

“So what is an Architectural Technologist Anyway?”

The Association of Architectural Technologists of Ontario, or AATO, is the only governing body for accredited Architectural Technologists in the Province of Ontario. The Association ensures that all our members conduct themselves professionally, ethically and with total respect for the well being, health and safety of the general public.

In the past we were merely perceived as just “drafts people” a term implying that we are only capable of putting together technical two dimensional drawings. In fact this is only a small part of our job. Actually Architectural Technologists are design professionals who specialize in the art and science of building. This was a very frustrating situation that set our founding members into action in creating our Association.

In 1965 a small group of people organized themselves into a not for profit association whose goals were to promote architectural design and technology, advance the status and welfare of its members, provide an apparatus for its members to increase their skills, knowledge and proficiency and to establish, maintain and enforce strict rules of ethical conduct for the members of the Association.

In 1969 the AATO was granted a Letters of Patent, a document issued by the Provincial Government, giving us the exclusive right to the title of our Association. Prior to 1984 the Architects Act of Ontario prevented anyone from using the word “architect” or any variation of the words “ architect” or “architectural” in their titles. In 1984-85 Bill 122 was passed revising the Architects Act to allow AATO members to use the word “architectural” in their titles.

On December 16, 1996 legislation was put in place in the form of Bill Pr40, an Act respecting the Association of Architectural Technologists of Ontario, which allows the Association to control the titles “Architectural Technologist”, “Architectural Technician”, “Registered Building Technologist” and “Registered Building Technician”. This Act allows the AATO a greater scope in providing for the well being, health and safety of the general public as well as safeguarding the high standards that we have set for our members.

The accreditation requirements of the AATO are strenuous and uncompromising. An accredited member of the Association has devoted a considerable amount of time and effort in achieving their goal. An accredited Architectural Technologist is typically a graduate of a 3 or 4 year architectural design and technology program at the community college or university level. This member will also have been successful in completing a 3 to 4 year Internship which requires working experience under the direct supervision of an Accredited Technologist, a Registered Architect or a Professional Engineer. During this period the member will have continued their educational upgrading and at the end of the Internship the member will have attended a two day lecture series of seminars and successfully written and passed the Association's accreditation examinations. This is not an easy process and a member will have committed a lot of time and effort to achieve accreditation.

By setting very high standards and pushing our members to be the very best in their field, the Association can ensure the highest quality of professionalism when offering our services to the general public. Our members are quite diverse in what they do. Many work with architects, engineers, interior designers, contractors and developers in a wide variety of capacities. We are designers, project coordinators and site administrators. Many of our members are building inspectors, plans examiners and even chief building officials in municipalities throughout Ontario. Some of our members are teachers in high schools and community colleges and some in planning departments of large corporations. A large number of our members are in private practice and provide complete building design services to the general public on a wide variety of building types within the limitations of the Ontario Building Code. These members generally provide the initial design, working drawings and documentation for building permits and construction, project coordination and site administration and even the construction itself in some cases.

As you can see we are much more than “drafts people” the profession of architectural technology and building design is both challenging and rewarding. Our members are true professionals and well qualified to meet those challenges head on. In recent years our members have demonstrated this with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing introduction of Bill 124 and the requirements for qualifications and registration under the Act. Many of our members have shown the way to the rest of the industry by achieving these requirements and obtaining their individual BCIN (Building Code Identification Number). The Association of Architectural Technologist of Ontario is here to ensure that our profession remains just that; professional. Our objectives have not changed since the beginning and we will continue to ensure quality and maintain integrity.

Adapted from an article by Kerry Traynor MAATO Accredited Architectural Technologist and Program Coordinator for the Architectural Program at Fanshawe College, London, Ontario.



THE ASSOCIATION OF ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGISTS OF ONTARIO

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