

Education Standards

central role in the selection of immigrants. In the licensed professions, immigration officials can rely on the licensing bodies set up by those professions and so it is standard practice to advise applicants in licensed professions to write to professional licensing bodies in Canada so as to obtain their qualification equivalency. When it comes to non-licensed professions there is no parallel process for applicants who claim specialized competence. This is particularly true of foreign graduates in the humanities and social sciences, and a relatively large proportion of potential immigrants fall within this category.

The logical course of action has been to assume that the holder of a degree or of several degrees from a foreign university could be considered a specialist in the field of study in which he has concentrated. But the experience of some employers and of Canadian graduate schools has shown that this assumption is not always justified.

It may occur that immigrants on arrival in Canada encounter difficulties in getting their degrees or diplomas accepted. The non-acceptance of the degree then becomes a major obstacle to finding employment and results in understandable frustration. This may happen in spite of the fact that immigration officers abroad did tell the potential immigrant about the problem of recognition of foreign qualifications in Canada. The officers attempt to give applicants among the professions as realistic a picture as possible so as to dispel any misconception which an applicant might have about the opportunity of using his degree immediately after arrival here. The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that he might be forced to take employment in other fields, at least initially, before working in his own profession. Language requirements and lack of familiarity with Canadian conditions also may play the role of delaying factor in this respect.

The department is always interested to find out what level of competence foreign degrees in arts and sciences provide and in establishing how these degrees compare with Canadian degrees. Research in this field is faced with the task of establishing equivalence between foreign degrees and various Canadian degrees. The problem of equivalence in non-licensed professions confronts the department with great difficulties because very little has been done in the past in this area of research. There does not exist any fund of knowledge as in the case of professional associations with regard to licensed professions.

The difficulty of establishing equivalence between foreign and Canadian degrees is illustrated by the fact that even in Canada two degrees received in the same field are not equivalent if they are granted by different universities. In the strict sense of the word, equivalence means that the courses of study and the contents of the courses are identical. As we know, programs of study vary across the country. However, a Canadian university will usually admit the holder of a degree other than its own to graduate work, and such admission can be taken as a judgment that the degree is equivalent to its own. One way, then, of determining what foreign degrees are equivalent to Canadian degrees is to find out whether Canadian universities usually accept those who hold them into graduate degree programs.

[Mr. Caccia.]

There are at least three levels of graduate studies at which a student can be admitted, each representing a different equivalence. If a student is admitted to a two year master's degree program he may be said to have the equivalent of an ordinary bachelor's degree. Admission to a one-year master's program or to a three-year PhD program requires the equivalent of an honours bachelor degree, and acceptance into a two-year PhD program requires the equivalent of a Canadian university master's degree. These three levels signify grades of specialization.

The holder of an ordinary bachelor's degree is considered to have no real specialist competence. He is admitted to the lowest level of apprenticeship. The honours bachelor's graduate is only an apprentice. In this sense he is merely further along in his apprenticeship. It is only the holder of the master's degree who is recognized as meeting the minimum requirements for a specialist. In Canada, such a degree usually demands 18 years of study and a heavy concentration of courses in his subject. In addition, the preparation of a thesis has familiarized the post-graduate with the availability of data sources and the application of methods and techniques of research.

It must be stressed that admission to a Canadian master's degree program does not mean that a person is a specialist. It signifies only that his background fits him to train to become one. Even in the admission to a two-year PhD program the university may be less rigorous in its definition of a specialist than an employer would be. In this connection it must be considered that a university is a training institution and therefore it can undertake to fill gaps in a student's knowledge.

It is, for example, not uncommon for a foreign PhD student to take one or more undergraduate courses in an area where training was deficient in his home university. An employer who hires a specialist does not ordinarily expect him to undertake training in skills usually learned at the undergraduate level. In the absence of other criteria, university graduate admission standards can provide a minimum definition of a specialist in arts and science areas—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Order, please. I have been very good up to now this week, but due to the fact that one of my favourite poets, Ogden Nash, died this week—a man who was very popular, very human—I thought these lines that were published some years ago could have been written last Sunday:

Gently my eyelids close;
I'd rather be good than clever;
And I'd rather have my facts all wrong
Than have no facts whatever.
I didn't go to church today,
I trust the Lord to understand.
The surf was swirling blue and white,
The children swirling on the sand.
He knows, He knows how brief my stay,
How brief this spell of summer weather,
He knows when I am said and done
We'll have plenty of time together.

Isn't that appropriate?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

At six o'clock the House took recess.