

# Regulated & Non-Regulated Occupations

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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## 1. What Is a Regulated or Non-Regulated Occupation?

### *Introduction*

The government regulates certain professions in Canada - such as those in healthcare, engineering, law, finance, and education - to protect public health and safety. Each province or territory is responsible for overseeing regulated professions, and licenses/certifications are only valid in the province or territory where they are issued. This guide will help you determine if your occupation is regulated or not, and if it is, what the licensing requirements are to be able to practice in British Columbia.

### *Regulated vs. Non-Regulated Occupations*

A **regulatory body** is an organization that makes sure all people working in a specific industry or profession meet the entry requirements, and education or experience standards of that industry. Regulatory bodies are responsible for:

- providing certification, registration or licensing for qualified workers
- discipline of members that do not meet the requirements for the profession
- protecting the public as well as their members

In a **regulated profession**, you must have a license or certificate from the appropriate regulatory body that governs the occupation you want to work in. Each regulatory body evaluates educational qualifications, work experience, and professional skills in different ways. Many internationally trained professionals

decide to find employment in non-regulated professions because of the cost and time needed to re-license.

**Non-regulated professions** do not need a license or certificate. Employers may want to verify certain credentials, such as education and work experience, as a requirement to work in their company. There are also voluntary certifications that can increase your career success that usually cost less and take less time to obtain, as compared to the regulated professions. Although no license, certification, or registration is required for these occupations, membership or certification through an association demonstrates commitment to the profession, and adherence to a set of association standards.

### ***Is My Occupation Regulated?***

You can use the information resources below to find out if your occupation is regulated.

- **Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre Employment Guides**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guides/employment-guides-industry>  
Learn about certification and find links to regulatory organizations.
  
- **Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC) - Learn About Qualifications Recognition**  
[https://www.cicic.ca/927/identify\\_the\\_organization\\_responsible\\_for\\_recognition.canada](https://www.cicic.ca/927/identify_the_organization_responsible_for_recognition.canada)  
A step-by-step guide that takes you through the process of occupational certification.
  
- **Foreign Credential Recognition in Canada Tool**  
[https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/report\\_note.do?cid=12228](https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/report_note.do?cid=12228)  
Provides links to regulatory organizations (scroll about half way down the page to get to the tool).

## **Types of Regulation**

There are 2 kinds of certification:

1. **Reserved (or Exclusive) Title:** To use a particular job title you need to be certified by a regulatory organization. If someone uses the job title for themselves and is not certified then they are breaking the law.
2. **Reserved (or Exclusive) Practice:** Certain tasks or jobs can only be performed by someone who has been certified by a regulatory organization. If someone performs these tasks and is not certified then they are breaking the law.

Some occupations have reserved titles, some have reserved practice, and some have both.

### **For Example:**

- Only people certified by the British Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons can call themselves medical doctors in British Columbia, and without the certification you cannot practice medicine in BC. Medical doctors have Reserved Title and Reserved Practice.
- Only people certified by the Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of British Columbia can call themselves Electronics Technologists in British Columbia, but anyone can perform the tasks of an Electronics Technologist if they have sufficient skill. Electronics Technologists have Reserved Title but not Reserved Practice.
- Anyone in British Columbia can call themselves a Teacher, but teachers in public or independent primary or secondary schools in British Columbia need to be certified by the provincial authorities. Teachers do not have Reserved Title, but have Reserved Practice.
- Anyone in British Columbia can call themselves a Counsellor, and can provide counselling. Counsellors do not have Reserved Title or Reserved Practice.

Sometimes the practices that are reserved for a particular occupation may be different than you might think.

- **For Example:** Only people certified by the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of the province of BC can call themselves Professional Engineers. Most of the tasks performed by a Professional Engineer can be performed by anyone with sufficient skill, but often for legal and insurance reasons will need to be approved by someone who is a Professional Engineer. Engineers have Reserved Title and some Reserved Practice, but many tasks that they perform can be performed by someone else.

If your occupation is a Reserved Title occupation you may be able to find employment using your skills independently or under the supervision of a certified professional.

### ***Useful Websites***

- **Work BC - List of BC Occupational Regulators**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers/B-C-Occupational-Regulators.aspx>  
A list of all the regulatory bodies in British Columbia.

## **2. My Occupation Is Regulated**

In a regulated profession, you must have a license or certificate from the appropriate regulatory body that governs the occupation you want to work in. Each regulatory body evaluates educational qualifications, work experience, and professional skills in different ways. Many internationally trained professionals decide to find employment in non-regulated professions because of the cost and time needed to re-license.

## ***Mutual Recognition***

Some certifications from other countries are recognized in Canada through a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA). If the certification for your occupation is recognized in Canada, this is the easiest way to get certified.

- **For Example:** Engineers registered in Australia, Hong Kong and Ireland can apply to be engineers in Canada under a streamlined process because of a Mutual Recognition Agreement.

If there is no Mutual Recognition Agreement, find out about other paths to certification under “Certification Process” below. Often there are specific paths to recognition for internationally trained professionals.

## ***Certification Process***

Contact the organization responsible for certifying your occupation to find out more about mutual recognition agreements and other paths to certification.

- **Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre Employment Guides**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guides/employment-guides-industry>  
Find out if you need certification and find links to certifying organizations.
- **Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC) – Information on Mutual Recognition Agreements**  
[https://www.cicic.ca/931/get\\_information\\_on\\_mutual\\_recognition\\_agreements\\_\(mras\).canada](https://www.cicic.ca/931/get_information_on_mutual_recognition_agreements_(mras).canada)  
Find out if there is a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) for your occupation.

- **Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre Credential Evaluation**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/credential-evaluation>  
Certification may require an examination of your education and experience.
- **Welcome BC: Getting Certified to Work in BC**  
<https://www.welcomebc.ca/Work-in-B-C/Getting-Certified-to-Work-in-B-C>  
Guide to the certification process.

## ***Get Help***

- **Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants Program**  
<https://www.welcomebc.ca/Work-in-B-C/Career-Paths-for-Skilled-Immigrants>  
Provides support for immigrants to become certified in regulated occupations.
- **Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) Loan Project**  
<https://www.fcrloan.ca/>  
Provides access to loans to cover the costs of registering for certification and guidance on how to best navigate the process.
- **Funding Programs for Jobs, Training & Social Development Projects**  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/funding.html>  
Current and upcoming funding opportunities for government grants and contributions that help support jobs, training, and social development.
- **Windmill Microlending**  
<https://windmillmicrolending.org/>  
Low interest lending to help pay for registering for certification.

## ***Alternative Careers***

Applying for certification can be a long and expensive process and may require additional training. If you are unable to successfully apply for certification, or while you are waiting to complete the certification process, you may be able to use your skills in other occupations.

### **For Example:**

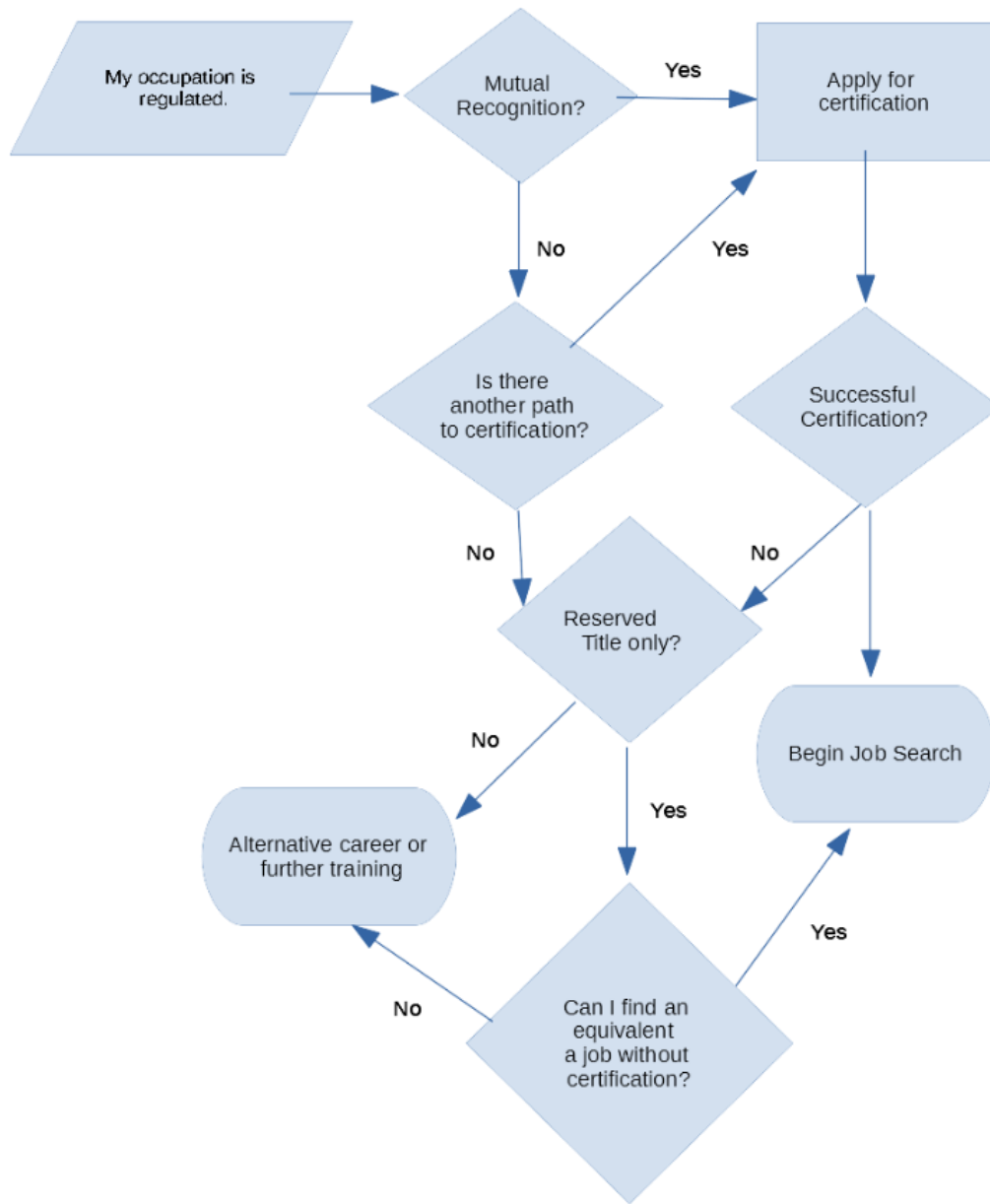
- If you are trained as a Counselling Psychologist but are unable to certify with the College of Psychologists of British Columbia, you may be able to work as a counsellor.
- If you haven't been licensed as a Professional Electrical Engineer but you have the skills to do electrical engineering work, you may be able to do so under the supervision of an electrical engineer.

## ***Useful Websites***

- **Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre: Alternative Careers**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guides/alternative-careers-industry>  
Other careers that may fit with your skills and education.
- **Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre: Transferable Skills**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/transferable-skills>  
Learn how to apply your skills to a new career.
- **Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants Program**  
<https://www.welcomebc.ca/Work-in-B-C/Career-Paths-for-Skilled-Immigrants>  
Provides support for immigrants to get further training and to find alternative careers.



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**Regulated Occupations Flow Chart**

### 3. My Occupation Is Not Regulated

An occupation is not regulated if you do not need to have a particular license or certificate, and requirements are up to the employer.

Even if no qualification or certification is required by law, there might be a voluntary certification or academic credential that is generally desired by employers.

The process of gaining accreditation in such cases is similar to the way it is in regulated occupations, but often takes less time and money.

#### ***Credential Recognition***

If you have credentials that are recognized in Canada, it will be helpful in finding a job in your field, or in joining a professional association.

- **For Example:** A degree from some computer science programs in Hong Kong will allow you to receive certification as an Associate Information Technology Professional with the Canadian Information Processing Society. This certification is not required but may be helpful in finding a job.

If your academic credential is not immediately recognized, you may be able to have it recognized using a Credential Evaluation Service. Learn more about how to get foreign credentials recognized in Canada at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/credential-evaluation>.

- **For Example:** After credential evaluation, a Librarian with a degree from Iran can have their degree recognized and be able to work as a Librarian in Canada.

## ***Voluntary Certification***

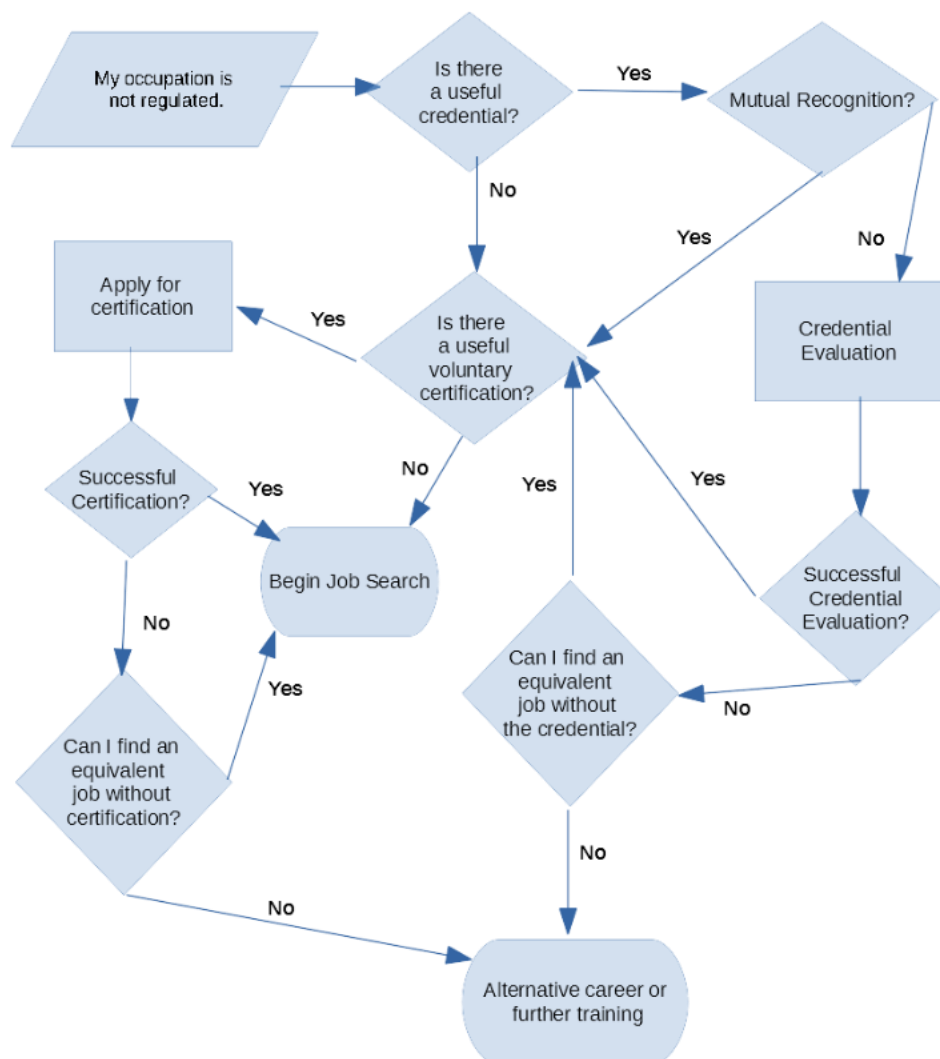
Find out if there is a voluntary certification that will improve your ability to find a job in this occupation, and apply to the professional association or trade for certification.

- **For Example:** Trade certification for Ironworkers is not required in Canada but is very helpful for finding a job in this field. You can be certified by completing an apprenticeship or by passing an examination and working a specific number of hours in the trade.

## ***Get Help***

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Provides access to loans to cover the costs of registering for certification and guidance on how to best navigate the process.
- **Windmill Microlending**  
<https://windmillmicrolending.org/>  
Low interest lending to help pay for registering for certification.

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**Non-Regulated Occupations Flow Chart**

**Questions? Please ask the Information Staff on Level 4, Central Library or telephone 604-331-3603.**

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <https://www.vpl.ca/sic/>.