific skills and address difficult cases faced by credential assessors.
- Webinars will be available on the CICIC Web site in **September 2014**

Stay tuned for upcoming webinars on...

- The Maghreb countries (in collaboration with the University of Moncton)
- Brazil, Jordan, and Palestine (in collaboration with the ENIC-NARIC networks)



POSTSECONDARY SECTOR: CURRENT CONTEXT

- Increasing number of students presenting international credentials
- Strain on admissions offices re: training, resources, turnaround time
- Inconsistency of credential recognition within an institution, and across institutions
- Resources and training primarily non-Canadian context
- Different terminology used across Canada

POSTSECONDARY SECTOR: OPPORTUNITY

- Provides an opportunity for national dialogue
- Common solutions/approaches across Canada
- Increased consistency and quality of decisions across institutions and sectors
- Increased transparency and credibility in eyes of stakeholders

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROJECT

- Development of **Terminology Guide**
- **Quality Assurance Framework** Steering Committee
- **Comparability Tables** Working Group

WHY BE INVOLVED?

- **Internal:** Consistency, Capacity, Credibility, and Collaboration
- **External:** Fairness, Transparency, Timeliness
- **Practical:** Provides a framework and tools for dialogue and change



HOW HAVE WE LEVERAGED THIS WORK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN?

- Adopting terminology within nomenclature document
- Utilizing the QAF to frame discussion with graduate faculties about consistency of credential evaluation
- Enhancing credibility of international credentialing resources
- Building mention of the QAF into transfer credit and articulation policy and admission policy
- Increasing our learning by participating in comparability tables working group for high volume countries
- Incorporating national-level project discussion topics into our provincial-level discussions
- Referring to intent to adopt the QAF in our provincial application for ISP designation

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Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials
Centre d'information canadien sur les diplômes internationaux

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