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September 2022 State Authorization Updates & Information [1]

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Hello everyone!

It's time to step a bit outside our comfort zones and focus on our neighbors to the north. Let’s talk aboot Canadian authorization.

Canada does not have a federal education system; instead, each province sets its own rules and regulations for delivering education to its citizens. Similar to the U.S. before SARA, the rules vary from province to province, and (you guessed it!) things can get more complicated when dealing with programs that lead to professional licensure.

So far, I've found that officials in the provincial education ministries are quite familiar with inquiries from U.S. institutions asking about reciprocity. Saskatchewan was delightful and confirmed that Boulder wouldn’t need additional authorization to deliver online education there. Ontario, however... That’s going to require more research. I’ve also heard that British Columbia can be quite particular. Depending on what you're offering, you may need to send someone to BC to participate in an annual workshop, and the institution wishing to operate there must undergo a quality assessment process. In fact, according to BC's Degree Authorization Act, institutions without proper authorization can't even use the term "university" when describing themselves!

What might trigger your institution to seek authorization in one of the provinces?

- Advertising the program in the province
- A distance student completing an on-ground experiential learning placement in the province
- Actively recruiting in the province

WCET-SAN will release a chart later this fall to help navigate the nuances of delivering education in Canada (with more information on Mexico coming in 2023).

While it doesn’t seem that individual courses (credit or non-credit) require authorization in Canada, programs beyond traditional degrees—such as certificates, microcredentials, and badges—might. As a reminder, much like state authorization, individual institutions are responsible for obtaining authorization where and when necessary. A third-party provider cannot represent an institution in contracting or working with any state, territory, or foreign nation.

Talk to your IR folks: How many of your students are located in Canada? Which provinces? What are they enrolled in?

Lastly, if you're planning to attend the WCET Annual Meeting in Denver but haven't registered yet, there's still time!

Have a wonderful rest of your week, and as always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out!

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