

By Matthieu Chapuis

The Ordre launches its course for professionals trained abroad

This fall, the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec (hereafter "the Ordre") will offer a course for professionals trained abroad (PTAs) for the very first time. This newly developed training session on professionalism is designed to support participants throughout their journey to becoming members of the Ordre.

What's more, it is unique in that it includes path-breaking electronic tools ("e-tools") which will create a landmark since they will be offered to members of the Ordre in the not so distant future.

A COURSE CUSTOMIZED TO IMMIGRANTS' EXPERIENCE

It bears reminding that back in 2008, the Ordre and the Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at implementing a coaching or shadowing program for PTAs who wish to become members of the Ordre. This new Québec professional training session is intended for those who already live in Québec and who have instructions information relating to their confirmatory examinations.

In this context, the Ordre wants immigrants participating in this new training to benefit from an education that is adapted to their reality as newcomers to our country. This training course not only deals with professionalism, ethics, professional conduct and the regulatory framework that governs engineering and our cultural context in the workplace, but it also takes diversity into account as well as the cultural differences we encounter in the workplace. For example, the first session addresses the challenges brought about by cultural integration, among other topics. Using concrete cases, participants are acquainted with various cultural trends in their relationships with others, particularly in a workplace setting.

The Ordre believes that by being responsive to various cultural perceptions and by promoting mutual understanding, this training will not only help participants adapt to their host society and become active members of their professional community, but will also allow them to better grasp and accept the fundamental values and the context underlying the practice of engineering in Québec.

A COURSE PLATFORM AND COURSEWARE FOR PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATIONS

In preparing this professional training, the Ordre was committed to ensuring that participants be able to obtain all the assistance they need via computer. Therefore, it developed two e-tools which will bring considerable added value to the course namely, a course platform and courseware. The electronic platform provides access to the teaching materials used during the course. Say goodbye to endless photocopies and costly books!

It also allows participants and instructors to communicate electronically. Introduced during the course intended for PTAs, the

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e-platform will subsequently be used in other training courses given by the Ordre.

As for the online courseware, it meets the demand often expressed by candidates taking the professional examination. The courseware matches the form and content of the actual professional exam – 92 questions divided under three headings – and gives the person taking the test a good idea of the complex questions he or she is about to face. Even better, the user can validate his or her answers. The courseware points out the user's weaknesses and refers him to texts one can study to correct such shortcomings. The candidate can interrupt the practice exam and return to it as often as desired.

In so doing, the Ordre hopes to help candidates prepare themselves for the professional examination. The courseware is currently offered to candidates trained abroad and will be available to all junior engineers in the near future. The e-platform and the online courseware will be piloted and tested during the course intended for PTAs and will certainly continue to evolve, but they mark the introduction of information technology in professional training at the Ordre.

THE OBJECTIVE FOR 2010-2011: 250 PARTICIPANTS

Even though it will be given for the first time this fall, the course intended for PTAs has already been given a run through since it was taken by a few junior engineers last spring, on a trial basis. The four instructors hired for the task, all engineers with extensive teaching experience and a good knowledge of PTAs, also participated in the experiment. After being adjusted and reworked according the results, the training session will be launched in September.

During this first year, the Ordre expects to attract at least 250 participants among the several hundreds of PTAs likely to be interested. The training session is offered in Montreal and Québec. Registration is on a voluntary basis and costs \$160 (plus tax). For more information, visit the following site: www.oiq.org/formationpfe.