

Certification & Accreditation: One Standard & One Accreditation Body **A Report from ASTTBC Executive Director, John Leech**

ASTTBC Council supports one national standard for the certification of Technology Professionals and one standard / model for national accreditation. ASTTBC also supports one national accreditation body. However, this process may be somewhat challenged by the current dynamics at play nationally.

National Technology Benchmark

A national standard for certification has been the norm in Canada for several decades. All ten Provincial Professional Associations (PPA) have endorsed the National Technology Benchmark (NTB) as the basis for the accreditation of technology education programs and as a guide for professional certification as a Technologist or Technician. While the NTB is built on a solid foundation with input from the PPAs, educators, industry and other stakeholders, the process by which the NTBs are approved and managed appears to have experienced some slippage. Recently the NTB Committee (NTBC) approved changes to the Technician standard without input from the PPAs, Council of Registrars and other stakeholders. In part out of concern for the management process governing the NTB, ASTTBC is reviewing the current process for NTB approvals with a view to working toward a better model. ASTTBC will post information on the website on which we post updates on the NTB project:

ASTTBC Council has accepted the most recent NTB (2012) and will soon consider as to whether it will accept any future NTBs until such time as a nationwide agreement can be reached on a better model for establishing and managing the NTB. There is one other issue that has in recent years caused uncertainty as to the status of the NTB and that is the claim of ownership of the NTB by the Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists (CCTT). It should be noted that the provinces of BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario are no longer member associations of CCTT and are now part of the Technology Professionals Canada (TPC) alliance representing some 85% of all registered Technology Professionals in the country. It is not clear at this stage as to how the ownership claim will play out but ASTTBC is of the view that the CCTT claim is inappropriate and would not stand up to scrutiny should it be formally challenged.

NTB Changes - Style and Verbs

As noted the NTB represents a solid foundation for certification and accreditation. Some changes have been requested by the various stakeholders, notably the PPAs, Council of Registrars (Registrars from the ten PPA) and educators. The changes relate to the writing style and some of the verbs. When first developed, the NTBs were written by many authors and, as a result, lack a common style. Likewise there has been a call for a review of the action verbs. Two years ago the Executive Directors and Registrars met and one of the outcomes was a general understanding that an existing contract between Economic and Services Development Canada (formerly HRSDC) would be expanded to include developing a common writing style and amendment of the verbs. The style work has been completed and submitted to all PPA Registrars, the NTBC and CCTT for consideration. Work on the verbs has started and will be completed in early 2014.

Professional Certification: Consistency in Canada is Critical

The ten PPAs signed a portability agreement in the past decade; however, this has now lapsed. Although the interprovincial Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) requires virtually automatic transfer of professional certification and registration, the PPAs are exploring a renewal of this agreement, with the likelihood that such an agreement would spell out how the PPAs would interface to ensure consistency in certification. The Presidents of the PPAs agreed earlier in 2013 to pursue a joint initiative to define best practices for professional certification. The TPLC Leadership Council has agreed to underwrite a project to review and better define best practices for professional certification. It is anticipated that this work will be launched before year end.

National Accreditation: Technology Accreditation Canada Being Developed

ASTTBC, as a member of TPC, is investing in a new national accreditation model, Technology Accreditation Canada (TAC). The team at TAC has entered into an agreement with Calico Communications to provide timely information on this new world-class model for accreditation and development and approval of a national technology accreditation standard. The following article has been issued by TAC as an update on their work. Watch for future information as TAC unfolds.

New World Class Technology Accreditation Program Expected to Pilot in Spring 2014

The impending arrival of a new year heralds some exciting developments for the technology profession in BC and other Canadian provinces. Technology Professionals Canada (TPC), a partnership of provincial technology associations in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario, is poised to launch a pilot project in spring 2014 for the delivery of Technology Accreditation Canada (TAC), a world class accreditation model for technology professionals across Canada.

The establishment of TAC is in direct response to findings from the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) which performed a comprehensive, third party review of current technology accreditation practices measured against best practices from other jurisdictions and sectors.

Further to CSA's recommendations, TAC is committed to assuming a leadership position in the delivery of a significantly improved and effective national accreditation system, using highly trained professional auditors, maintaining an uncompromising degree of quality control and assurance, and rigorously applying national technology benchmarks.

TAC will soon begin approaching educational institutions to develop a pilot for the new national accreditation system.

TAC's bylaws were approved in principle at the Sept. 28 ASTTBC Council meeting and incorporation of TAC is slated for later this autumn.

TAC will continue to keep association members and academic and industry stakeholders informed of its progress going forward with regular updates on service delivery milestones. TAC is comprised of technology professional associations in Alberta, Ontario, BC and Saskatchewan, which represent approximately 85 per cent of the technology profession in Canada.