

ASET waives fees for foreign-trained, engineering technologists with refugee status

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ASET is making it easier for engineering technology professionals who are refugees to earn their professional designations and find work in their field without having to return to school.

The Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta (ASET) is waiving all application fees for refugees hoping to obtain their engineering technologist designation. Application fees, learning assessment, practice exam fees, and the certification exam fee can cost applicants around \$1,000. As the number of refugees globally grows, ASET has recently decided to waive these fees, acknowledging the complex economic hardship of people fleeing unstable countries as refugees.

ASET's CEO Barry Cavanaugh said, "It is sadly often the case that the credentials and education of foreign trained professionals aren't recognized in Canada. As a result, these professionals may not be able to work here in their chosen fields unless they return to school to repeat their education."

Cavanaugh explained subject to individuals passing an English proficiency test, "their education and work experience are assessed by ASET through a comprehensive process that includes exams. Once they have completed the assessment, they are able to get certified by ASET and earn their professional designation, which is usually the certified engineering technologist designation also known as CET. Once they have their CET designation, employers will know they are fully qualified and ready to work in their field and it is much easier for them to find work as a direct result of this."

"If your readers in Coaldale and surrounding areas know of anyone newly arrived from Ukraine who has training in engineering technology, they can reach out to the Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta (ASET) to find out how they can get on the right path to getting their foreign engineering technology credentials assessed and certified so that they are readily able to work in Alberta without having to return to school to repeat their education."

Mila Wagner, based in Lethbridge described leaving her home country of Ukraine behind in 2016, following Russia's annexation of Crimea two years earlier.

Once arriving in Alberta, Wagner said, “I started applying for jobs in my engineering technology-related field, but nobody called me for an interview because my education and credentials were not fully accepted in Canada. At that time, I didn’t know about (ASET) or its competency-based assessment program. So, in order to get a career related job and to meet Canadian standards, I had to enrol in post-secondary education and earn another diploma.” Wagner spoke highly of her experience at Lethbridge College, but added, “I believe that going through ASET’s competency-based assessment program would have been a more efficient route for me. If I could have been certified through ASET from my previous schooling in Ukraine, I could have been positioned in a job and earning money sooner.”

Wagner arrived in Alberta with her son, and although she left behind a life and job in Ukraine, and described the great financial strain of having to return to school and work in lower paying roles until she completed a civil engineering technology diploma in Lethbridge.

While ASET has 16,000 members province-wide, the newly announced initiative of waiving fees for refugees may be useful information for families in the region supporting Ukrainian refugees. According to Cavanaugh, “Coaldale is home to 28 ASET members and a Ukrainian population, this information may be important to families who are sponsoring or otherwise helping relatives from Ukraine move (here).”