

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS

ABSTRACT

Lifelong Learning is as essential for Professional Engineers as their initial training and certification. Continued professional development is an urgent imperative to ensure public safety, a sustainable environment, a competitive national economy, a respected profession, a profitable employer and a fulfilling career. The primary responsibility for this resides with the individual engineer, actively supported by all stakeholders.

The processes for maintaining continued competency vary markedly among practitioners, depending both on their employment status and the engineering functions that they fulfill. This paper, prepared by the Canadian Academy of Engineering, presents lifelong learning guidelines for employees, employers, educational institutions and professional and technical engineering societies. In addition, best practices of leading organizations and their engineering staff are described to illustrate the broad range of lifelong learning approaches. Learning on the job is highlighted as one of the most important routes to maximizing professional competency.

"In the new economy, you graduate and you're set for fifteen minutes. Working and learning are fast becoming the same activity" -- Don Tapscott, author of *The Digital Economy*.

"In a time of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future" -- Eric Hoffer, *Reflections on the Human Condition*.

"The illiterate person of the late 1990s, and in the next decade, will not be the person who has not learned how to read, but rather the person who has not learned how to learn" -- *Society of Manufacturing Engineers. (Discussion Paper on Lifelong Learning, Society of Manufacturing Engineers, Revision 7, 1992, page 6)*