

# Lifelong Learning As Critical for Today's Engineers As in 1887

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ngineering is a fabulous profession that combines the application of technical problem-solving skills with specialized knowledge in order to design solutions that better the lives of Canadians. It is a calling particularly suited to women and men who possess great analytical skills and a love

for challenges. With these challenges come the engineer's duty to the public, their client, and their employer to act ethically and to maintain the level of competency they acquired in school.

The Engineering Institute of Canada (EIC) is the country's oldest technical organization, founded in 1887 by Canadian engineers who predicted that daily engineering practice was insufficient to stay abreast of new scientific findings and advances in technology. They created the EIC to provide engineers with seminars, conferences, technical journals, and networking events to help maintain necessary competencies through lifelong learning. The EIC represents the diversity of the engineering field as it advances with society.

For its first hundred years, the EIC's membership was made up largely of practicing engineers in the traditional disciplines of mechanical, civil, geotechnical, chemical, and electrical engineering. Starting in 1970, subgroups of the organization decided to incorporate themselves as independent groups that would remain EIC Constituent societies. This began the transition toward the modern EIC—a federation of technical associations. There are now 12 constituent societies that are part of the EIC federation, comprising over 25,000 Canadian engineers.

The EIC mission has evolved alongside

the needs of the profession, but one thing remains clear: the need for engineers to adhere to lifelong learning principles is as true today as it was when the EIC was created 130 years ago. Today, the EIC:

- recognizes outstanding engineers with lifetime achievement awards and fellowships;
- accredits Quality Learning Providers to issue continuing education units (CEUs) to engineering professionals;
- preserves engineering history and archives;
- operates an eLearning Centre where engineering professionals can sign up for online courses;
- runs a career site focused on jobs in the engineering community; and
- organizes a series of national conferences on topics of importance to Canadians and a broad spectrum of the engineering community, for example climate change technologies, sustainable development of the North.

The EIC Continuing Education Recognition Program helps engineering professionals identify and source quality education providers to support their training and development needs. The responsibility to maintain technical competencies is of utmost importance in engineering—most licensing bodies have adopted explicit professional development requirements as a condition of licensing renewal. One CEU is defined as “ten hours of participation in a continuing education program organised in compliance with prescribed standards under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction.” Because of this stringent require-

ment, CEU-facilitated courses and seminars provide significantly more value to professionals than other professional development activities. They're also widely accepted by employers and licensing bodies as a valid demonstration of continuing education activities. Engineering professionals are recommended to permit accredited Learning Providers to register their continuing education achievements in the EIC CEU registry for ease of reference and record keeping.

The EIC and its constituent technical societies are also partners in a career site catering specifically to the engineering market in Canada, [EngineeringCareers.ca](http://EngineeringCareers.ca). Job seekers can upload their resumes and apply for any of the posted jobs free of charge. It's a good niche site for companies and governmental organizations looking to hire qualified engineering professionals.

Public and private providers of continuing education programs may join the EIC CEU program as Participating Partners. As a Participating Partner, providers will be able to issue CEU certificates to trainees who comply with process standards modelled on international best practices. To join the EIC CEU program as a partner, contact EIC's Executive Director, Guy Gosselin, P.Eng., at [ggosselin.eic@gmail.com](mailto:ggosselin.eic@gmail.com).

*Guy Gosselin*

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