



Frequently Asked Questions

1. *What is the difference between a regulatory body and a professional education accrediting body?*

A regulatory body is an organization that sets the standards and practices of a regulated occupation. They are responsible for the issuing of a licence to practice. Most of the regulatory bodies are responsible for or create an arm's length accreditation body to accredit university or college programs. If the program is not accredited by these bodies, a person will not be licensed by the regulatory body.

2. *Are all regulated professions in Canada self-regulated?*

When you are given the authority by legislation to regulate your profession you are authorized to accredit programs.

3. *Who answers to whom when it comes to professional accreditation?*

It can vary in as much as an accreditation of programs is required. It could be a government, a regulatory body, a university, a college, etc. Remember accreditation is not defined in the same manner as in the USA. We recognize institutions and accredit professional programs.

4. *Not all professional programs are accredited – i.e. the Canadian Journalism Association does not oversee journalism education programs and there is no professional designation. Who determines if a profession should be accredited?*

Regulated professions, as a rule, are usually the ones that play an important role in the safety and protection of the public. E.g. Engineers (so that bridges don't fall), doctors (so that they prescribe the right drugs), architects (so that the buildings are well designed), etc. There are about 50 regulated professions in the country. Of course you have to multiply these by 13 if you are to cover all regulatory bodies operating in the country. Not all provinces regulate the 50 professions. It can vary. They are occupations that set their own standards and that require workers to have a licence to practice. Regulated professions usually require several years of university or college education, practical experience under the supervision of a licensed worker in the chosen profession, and the successful completion of a licensure examination.

5. What role does the Canadian federal government play in post-secondary education standards?

None. It is the responsibility of the provinces and territories. The federal government is active in the area of student loans and research and exchanges, but the sole responsibility for post-secondary education is that of the provinces and territories.

6. What is the difference between licensure, certification and accreditation in Canada?

Programs are accredited (as described above) – licensure and certification are often times identical.

CERTIFICATION: A process by which a regulatory or other authorized professional body determines that a person has attained occupational/professional proficiency.

LICENSURE: Mandatory procedures for determining license eligibility, granting licenses, and protecting the public regarding licensed occupations and professions.

7. Do provincial governments in Canada “accredit” schools for university, college or private college status?

It varies from one province to the other – however, universities and colleges and career colleges are not accredited in Canada (one exception – in B.C. private career colleges register programs and the school may be accredited if they so choose). They are recognized through legislation – either through a government bill (e.g. public universities and colleges) and Private or Vocational Acts (Bills) in which registration or licensing is an obligation and the programs are approved or registered and religious schools (colleges) (universities) are recognized through a private bill of legislature. All of these Bills are adopted by the provinces or territories. The Federal Government plays no role. The Constitution of Canada clearly defines Education as being a provincial responsibility.