

Tool 9: References

As stated earlier, employers should follow their normal recruitment procedures wherever possible. These include following up on newcomer references, which immediately gives rise to challenges in terms of the language, culture, and time zones of the references.

Firstly, there are many academic credential assessment services throughout Canada that can provide reliable information on how foreign qualifications compare with Canadian equivalents. (Ask your candidate if they have already obtained a comparison—it could save you both time.) The [Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials](#) (CICIC) is a central source of information about such bodies, and their services and fees. Also, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has established a [Foreign Credential Referral Office](#).

Four relevant services for technology qualifications in B.C. are:

International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES)	3700 Willingdon Avenue Burnaby, B.C V5G 3H2 604 432-8800 Toll-Free: 866-434-9197 Fax: 604 435-7033	icesinfo@bcit.ca
World Education Services (WES Canada)	2 Carlton St, Suite 1400 Toronto, ON M5B 1J3 416 972-0070 Toll-free: 866 343-0070 Fax: 416 972-9004	www.wes.org/ca/contact.asp
Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE) Engineering International-Education Assessment Program (EIEAP)	180 Elgin Street, Suite 1100 Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2K3 Canada 613 232-2474 Fax: 613 230-5759	evaluation@ccpe.ca
Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC (APEGBC)	4010 Regent St Burnaby, BC V5C 6N2 604 412-4856	register@apeg.bc.ca

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In terms of employer references, if the candidate has already been employed in Canada, you can follow up by telephone or email. Obtain the candidate's permission if they are currently employed at a reference's organization.

If the candidate has had any language training or employment counselling here in B.C., you could ask the teacher or counsellor for a reference regarding "soft skills".

For overseas references, take extra care. Some cultures have difficulty giving either praise or reporting problems, some organizations may give only dates of employment, while others may decline to cooperate at all. References may be biased either way for family or other reasons. The candidate may bring you a "To whom it may concern" letter, which is not necessarily reliable.

Nevertheless, it is worth persevering, to avoid losing a potentially good employee. You could, for example, ask the candidate for the names and email addresses of two or three referees. Send an email requesting employment information and asking for a telephone or Skype call in English or you may already have a trustworthy employee from the candidate's country who can interpret, act as a go-between or even make the call for you. A phone conversation may be more revealing than a written reference. Remember that differing time zones will be in play, so you may have to call early or late in the day. Large organizations and even small technology companies are usually able to find an English-speaking manager to talk to you. At the very least, you should be able to establish the existence of the business concerned.

You will find information for preparing for a reference by phone in the section on page 4 "What You Need to Know When Recruiting Internationally-Trained Professionals" and the appropriate Sector Guide to see what cultural aspects should be taken into account.

Alternatively, you can outsource this task to professional agencies. This could be particularly useful for technical skills or unfamiliar job titles or sector environments.

A useful reference is *Employer's Guide: Newcomers & Your Workplace* by Laurentian University: www.professionsnorth.ca/employers/guide.

Finally, for some positions, there may a requirement for additional checks, such as criminal record, work permits or credit references. You should not undertake any of these checks if you would not do so for Canadian nationals, as that would be deemed discriminatory. Keep a record of your checks if you determine they are necessary.