



Colleges Integrating
Immigrants to Employment

Phase 2 Final Report

Acknowledgements

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1. Executive Summary

The Colleges Integrating Immigrants to Employment (CIITE) project is a three-phase initiative designed to improve the pathways for internationally trained immigrants (ITIs) through the Ontario college system, from pre-entry services through employment transition and into the workforce. For the purposes of CIITE, an ITI is defined as an immigrant who has received post-secondary level credentials and/or training in a country outside of Canada. The CIITE vision, which was articulated in Phase 1, and has consistently steered the Phase 2 work is as follows:

Internationally trained immigrants have access to programs and services in the Ontario college system that build on their qualifications and expedite their securing employment in their field of expertise or in a related field.

The ultimate goal is for every immigrant in Ontario to more quickly and efficiently achieve employment that leverages their prior education, experience, and expertise.

Phase 1 was completed in 2004 and identified barriers within the college system for ITIs and specific issues where solutions needed to be developed and piloted.

Phase 2 was launched in 2005 and completed in February 2008. The objective of Phase 2 was to explore and test ways to remove the barriers to employment for ITIs and to develop recommendations for change across Ontario's colleges. A funding decision was made in 2005 to proceed with five projects selected from the proposals in the Phase 1 Report: Admissions, Advising, Credential Assessment and Advanced Standing, Employment Preparation, and Language Proficiency. A further two projects were identified through findings in Phase 2 and were funded in 2007: Competency Assessment and Continuing Education and Part-time Data Collection.

All seven Phase 2 projects have been completed and their objectives met. Each project resulted in a detailed report; these reports are included in the Appendices. Phase 2 was very successful—within each of the seven projects, solutions were identified, piloted as required, and recommended for Phase 3 implementation. A wide range of products and implementation tools were developed (see page 10 for a full list). A large number of ITIs were served, and both ITIs and college staff were involved in developing recommendations and tools. Much was learned in Phase 2 about what will be required to achieve sustained systemic change, and this learning directly informed the development of the Phase 3 Implementation Plan. A wide range of external agencies were engaged, and the development of partnerships begun, with both community operations and system-wide organizations.

Phase 2 demonstrated strong college system engagement and readiness for increased effectiveness at serving ITIs. Fourteen colleges participated in one or more of the Phase 2 projects. Almost all colleges participated in a series of Advisory Group meetings in which the project recommendations were reviewed and refined, and advice was gathered for this report and the design of the Phase 3 Implementation Plan. As a result of Phase 2 work, colleges are already moving to elevate the importance of ITIs in their strategic planning and to realign their organization and processes in anticipation of Phase 3 roll-out.

The Phase 2 work and learning has led to the development of a comprehensive Phase 3 roll-out plan (see Section 4 and Appendix 16). This roll-out plan outlines a three-year process to re-tool the Ontario college system, in order to address the large employment gap that ITIs experience today.

At the end of Phase 3 implementation, colleges will more efficiently assist a greater number of ITIs to full employment. In advance of collecting the data required to accurately track service levels and set measurable goals, it is estimated that the college system could target to bring 15,000 to 20,000 more ITIs into full employment each year, with an incremental net benefit to Ontario ITIs of over \$150 million per year that will grow cumulatively over time.

The Phase 3 plan includes implementation work in the areas of Admissions, Advising, College-Work Connection (including work experience, mentorship and career-search initiatives), Competency Assessment, Credential Recognition, Cultural Intelligence and Change Management, Flexible/Modular Delivery, ITI Data Collection and Reporting, Language Assessment, and Language Benchmarking.

The Phase 3 Implementation Plan has been designed to yield sustainable results through a series of specific changes and transitional supports, and addresses all relevant areas of college system operational delivery. It anticipates evolution in the college funding model, in which funding will be aligned to the new realities of the college student population and enable the delivery of education which accelerates the integration of immigrants and ITIs into the workplace.

The three-year, Phase 3 Implementation Plan, is designed to build a system that is *much* more effective at satisfying the needs of ITIs, a system which can sustain itself, and is able to implement ongoing continuous improvement.

2. Background

2.1 Internationally Trained Immigrants in Ontario

Ontario faces challenging labour demands and skills shortages. Internationally trained immigrants (ITIs) are an essential piece of the solution. Immigrants are increasingly arriving with training and skills that are valuable to the Ontario economy.

Ontario's immigrant population is changing. Recent immigrants to Canada have higher levels of education than past waves of newcomers and higher levels of education than native-born Canadians. The 2006 Census data showed that 36% of immigrants between the ages of 25 and 54 had at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 22% of Canadian-born men and women¹

Based on estimates using Statistics Canada data, an estimated 45,000 to 65,000 immigrants (depending upon annual immigration levels) in the prime working age group of 25 to 54 arrive in Ontario every year with post-secondary education or other forms of training²

2.2 Barriers to Full Employment for ITIs

Conference Board of Canada research estimates there is a \$1.5 billion annual gap in ITI earnings because prior learning is not recognized and utilized in Ontario³. This reported gap is the product of a lack of credential and learning recognition by employers, a lack of specific pieces of knowledge and/or skills that are required for Canadian employment, a lack of Canadian work experience, inadequate English-language skills (including workplace language, norms and expectations), and unfamiliarity with the "system" (e.g., how to attain recognition of foreign credentials and education in Canada, how to acquire the missing skills, and how to bridge into employment).

The result for ITIs is *underemployment* in jobs not commensurate with their levels of education and experience and, for some, *unemployment*. The result for the province is a decreased ability to meet labour force needs.

Discouraged at not finding appropriate employment in their chosen field or any employment at all, some ITIs leave the country. Recent research found significant rates of out-migration among immigrants admitted to Canada in the business and skilled worker categories, especially if the economy dipped during the first few years after entry⁴.

¹ *Canadian Immigrant Labour Market in 2006*, Statistics Canada, September 2007

² Estimate based on Statistics Canada 2006 *Census of Population: Immigration in Canada: Portrait of the Foreign-Born Population, 2006 Census: Highest Educational Level Achieved by Ontario Immigrants versus the Non-immigrant Population, Aged 25-44*, Statistics Canada from 2001 data.

³ *Brain Gain*, Conference Board of Canada, 2001 and Canada 2006 Census data

The gap has grown since 2001, when the Conference Board estimate was developed. Ontario's population has since grown with the arrival of almost 600,000 immigrants, the majority in the prime working ages with post-secondary credentials or trade certificates.

⁴ *Return and Onward Migration Among Working-Age Men*, Statistics Canada, March 2006

2.3 Ontario Colleges' Role in the Solution

The college system can provide the education and employment linkages ITIs need.

As a system, Ontario colleges offer:

- An applied-education mission with embedded work experience targeted to employment
- Close workplace connections with local employers
- Reliable, professional, and standardized education delivery from a network of established institutions with highly experienced faculty and staff
- Broad educational offerings, from basic literacy to applied degrees
- Province-wide geographic coverage from 24 colleges with campuses in 200 Ontario communities
- A “one-stop-shop” for the key elements required to help ITIs succeed

For ITIs, college is often their first integrative experience in Canadian culture and society.

ITIs are already benefiting from Ontario colleges, but there are still large unmet needs.

As there is no consistent system-wide identification and tracking in the Ontario college system, the exact number of ITIs in the college system cannot be confirmed. However, it is estimated that approximately 50,000 immigrants are participating in Ontario's college system today in Full-time, Part-time, and Continuing Education programs⁵. As well, other ITIs are serviced by colleges as non-registrants, e.g., some advising recipients do not subsequently register for college studies.

Whether or not they enrol in the Ontario education system, Conference Board of Canada research indicates that approximately one half of new ITIs did not take *any* steps to have their prior learning recognized. ITIs reported it took too much time, it was too costly, they did not understand the process, or they were sceptical of the outcome⁶.

A very high-leverage opportunity exists to improve the existing college system to better serve ITIs and to integrate them into the workforce more efficiently; this is the focus of CIITE.

CIITE has been steered by a clear vision of closing the employment gap for ITIs.

The CIITE vision, which was articulated in Phase 1, and has consistently steered the Phase 2 work is as follows:

Internationally trained immigrants have access to programs and services in the Ontario college system that build on their qualifications and expedite their securing employment in their field of expertise or in a related field.

The ultimate goal is for every ITI in Ontario to more quickly and efficiently achieve employment that leverages their prior education, experience, and expertise.

2.4 CIITE Overview

The CIITE Project has been defined in three phases, two of which are now complete. A brief overview of all three phases of CIITE is provided below.

CIITE PHASE 1: IDENTIFYING THE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR ITIs

Phase 1 was built on a province-wide consultation that included key stakeholders, including colleges, immigrant settlement agencies, government departments, employers, and ITIs. It identified the barriers ITIs face within the college system and the systemic changes required for improvement. Phase 1 results included the identification of service and structural barriers for ITIs and the creation of a vision for an ITI pathway to employment through the college system. Project proposals were submitted to address the high-priority issues and define best-practice models for college implementation.

CIITE PHASE 2: CREATING BEST PRACTICES TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR ITIs

The objective of Phase 2 was to explore and test ways to remove the barriers to employment for ITIs identified in Phase 1 and to develop specific recommendations for change across Ontario colleges. Five projects were originally funded: Admissions, Advising, Credential Assessment and Advanced Standing, Employment Preparation, and Language Proficiency. An additional two projects were funded in 2007: Competency Assessment and Continuing Education and Part-time Data Collection.

Some project proposals could not be funded in Phase 2 (notably, modular or flexible delivery, and the funding model required for prior learning assessment and recognition) or were substantially reduced in scope (in the case of Employment Preparation). The exclusion of these proposals was not a result of disagreement with the diagnosis and prescription, but was driven by environmental pressures and the government's priorities at the time.

Phase 2 activities were piloted in Anglophone colleges, although Francophone colleges did participate in some work. A notable exception was the Language Proficiency Project, which was only piloted in Anglophone colleges since an appropriate Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB)-based French-language tool did not exist.

Phase 2 was a collaborative effort between the CIITE Project Team, Ontario colleges, Colleges Ontario, Colleges of Ontario Network for Education and Training (CON*NECT), and other key agencies (i.e., the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, the College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario, Heads of Continuing Education Committee, International Credential Assessment Service, the Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists, the Ontario College Application Service, and World Education Services). Phase 2 included consultation with the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) and linkage with other programs and projects, such as the Canadian Immigration Integration Project (CIIP).

The methodology in Phase 2 included analyzing current processes, exploring and proposing changes to remove ITI barriers, and piloting and refining new processes across the seven projects. The Phase 2 college-level pilot projects included 14 colleges and involved more than 1,100 ITIs.

Each of the seven projects had a project team composed of participating colleges and external stakeholders, with support from the CIITE Project Office and expert advice as necessary. To help ensure funder expectations would be met, a third party designed and carried out three separate evaluations (see Section 3.5).

CIITE PHASE 3: REMOVING BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR ITIS

Phase 3 will transition Ontario colleges to a new level of capability to help ITIs on the pathway to employment.

Phase 3 calls for implementation over a three-year period of the best practices, models, and lessons learned in Phase 2. The goal is systemic change to provide services that move ITIs into employment commensurate with their skills and experience faster and more efficiently than today.

Phase 3 needs to be comprehensive and its scope needs to be defined in terms of outcomes for ITIs. These requirements include the following:

- Integrative, cross-project lessons and solutions learned from Phase 2 need to be incorporated in Phase 3.
- Phase 3 needs to recognize and address the Phase 1 issues that were not included in Phase 2 (for example, modular/flexible delivery) since these are critical to making the transition to employment more efficient for ITIs.
- Phase 3 needs to include the implementation of service improvements for French-speaking ITIs.

3. Phase 2

3.1 Project Deliverables and Research Results

The seven Phase 2 projects were all completed and delivered their intended outcomes. A number of additional useful outcomes were achieved from this work that will help steer successful implementation. This section summarizes four overall outcomes resulting from Phase 2 research and project activities.

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF PROJECT DELIVERABLES

The seven projects were designed to tackle key barriers for ITIs and develop solutions. A report was produced for each project, documenting deliverables, activities, research results and recommendations. Please see the individual project reports in Appendices 3–9 for details on all deliverables, research results, and recommendations. The project reports were developed and reviewed by the college teams involved with the project and by the all-college Advisory Group.

A SERIES OF PACKAGED PRODUCTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Phase 2 products include the following:

- *Advising Internationally Trained Immigrants: A Guide for Ontario Colleges* (a guide to assist college advisors with providing accurate information for ITIs, see Appendix 11)
- *Advising Internationally Trained Immigrants at Ontario Colleges: Key Findings* (a report on the findings from the Advising Project Pilot, see Appendix 10)
- *Ontario Colleges' Guiding Principles for the Recognition of Previous Learning* (operational guidelines and principles for the recognition of skills and credentials obtained internationally, contained in both Appendix 5 and 6)
- *Record of Education & Experience* (for use by ITIs when applying for credit at a college and/or when applying for jobs, contained in Appendix 5)
- *Applying for Credit at Ontario Colleges* (a standard communication piece to be used on the OCAS website and in colleges, contained in Appendix 5)
- *Language Benchmarking at Ontario Colleges: A Guide to Program Benchmarking using the Canadian Language Benchmarks* (a guide to provide college staff with an outline for undertaking language benchmarking on a program-by-program basis using the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000*, see Appendix 12)
- *Ontario College Process for the Recognition of Previous Learning* (two models of competency assessment — one for regulated professions and one for unregulated professions, contained in Appendix 6)

ACTUAL SERVICE DELIVERY TO MORE THAN 1,100 ITIs

While Phase 2 focused on research and pilots, in a number of projects ITIs were served, consulted, or involved in the development of recommendations and tools. Notably, more than 1,100 ITIs received advising services across four colleges.

In a follow-up telephone survey of a sample of ITIs who received advising services in the Advising Pilot Project (Appendix 14), almost three-quarters (71%) rated the advisement as being “useful” or “very useful” and an incremental 12% rated it as “slightly useful”.

“ I am a new immigrant and I didn’t know what to do about getting a job. The advising helped me to go to school again and to choose a program related to what I have already done back home. ”
—An ITI advised in the Advisement Project Pilot

STRONG COLLEGE SYSTEM ENGAGEMENT AND READINESS FOR INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING ITIS

CIITE Phase 2 has heightened college managements’ awareness of and engagement in the challenge to better serve ITIs. The findings and implications have been brought to all colleges, and colleges across the system are reviewing how services for ITIs fit in their strategic priorities and plans.

The completed set of Phase 2 recommendations have been reviewed and endorsed by the college system as a whole, through an all-college Advisory Group that reviewed and endorsed the specific project recommendations and participated in the design of the Phase 3 Implementation Plan.

As a result of Phase 2 work, colleges are already moving to elevate the importance of ITIs in their strategic planning. In anticipation of Phase 3 roll-out, a number of colleges are examining how to realign their organization and processes to create the management mechanisms needed to implement ITI-focused change that crosses organizational boundaries within the college.

3.2 Project Summaries

This section of the report includes a high-level summary for each of the seven projects, quickly recapping the issues, activities, and recommendations in each. The full set of Phase 2 project recommendations is summarized in Appendix 2.

ADMISSIONS PROJECT

College application and admission processes, including some Ontario College Application Services (OCAS) processes, are confusing to applicants who were educated outside Canada. Admissions and application-processing staff would benefit from more training in how to work with diverse clientele. As well, data collected on ITIs through the application process is quite limited, making it impossible to accurately track this population through the college system.

Research was structured to identify the roadblocks for ITIs in application processes and the gaps in college data collection and management related to these processes.

Project recommendations included changing the OCAS online application to make the process and tool more user-friendly for ITIs, training OCAS and college admissions staff to understand and deal more effectively with the specific needs of ITIs, and developing consistent policies across Ontario colleges regarding the acceptance of recognized external credential assessment reports.

The impact for ITIs from the Admissions Project will be more understandable, user-friendly application processes across Ontario colleges.

The participants were Algonquin, Cambrian, Fanshawe, Seneca, and St. Clair colleges, and OCAS.

ADVISING PROJECT

ITIs need access to an advisor who is culturally-sensitive and knowledgeable about the work environment, labour market needs and educational offerings, in order to advise them about how to achieve their employment objectives and how to most efficiently use the college system — including making proper program choices, navigating the application and admission processes, and resolving program-related academic concerns. The lack of comprehensive, easily accessible advising services often leads to ITIs spending excessive time and money in inappropriate programs, or to ITIs not finding an effective pathway to employment.

The Advising Project Team recommended that Ontario colleges implement advising services for ITIs using the tools developed and piloted in Phase 2; implement the data tracking and reporting required for system management; and create an ITI advisor network to transfer best practices across colleges.

The anticipated impact of the ITI Advising Project includes:

- **More informed program choice and career decisions by ITIs**
- **Reduced and more effective time spent in the college system**
- **A faster path to employment**
- **Employment commensurate with ITIs' prior learning and experience.**

The participants were Algonquin, Centennial, George Brown, and St. Clair colleges.

COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT PROJECT

ITIs acquire professional knowledge and skills in several ways, other than through formal education. Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) and competency assessment are both processes for assessing knowledge and skills, to the benefit of ITIs seeking employment.

PLAR is a distinct process already in place in the Ontario college system and differs from institution to institution. PLAR assesses non-credential prior learning against course outcomes, for the purpose of receiving individual credits and grades for college courses. PLAR is primarily conducted through a lengthy process of portfolio development. Opportunities for ITIs in the college system to obtain PLAR are limited and not well publicized because they are too costly for colleges to sustain. Ontario colleges lack guidelines and updated tools for conducting PLAR.

A related but distinct concept is competency assessment, which assesses previous learning (including credentials and non-credential knowledge and skills) against the overall learning outcomes of a program or profession. The purpose is to identify the skill and knowledge gaps that need to be filled in order for an individual to be ready for employment. Competency assessment will primarily be conducted through written and practical skills demonstrations that take no longer than a few weeks to complete. The difference between competency assessment and PLAR is that competency assessment provides an employment-focused overview of an individual's competencies, while PLAR is focused on course credits and grades.

This was a short project as it was one of the two additional projects funded in 2007. It investigated competency assessment as an additional option to PLAR. Competency assessment was perceived to offer a timely, practical, and holistic assessment of an individual's knowledge and skills. Two models were designed for competency assessment, one in a regulated profession and one in an unregulated profession, and a set of operational guidelines was created.

Recommendations include piloting the competency assessment model in two professions, the development of college capacity to provide methods of recognition that correspond to flexible programming, and the exploration of the development of regional centres of assessment.

The anticipated impact of the Competency Assessment Project for ITIs will be the creation of much more personalized and efficient plans for gaining employment, including the identification of job requirements, current skills and competencies, education/knowledge gaps, and the recognition of previous education and experience.

The participants were Algonquin, Boreal, Centennial, La Cité, Conestoga, Fanshawe, George Brown, Humber, Mohawk, Niagara, St. Clair, and Sheridan colleges.

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PART-TIME DATA COLLECTION PROJECT

Current college data collection practices do not effectively identify ITIs, making it impossible to track their progress through the system and difficult to target and manage initiatives to help them. This is particularly true in Continuing Education (CE) and Part-time (PT) studies.

In a consultative process through the Heads of Continuing Education, current data collection practices for PT and CE students were examined.

Recommendations included revising the Continuing Education Provincial Survey (CEPS) to better identify ITIs in CE and PT programs in order to track these individuals and develop interventions and initiatives to assist them.

The impact on ITIs from the Continuing Education Data Collection Project will be an improved ability on the part of college management and faculty to meet the educational and support needs of ITIs.

The Heads of Continuing Education (HCE) Committee participated in this project.

CREDENTIAL ASSESSMENT AND ADVANCED STANDING PROJECT (CA & AS)

The Ontario college system does not have recognized system-level guidelines or procedures for international credential assessment, or for determining the academic credits individuals may be granted through Advanced Standing or Transfer Credit⁷. Individual colleges have their own processes, but inconsistencies exist between institutions, resulting in a lack of clear guidelines for ITIs wishing to apply for credit, as well as inefficiencies and inequities in the granting of credit.

The CA & AS Project developed and piloted standardized tools, operational guidelines, and communication materials related to credential recognition that can be applied and used across Ontario colleges.

Project recommendations included that Ontario colleges adopt the standardized tools and guidelines for ITI academic recognition and that college staff in these roles be trained in the use of the tools and guidelines.

⁷ The term for this varies from college to college. This process is also commonly referred to as Course Exemption and External Credit.

The impact of the CA & AS Project for ITIs will be reduced cost and faster assessments, and improved and consistent recognition of previous education across Ontario colleges.

The participants were Algonquin, Centennial, Fanshawe, and Seneca colleges, the International Credential Assessment Service (ICAS), the Ontario College Application Service (OCAS), and World Education Services (WES).

EMPLOYMENT PREPARATION PROJECT

Specialized, ITI-focused employment advisement services are not commonly offered at Ontario colleges. ITIs would benefit from more co-op and work placements that prepared them for employment. The Job Connect program is present at 20 of 24 colleges, but its service scope has been limited and it has not fully utilized the potential links to the colleges' wide range of services and resources, nor has it fully engaged other ITI-relevant community agencies such as settlement services.

Research was conducted to understand (a) Job Connect in Ontario colleges and (b) how ITIs access employment preparation services. Twenty-five employment preparation service providers were interviewed and 59 ITIs participated in focus group discussions.

Project recommendations include piloting an integrated model to improve links between college and community-based employment preparation providers, and capacity-building initiatives within colleges to better serve ITIs. Job Connect or an equivalent service should be placed at every college. As well, the implementation of enhanced workplace experience opportunities for ITIs should be piloted in Ontario colleges.

The anticipated impact of the Employment Preparation Project for ITIs includes a faster path to employment and an improved rate of achieving employment commensurate with their level of skills and experience.

The participants were Fanshawe, Mohawk, Niagara, and Sheridan colleges.

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (ASSESSMENT) PROJECT

Language assessment tools in colleges are inconsistently applied and not clearly linked to the language requirements of programs. Colleges can better serve the language development requirements of ITIs by assessing them appropriately into programs, and delivering programs in a manner that encourages the development of language proficiency for the profession.

In the Language Project, college program benchmarking for selected programs was piloted and a protocol developed for implementing program benchmarking at individual colleges, in conjunction with the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB). Staff in seven colleges were trained in benchmarking, and 31 post-secondary programs and 8 language courses were benchmarked (refer to Appendix 9, Section 4.1, for the full list of programs benchmarked).

The Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test (CLBPT) was piloted to assess its suitability for system adoption for post-secondary program placement, and other commonly used language assessment tools were analyzed using the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000*.

Project recommendations include that the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000* be adopted at Ontario colleges as a language proficiency framework, with training for staff, and that the colleges adopt benchmarking as an essential tool for assessment and program design and delivery. Based on the pilot, adoption of the CLBPT for college entry assessment was not recommended, because it was designed for ESL placement and does not test all of the skills required for program and employment success. It was recommended that colleges use a suite of language tests aligned with the Canadian Language Benchmarks, and that the college system support the eventual national development of a new CLB-based test appropriate for use in post-secondary environments, by the CCLB.

The impact of the Language Project for ITIs will include:

- **Portable assessment results accepted by all colleges and the ability to use prior test results for assessment purposes**
- **Cost and time savings**
- **A more streamlined college entry experience**
- **Curriculum tailored and enhanced to improve ITIs' learning experience, ensuring communication skills development that aligns with workplace requirements.**

The participants were Algonquin, Centennial, George Brown, La Cité, Mohawk, Seneca, and Sheridan colleges, and the CCLB.

3.3 Integrated Results

Phase 2 was conducted as a set of individual projects, each developing solutions to specific ITI barriers and issues. The projects defined what to do on the seven different issues. As these projects were completed through collaborative work among colleges and between colleges and other bodies, much was also learned about how change that benefits ITIs can be implemented.

Some of these lessons were integrative, learning how the individual projects can be tied together to leverage each other (a summary matrix of project interactions and inter-relationships is contained in Appendix 13) and some were organizational, learning about how to effect change in the institutions. All lessons resulted in implications for the design of the Phase 3 Implementation Plan.

3.4 External Agency Engagement and Partnership

Through the Phase 1 consultation, Phase 2 projects, and significant investment of Steering Committee and Project Office effort, CIITE built linkages with non-profit community agencies and organizations with a mutual interest in helping ITIs on the pathway to employment. In Phase 2, CIITE began to build the outside agency understanding and support required for productive linkage in Phase 3 implementation. These linkages are fundamental to the colleges' ability to play an effective and efficient role in ITIs' pathway to employment.

Some of these key relationships include ACCES Employment Services, the Access Alliance Multicultural Community Health Centre, Career Bridge, COSTI Immigrant Services, the Maytree Foundation, Skills for Change, and the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC). The Project Office and Steering Committee also attended meetings and developed links with other interested policy and development groups, including the Association of Canadian Community

Colleges (ACCC) and its projects including CIIP and Centres of Expertise Research; the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA); the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC); Colleges Ontario; the International Metropolis Project; OACETT; Peterborough Area Immigrant Services; and the Public Policy Forum.

As part of Phase 2, many new and valuable college-level partnerships with community agencies have been developed that have direct impact upon ITI advancement.

A few selected examples of these college-level partnerships are:

- Mohawk College in Hamilton has forged a strategic partnership with a local immigrant settlement agency and service provider. The two organizations have begun to make an inventory of their activities that reach immigrants and to identify the linkages between themselves. One result is that the college is using this information to help streamline ITI-related activities for ITIs.
- Conestoga College in Kitchener-Waterloo is an integral part of the Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network (WRIEN), which attracts immigrants to the area and supports their integration into the community and workforce. Conestoga has a representative on the WRIEN's steering committee and is helping ITIs fill the skills and education gaps needed for employment.
- Humber College in Toronto is currently engaged in a 5-year strategic planning process and Board members voiced the need to include ITIs in the draft of the plan. Humber has developed a proposal with a local settlement agency to provide software training for engineers. Humber is also developing links to other community agencies that work with ITIs to develop programming to help ITIs find work related to their background, education, and/or training.

3.5 Evaluation

A third-party program evaluator, Berkeley Consulting, carried out three studies to evaluate Phase 2's progress and success. The results of these evaluations confirm that Phase 2 met and, in many cases, exceeded expectations. Please refer to Appendix 15 for the final evaluation from Berkeley Consulting, which includes the results from all three evaluations.

3.6 Lessons Learned

Through the collaborative Phase 2 effort, much was learned beyond the specific project-level objectives about what will practically be required to create the systemic change needed to implement and sustain greater effectiveness at meeting the needs of ITIs.

The following sections outline five sets of key cross-project findings from the Phase 2 work, and their implications for how to implement sustainable change.

INTEGRATED CHANGE ACROSS PROJECTS IS REQUIRED.

The improvements CIITE is seeking for ITIs require integrated change. The issues and proposed solutions from the seven projects inter-link and the solutions' impacts are additive. See Appendix 13 for a summary table.

The implications for sustainable change are:

- 1. Implementation should be integrated, not a collection of separate activities.**
- 2. Advising, in particular, should be expanded to incorporate all of the evolving tools and delivery/service capabilities. The full advisement model should include a Pathway to Employment Plan for individual ITIs that addresses the ITI's unique needs and takes advantage of the recommended new college service capabilities.**

COLLEGES FACE A NEED FOR INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE.

ITI-focused changes cut across most college functions. The CIITE vision requires integrated institutional change in the colleges, rather than a series of separate initiatives; however colleges are at varying levels of readiness to implement ITI-focused change, depending on the proportion of ITIs in their student population and their history of delivery. The integration of ITI needs into college planning and priority setting will ultimately need to be done at the most senior, strategic level of college planning, at least at those colleges with significant ITI populations.

The implications for sustainable change are:

- 1. System-wide implementation planning needs to include support for institutional change management.**
- 2. Each college should conduct a self-assessment of cultural intelligence, ITI demand within the institution, ITI barriers, and priorities for change.**
- 3. System-wide implementation planning needs to include support for broad-based upgrades to institutions' cultural intelligence as determined by self-assessments.**
- 4. College-level implementation planning needs to weave ITI services into overall institutional priorities, at least in large ITI-population colleges. In these colleges, the CIITE-led changes should be reflected in their strategic plans.**

MEASUREMENT IS KEY TO CREATING ACCOUNTABILITY.

Across the Ontario college system, adequate data on ITIs is not available. The system, as well as individual colleges, lack the means to measure ITI activity and progress, establish quantitative goals, and manage to the achievement of those goals.

Strong directional goals can be established for the system today, but the clarity of the goals and the ability to track progress toward those goals will depend upon the implementation of the defined measures and tracking processes.

The implications for sustainable change are:

- 1. Early priority need to be placed on the implementation of the admissions and CE and PT data gathering recommendations, on the inclusion of measures of ITI satisfaction and outcomes in all significant change initiatives, and on the implementation of an ITI-advisement database system.**
- 2. College-level goal review and renewal needs to be fostered as better data become available.**
- 3. Investment is needed in the analysis and system reporting of progress, and the diagnosis of roadblocks and gateways to progress, on a regular basis through Phase 3 implementation.**
- 4. The overall cultural intelligence and institutional planning initiatives should evolve on the basis of these better measures, as they become available.**

FLEXIBLE PROGRAM DELIVERY IS ESSENTIAL FOR ITI SUCCESS.

Flexible delivery is an essential ingredient in meeting ITIs' needs, especially as enhanced advising includes effective credential recognition and competency assessment. Once specific knowledge and skill gaps are identified, ITIs need to be able to quickly and efficiently obtain only the specific pieces of education required. This implies a much enhanced ability across the system to deliver individual component parts of an educational program.

The implication for sustainable change is:

- 1. While flexible delivery was not addressed in Phase 2, it needs to be built into Phase 3, if the system is to be able to properly leverage its capabilities to efficiently satisfy the needs of itis.**

PHASE 2 HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED FOR THE COLLEGE FUNDING FORMULA TO EVOLVE.

Properly serving ITIs will challenge the existing college funding model. The areas of issue include: flexible delivery, competency assessment/PLAR, and pre-entry advisement, where the services required by ITIs do not easily or fully fit into the current design and funding of college operations.

The issues arise because the college funding formula was designed to support operations that primarily addressed the needs of students entering directly from domestic high schools. ITIs and other non-direct-entry students have less homogenous requirements as a cohort, require different education-delivery solutions, and need additional supporting services.

In all areas, there are incremental and tactical opportunities for colleges to increase and improve their service delivery, and modify and extend their activities in light of ITI needs. Immediate progress can be made ahead of new funding solutions, but delivering on the full vision for satisfying ITI needs will require funding designed for the new realities of the college student population.

The implications for sustainable change are:

- 1. The CIITE perspective and insights into the work that has begun between the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) and Colleges Ontario to review the funding formula needs to be linked.**
- 2. Past the first year of Phase 3, it will be necessary to identify and prepare for broader change as funding solutions are identified.**
- 3. Partnerships and alternative funding approaches for services that link education with settlement and employment will need to be explored. Phase 3 work should emphasize partnership development and/or the engagement of additional potential funders. The goal is to serve immigrants well, without duplication of service-delivery costs.**

4. Phase 3 Roll-out Strategy

4.1 Implementation Goals and Objectives

OVERVIEW

Phase 3 is defined by a three-year plan to re-tool the Ontario college system, in order to address the large employment gap that ITIs experience today. The focus of the plan is to identify, support, and manage at a system level the transitions required from “what is” to the CIITE vision of “what should be”. However, this is not a static state and ongoing development and improvement will always be needed. This three-year transition plan is designed to build a system that is much more effective at satisfying the needs of ITIs, a system which can sustain itself and is able to implement ongoing continuous improvement.

GOALS

At the end of Phase 3 implementation, colleges will assist more ITIs toward full employment, and will be doing so more efficiently.

While the college system does not currently have the data required to accurately measure ITI throughput and quantify three-year goals, the extent of improvement can be estimated. If Ontario colleges are currently serving approximately 50,000 ITIs at any one time today, CIITE estimates, based on the MTCU and Conference Board data, that through barrier reduction the population served could be increased by 20%.

CIITE does not have current data on the average time between an ITI beginning college training and achieving desired employment. Informal estimates have suggested an average between two and three years. CIITE perceives that through better advising, credential recognition, competency assessment, flexible delivery, and college-work connection, that the average time to desired employment could be targeted to shrink by one-third.

In combination, these directional goals suggest that the “future state” Ontario college system could target to bring 15,000 to 20,000 more ITIs into full employment each year. The impact of this on ITIs is significant. The Conference Board analysis suggests the annual income shortfall to the ITI from un/under-employment is approximately \$10,000 per person. Our future state estimate therefore suggests an annual benefit yield to provincial GDP of over \$150 million from every year of operation that would grow cumulatively over time.

These numbers are directional, not precise estimates or targets. Work is required to establish the data and reporting required to set objectives and manage toward them, and that work will be launched in the first year of the Phase 3 plan.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Helping ITIs and other immigrants achieve better employment, faster, is the core benefit of CIITE Phase 3. At the same time, there are a number of potentially valuable secondary benefits from Phase 3 implementation:

- **Increased quality of experience and satisfaction among ITIs and other immigrants**
- **Reduced time and dollar cost of educational gap closure for ITIs**
- **Reduced skilled labour shortages provincially**
- **Reduced out-migration of disillusioned ITIs**
- **Spin-off benefits to the economy from increased ITI productivity and income**
- **Enhanced college capabilities that will significantly improve ease of entry and success of other groups of college students who do not come directly from a domestic high school**

4.2 Design Criteria for the Implementation Plan

In line with the experience, findings, and insights from Phase 2, the implementation plan has been designed to:

- Deliver ITI benefits that start immediately and build over time
- Concentrate transitional resources and effort on colleges with the largest populations of ITIs
- Recognize the need for individual institutional and Board ownership of each college's priorities and implementation plan, in light of differing strategic challenges, resource availability, organizational design, institutional readiness for change, etc.
- Implement the Phase 2 project recommendations and respond to the implications for sustainable change that have been identified
- Foster effective partnerships at the community level between the college and settlement agencies and employment services
- Stage implementation in such a way that "easy" changes are implemented quickly and the capacity for more difficult change is built over time
- Foster system-wide change, so that ITIs across Ontario ultimately have access to the services they require

4.3 Implementation Plan Development Process

The implementation plan has been the product of an extensive process of consultation and discussion over eight months. This consultation has included briefings and dialogue with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI), consultation with Colleges Ontario, and engagement of the full college system through a series of day-long Advisory Group working meetings wherein implementation issues were discussed in great detail, and processes were managed to obtain engagement and review by College Presidents and management teams. External consultations were also held with community agencies, such as TRIEC, and with complementary programs, such as CIIP.

4.4 Implementation Plan Summary

The projected three year project funding requirement for the Phase 3 Implementation Plan as designed is approximately \$17 million. Over the three-year period of this plan, the colleges are expected to make a large contribution in-kind to the change effort, in the order of 20% of the total. In addition, further work outside the project funding envelope within OCAS and CCLB is anticipated within this plan, with funding from within these organizations or through other funding initiatives.

The key activities by area of this three-year plan are outlined below. Refer to Appendix 7 for implementation plan details, which outlines activities by key area of change over years one to three.

ADVISING

- Launch active ITI pre-entry advising, beginning with a focus on the colleges with large numbers of ITIs, building on the ITI advising model piloted in Phase 2. Implement all-college training and an advising information system and tools.
- Expand/refine the Phase 2 model to: (1) integrate the other CIITE initiatives into the advising process; (2) include the Pathway to Employment Plan recommendation developed at the end of Phase 2; (3) include evening-hour service; and (4) manage continuous improvement based on measures and tracking.
- Explore alternative forms of partnership and linkage with CIIP and community agencies providing other forms of immigrant assistance. Assess alternatives for how best to link comprehensive college advising to other settlement and/or employment advising, in order to fill gaps while avoiding duplication. Assess and resolve the appropriate ongoing roles, linkages, and funding.

CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION

- Implement the Record of Education and Experience (REE) to create a standard form of recognition that all colleges recognize, and which can be understood and used by employers. The implementation of the REE starts with work at OCAS to create the data framework. Implementation will require significant Student Information System changes at each college (funded by each college) which will take a number of years to complete, depending upon college-level information technology priorities and capacity.

COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

- Pilot the Phase 2 recommended approach for competency assessment in the two programs used for development purposes in Phase 2 (Respiratory Therapy and Mechanical Engineering Technology). On the basis of these pilots, develop a recommended strategy for how competency assessment can be implemented most practically and affordably in the college system.
- Develop plans for competency assessment in four high return occupations (measured in terms of labour demand and potential benefit to ITIs).

ADMISSIONS

- Upgrade the college application process and materials to reduce barriers to immigrants.

LANGUAGE BENCHMARKING

- Foster and assess college progress in the use of benchmarks (determined as a result of the Phase 2 benchmarking work) in assessment, entry standards, and curriculum development.
- Build college system capacity for language benchmarking, in order to enable benchmarking to be included in program review processes and in program renewal and development initiatives.
- Assess experience to date in order to identify the most efficient approach to formal program benchmarking. Develop and implement a plan for benchmarking the highest-priority programs in the system using the highest-leverage approach possible, to enable curriculum revision by the colleges.

LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

- Colleges use a suite of language tests, benchmarked to the CLB, in order to assess students for specific purposes and against identified requirements. Phase 3 will include the dissemination of Phase 2 results and the benchmarking of two additional commonly used language tests.
- A new CLB-based post-secondary program language assessment test is recommended, but this work is national, not provincial in scope, and therefore outside the CIITE mandate. This has been referred to CCLB.

COLLEGE-WORK CONNECTION (INCLUDING WORK EXPERIENCE, MENTORSHIP, AND CAREER SEARCH INITIATIVES)

- Support improved college capabilities for linking ITIs to employment, including mentorship programs, internships and field placements embedded in post-secondary and bridging programs (through partnerships such as Career Bridge and employer-sector connections), and career-search training resources via Job Connect or equivalent partnerships with community agencies. This work will link community agency resources, provincial job placement support programs and the colleges' capabilities, including employer/sector connections, co-op/field placement, and proper advising for placement success.

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

- Create the organizational culture and commitment required to achieve the integrated college-wide change needed to re-tool the college system to the needs of ITIs and to sustain a strategic focus on continued upgrades.
- Building on Phase 2, the first year of Phase 3 will drive college managements' understanding and engagement through concrete implementation projects and medium-term planning (with cultural intelligence training as determined through college self-assessment).
- Based on the early implementation work and college-level learning, in the subsequent years colleges will take the lead on integrating ITIs more strongly in their overall strategic priorities and plans.

ITI DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING

- Implement an ITI data gathering, analysis, and reporting framework across all colleges, working with Colleges Ontario.
- Support Colleges Ontario in creating regular measures of ITI volumes and progress in colleges.
- Support the measurement, tracking, and reporting of ITI satisfaction measures within all Phase 3 projects.
- Support the regular review of measures and facilitate college-level action planning in response.

FLEXIBLE/MODULAR DELIVERY

- Separate from this implementation plan, Colleges Ontario and MTCU are discussing revisions to the college funding formulae, which will be essential to colleges' allowing open access to specific modules within programs and improved part-time access. This plan includes the work required to gather and structure ITI-focused perspective and advice into this review.
- Support the expansion of smaller-scale tactical additions to course-based delivery opportunities for ITIs, including Continuing Education and distance education.

CIITE CO-ORDINATION AND PROJECT OFFICE SUPPORT

- Evolve the governance from what was required to manage development to what is needed to steer and drive implementation across the system in an appropriate and effective way. This will require broadening project leadership and creating a representative Executive Committee from the all-college Advisory Group.
- Provide the core staffing and necessary resources required for effective project management and support.
- Build an effective French-language delivery and support capability. Identify the appropriate Francophone components within the different implementation initiatives.

5. Sustainability

Phase 3 will, over three years, re-tool the Ontario college system to assist ITIs to achieve better employment, faster. The changes are expected to be sustainable by the college system for the following reasons:

- The Phase 3 plan aligns clearly with the analysis of barriers and opportunities in Phase 1 and is comprehensive, including addressing the needs of French-speaking immigrants.
- The Phase 3 plan was designed to a set of criteria that explicitly included institutional-level and system-wide change management.
- The whole college system has been deeply engaged in defining the recommendations and priorities, both through intensive project-level work by the colleges with significant ITI populations and/or experience with ITIs, and through college involvement in reviewing the recommendations and in designing and refining the implementation plan.
- Colleges are already taking proactive leadership to realign their strategic plans to place more focus and priority on serving ITIs and other immigrants.
- Phase 3 will include the implementation of ITI data capture, allowing for college- and system-level analyses of ITI populations and progress. These data and reports will provide the means to establish accountability for increased and improved service to ITIs in Ontario colleges.
- The changes in processes and mindset being implemented in Phase 3 align with a broader evolution in Ontario colleges toward better serving non-direct-entry student populations. The Phase 3 changes will be reinforced by other change initiatives within the college system.
- Colleges are building active, vibrant partnerships with community-based immigrant-service agencies, and strengthened partnerships are central to the Phase 3 work plan. These partnerships will help sustain a college focus on ITIs, and result in ongoing visible accountability at the community level for college performance with ITIs, while avoiding duplication of services and costs.

More specifically, a series of specific measures and strategies have been taken and/or implemented as integral components of Phase 3 planning to ensure continuity and sustained delivery and impact of Phase 2 outcomes. These include:

- developed and presented a long-term, multi-year Phase 3 plan and funding proposal to MCI and MTCU in July, 2007
- submitted a comprehensive Invitation for Proposal (IFP) to the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration in October, 2007 requesting \$5.3 million for Year 1 funding of a 3-year implementation of Phase 2 recommendations
- incorporated the development of train-the-trainer programs designed specifically to develop or increase internal college and system-wide capacity to evolve, advance, customize, and re-deliver critical training continuously over time
- took steps to provide for CIITE involvement and/or participation in MTCU discussions and consultations on college funding formula changes
- developed strategic plans, and supported efforts by other agencies, to identify and access alternative funding from other government sources including MTCU and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)
- developed and strengthened partnerships with community agencies supporting ITIs in order to explore opportunities for collaboration and joint ventures as a platform to implement Phase 2 recommendations and enhance its impact

- designed a planning and implementation process for all colleges that fully integrates Phase 3 activity into existing college strategic and departmental planning processes and cycles
- implemented an advanced and more fully integrative governance model that strengthens college and system-wide engagement

CIITE is confident that the sustainability measures are diverse and broad enough to ensure that Phase 2 products, initiatives, impacts, measures, and activities can and will be continued, sustained, and advanced over time.

Every opportunity and effort has been taken to help colleges and the overall college system to build its capacity to maintain the changes and supports that were delivered through Phase 2.



Colleges Integrating
Immigrants to Employment



*Colleges of Ontario Network
for Education and Training*



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