



Panel on Employment Challenges of New Canadians

Summary of the Panel's
Online Consultation



Employment and Social Development Canada
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**Panel on Employment Challenges of New Canadians –
Summary of the Panel's Online Consultation**

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Disclaimer: The review of the online consultation was conducted by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) shortly after it ended on December 1, 2014. The purpose of this review was to provide the Panel on Employment Challenges of New Canadians with a better understanding of the challenges and best practices of the stakeholders involved in the pathway to employment for new Canadians. While all care has been taken in preparing this report and summarizing the findings as accurately as possible, the report provides only a subjective review of the online responses. Questions were completed on a voluntary basis, response may have been incomplete and interpretation of the responses may vary. ESDC expressly disclaims any liability for any damage resulting from the use of the material contained in this summary.



Introduction

This report provides a summary of responses to the online consultation undertaken by the Panel on Employment Challenges of New Canadians. The questionnaire (Annex A) was available on Employment and Social Development Canada's (ESDC) website from October 24th to December 1st, 2014.

The Panel, chaired by Mr. Nick Noorani and six other experts, was tasked by the ESDC Minister to consult with employers, regulators, academics, governments, immigrant serving organizations and other relevant stakeholders to identify successes, innovative approaches, and best practices, notably on licensing, hiring and retention, related to the labour market integration of recent immigrants.

The online consultation provided access for the Panel to the extensive network of stakeholders involved in the pathway to employment of new Canadians, including by hearing directly from newcomers.

While the survey questions varied slightly according to the respondent's category (e.g. individual, business, etc.), the responses can be organized along four key themes:

- Employment Challenges Faced by Newcomers
- Available Supports for Newcomers
- Role of Employers
- Additional Actions to Help Newcomers find Jobs

After providing an overview of the individuals and organizations who participated in the online consultation, a thematic summary of responses will be presented.

Section A: Overview of Participants

The following statistical overview summarizes participation in the online consultation undertaken by the Panel on Employment Challenges of New Canadians:

- 2,548 site visits to the consultation page on ESDC's website
- 620 participants, of which 568 provided their input in English and 52 in French
- 289 completed responses (incomplete consultations contained data that were taken into consideration for this summary)

In addition to making the online survey available to the general public, ESDC also invited stakeholders to participate, including those organizations invited for the in-person consultations, as follows:

- over 130 organizations serving newcomers
- more than 300 employers
- over 50 academics with a particular expertise in this area
- more than 100 regulatory stakeholders
- over 60 other relevant stakeholders

Additionally, other federal departments, including Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Industry Canada, Health Canada, as well as other stakeholders, such as the Canadian Network of National Associations of Regulators, shared the invitation to participate in the online consultation through their own networks of relevant stakeholders.

Overview of Individual Participants

Most responses to the consultation came from respondents who identified themselves as individuals, who are largely newcomers¹ to Canada, live in Ontario and are between 35 and 49 years old. Following individuals, a quarter of responses were completed by organizations supporting newcomers, with the remainder of responses almost equally divided between the other categories.

Table A1: I am or I represent the following:

Types of Participants (among 544 self-identified)		
	Percentage	Count
Individual	40.1%	218
Organization supporting newcomers	25.4%	138
Other (please specify)	9.2%	50
Organization involved in the assessment of foreign credentials	7.5%	41
Academia	6.4%	35
Business	5.7%	31
Government	5.7%	31
Total		544

Among responses to the "individual" category, 84% self-identified as immigrants (not born) in Canada. Approximately one third of these respondents indicated that their country or region of birth was Asia and Pacific, with 12% from the Middle East and a similar proportion from

¹ For the purpose of this consultation, a newcomer is defined as a person who was not born in Canada, who was not a Canadian citizen by birth and who has settled in Canada permanently. Newcomers are those who settled in Canada less than five years ago.

Europe (Table A2). Of the respondents not born in Canada, a majority of (60%) have been living in Canada for five years or less. Specifically, 26% have been living in Canada for three to five years, while 20% have been in Canada one to two years, and 14% for less than one year.

Table A2: Country or region of birth

Country or region of birth (among 141 self-identified)	
	Count
Asia and Pacific	49
Canada	24
Middle East	17
Europe	17
South America	11
Africa	10
Central America	8
United States	3
Prefer not to answer	2
Total	141

Overview of Participants from Organizations Supporting Newcomers

One hundred and thirty-eight responses were obtained from respondents in this category. Most organizations (53%) did not indicate the annual revenue of their organization, either because they didn't know, or preferred not to answer. Among those who responded, 27% had annual revenue of \$1 million or more (Table A3). Most organizations operated in Ontario (28%) although participation was present across Canada, with the exception of the territories.

Table A3: Annual revenue of the organization

Annual revenue (among 122 self-identified)	
	Count
\$0–\$29,999	1
\$30,000–\$99,999	3
\$100,000–\$249,999	3
\$250,000–\$499,999	7
\$500,000–\$999,999	11
\$1 million plus	33
Don't know/Prefer not to answer	64
Total	122

Overview of Participants from Organizations Assessing Foreign Credentials

Forty-one responses were provided by those identifying themselves as representing organizations that assess foreign credentials. This likely includes professional regulatory bodies and may also include organizations that provide assessment services for international education and credential evaluation. Most respondents indicated that their organizations operate across Canada and even internationally, while Table A4 indicates that for 88% of respondents, mandatory licensing/certification is necessary for their field of occupation.

Table A4: What level of licensing or certification is required for this field of occupation?

Level of licensing/certification required (among 34 self-identified)	
	Count
Mandatory licensing/certification	30
Voluntary licensing/certification	4
No licensing/certification necessary	3
Other (please specify)	3
Don't know/Prefer not to answer	0
Total	40

Overview of Academic Participants

Thirty-five academics participated in the online consultation, with the majority (74%) representing universities and colleges (Table A5). Almost half of academics worked in institutions in Ontario, while roughly one out of five worked in Alberta and British Columbia.

Table A5: Institution Type

Institution type (among 35 self-identified)	
	Count
University	17
College	9
Other (please specify)	4
Secondary School/Cégep/Career college	4
Don't know/Prefer not to answer	1
Total	35

Overview of Business Participants

Thirty-one respondents indicated that they represented businesses. Of these respondents, most identified themselves as small businesses (1–99 employees) and large employers (500+ employees), with each representing a 38% share of business respondents, followed by medium-sized businesses (100–499 employees). About 40 per cent of businesses operated across Canada. Businesses were represented in a variety of industries, including retail/manufacturing, energy/utilities, health, transportation, recruitment, construction, marketing, HR, technology/communications and others.

Overview of Government Participants

Thirty-one respondents to the consultation indicated that they were government representatives, with the largest representation from provincial or territorial governments, followed closely by representatives of municipal governments (Table A6). Of those government representatives, 9 of 25 indicated that they are located in Ontario.

Table A6: Government type

Government type (among 27 self-identified)	
	Count
Provincial/territorial	10
Municipal	9
Federal	5
Other (please specify)	2
Don't know/prefer not to answer	1
Total	27

Section B: Employment Challenges Faced by Newcomers

Almost all respondents stated that newcomers are facing employment-related difficulties in Canada. For example, of the 93 organizations supporting newcomers who responded to the consultation, all but one indicated newcomers faced challenges accessing the labour market to their full potential.

“The challenges have been: lack of Canadian experience; rejection before interview; and difficulty understanding the job hiring process.”

– Individual Respondent

Foremost among challenges identified by individual respondents (Table B1),² was a lack of, or difficulty obtaining, Canadian work experience, followed by difficulties getting their foreign experience and education recognized and a perceived employer bias against hiring immigrants. Other employment-related issues faced by newcomers included a lack of social and professional networks, difficulty obtaining work because of over-qualification, challenges related to language competency (in particular, occupation-specific language), cultural adaption challenges, perceived problems with the immigration system and inadequate pre-arrival information.

To better explain the difficulties with language, one individual respondent commented that,

“The biggest challenge I faced in Canada is the language. I feel difficulty in coping with daily life in English. Even if my CLB (Canadian language benchmarks) score is 8, it is more focus on the workplace English, not the daily life in English.”

Table B1: Individual responses to the question “Have you faced or are you facing challenges in getting a job in Canada that makes full use of your skills and international experience?” (108 total responses)

Responses	References
Lack of Canadian experience (difficulty obtaining)	24
Difficulties with the recognition of foreign credentials	21
Perceived employer bias	16
Lack of social and professional networks	14
Over qualification	11
Language competency challenges	9
Cultural adaption challenges	5
Challenges associated with the immigration system	5
Inadequate pre-arrival information (including labour market information, misinformation)	3

² To obtain the categorization, responses to the online consultation were reviewed and common themes were identified. Then, references to these themes were counted for each category of respondents, where there were sufficient numbers to warrant an analysis.



Some respondents indicated that the immigration system did not align with labour market realities they experienced upon arrival in Canada. Prior to their immigration to Canada, some respondents noted their belief that the assessment of skills and education for immigration purposes meant that they were qualified to work in Canada. However, once in Canada, several newcomers mentioned struggling to meet the professional requirements of their occupation which most often did not correspond with immigration criteria. For example, one individual indicated,

“Challenges faced included – total lack of information about life after landing in Canada – no pre-landing sessions; impression that immigration on skills points and assessment of skills and education during application meant that I am qualified for a job...Even an engineer with over 15 years of experience needs to reprove themselves”.

While organizations serving newcomers (OSNs) listed obtaining Canadian experience high among the challenges faced by newcomers (Table B2), there were some key differences among other top employment challenges when compared to those listed by individuals. For example, for individual respondents, perceived employer bias was ranked among the top three greatest challenges, whereas perceived employer bias was 5th on the list of challenges identified

by OSNs. Similarly, while over-qualification and language competency challenges were ranked 5th and 6th by individual respondents, these challenges were ranked 6th and 3rd by OSNs, respectively. One OSN respondent indicated that immigrants faced

“many difficulties obtaining recognition for their diploma as well as obtaining their first paid job in Canada.”³

“Where I come from there is only information on medical exams and visa processing. There are not many consultants to inform newcomers about the challenges of educational credentials assessments.”

– Individual Respondent

These results indicate that the perception of employment-related challenges varied according to category of respondent. That said, while the ranking of issues varied, similar concerns were frequently identified by all groups.

³ « Beaucoup de difficultés tant pour la reconnaissance des diplômes que pour la recherche d'une première expérience de travail rémunérée au Canada. »

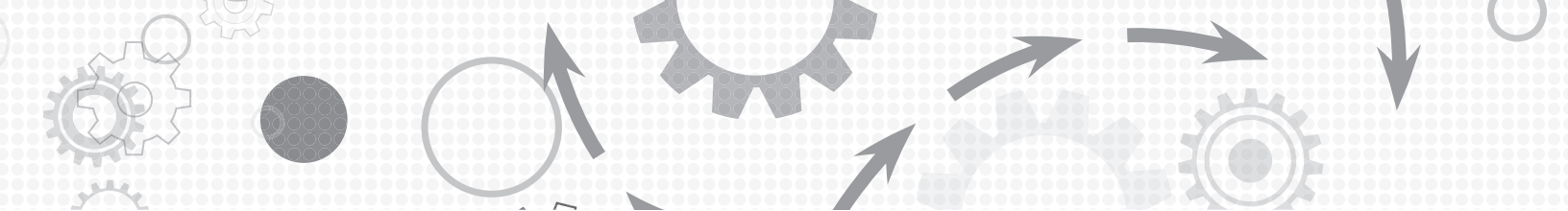
Table B2: Organizations serving newcomers (OSNs) responses to the question, “In your opinion, are newcomers facing challenges in getting jobs that make full use of their skills and experience? Please describe. (81 total responses)

Responses	References
Difficulties with the recognition of foreign credentials	43
Difficulty obtaining/lack of Canadian experience	32
Language competency challenges	30
Cultural adaption challenges	19
Perceived employer bias	17
Over-qualification	16
Lack of social and professional networks	15
Inadequate pre-arrival information (including labour market information, misinformation)	15
Challenges associated with the immigration system	1

Table B3 provides a ranking to best illustrate the perception of the employment difficulties faced by newcomers according to newcomers (individuals) and OSNs. For example, a ranking of “1” indicates that response was mentioned the most frequently by respondents to this particular question, as per a subjective analysis. Please note that these rankings are subjective as categories were determined based on an initial overview of responses and are not comprehensive.

Table B3: Responses to the question regarding challenges facing newcomers in obtaining jobs that make full use of their skills and experience, as ranked by newcomers and OSNs.

Responses	Individuals	OSNs
	Rank	Rank
Difficulties with the recognition of foreign credentials	2	1
Difficulty obtaining/lack of Canadian experience	1	2
Language competency challenges	6	3
Cultural adaption challenges	7	4
Perceived employer bias	3	5
Over-qualification	5	6
Inadequate pre-arrival information (including labour market information, misinformation)	9	7
Lack of social and professional networks	4	7
Challenges associated with the immigration system	7	9



Many respondents who identified themselves as academics described similar employment-related issues mentioned by other categories of respondents. This group frequently referenced difficulties with foreign credential recognition and employer bias, for example:

“Gatekeeping by professional associations keeps immigrants out of jobs that they were trained for. There is workplace discrimination based on foreign credentials, and racism which keeps immigrants out of good jobs.”

– (Academic respondent)

“The hiring process that many Canadian employers use (networking, referrals) does not help but hinders many newcomers from finding positions that best suit their skills and experience.”

– (Academic respondent)

Among organizations involved in the assessment of foreign credentials, some respondents indicated that key employment-related challenges for regulated occupations included obtaining the necessary documentation, confirming the educational equivalence, and overcoming differences between professional standards in the newcomers' home countries and those in Canada. Obtaining the relevant Canadian professional experience was also mentioned as a particular challenge to full recognition of qualifications by a respondent from a foreign credential assessment organization.

While government respondents did not provide a rationale for their response, the majority (18 out of 19 self-identified respondents) indicated that, in their opinion, newcomers are facing challenges getting jobs that make full use of their skills and experience.

Section C: Available Supports for Newcomers

For individual respondents, specific programs for newcomers such as those offered by all levels of governments or OSNs, were foremost among supports that assisted them in obtaining employment that made full use of their skills and experience (Table C1). Some respondents indicated that government programs were helpful, including the Canadian Immigrant Integration Program and the Federal Internship for Newcomers Program. As noted by an individual respondent, *“The Federal Internship for Newcomers Program sponsored by CIC and administered in collaboration with local immigrant support organizations: I cannot say enough good things about this program.”*

When asked “what practices, tools or programs have helped you, before and after you arrived in Canada, to get a job that made full use of your skills and experience?”, respondents most frequently mentioned “specific programs targeted at newcomers”, while “nothing helped” was the next most mentioned response.

Table C1: Individual responses to the question, “If applicable, what practices, tools or programs have helped you, before and after you arrived in Canada, to get a job that made full use of your skills and experience? (95 total responses)”

Responses	References
Specific programs targeted at newcomers	26
Nothing helped	17
Social/professional networking supports (mentorship, career counselling)	15
Canadian education/upgrading	14
Language programs	12
Job search/resume writing/interview assistance	12
Opportunities for Canadian work experience (internships, volunteer)	9
Pre-arrival information and supports	6
Online sources (job search sites)	5
Cultural support (workplace culture training)	3

In addition to the programs/services targeted to newcomers (such as the Canadian Immigrant Integration Program, OSN settlement programs and job search supports), individual participants most often mentioned networking, language competency, and obtaining Canadian education as particularly helpful with employment. For example, one respondent commented,

“I found that obtaining a Canadian degree helps as Canadian institutions are recognizable by employers and I also found networking to play an important role.”

Some individual respondents also mentioned internet resources, such as job search sites, as beneficial. Of note, another individual respondents mentioned that helpful services provided by OSNs and other relevant stakeholders ended when they were no longer considered “newcomers” and that it would be beneficial for these services to continue, as integration is an on-going process. Other programs/tools mentioned include mentorships, cultural awareness programs (both for the workplace and in general), employment counselling, help with job search, interview skills and résumé writing, and work placements (volunteer, internships, on-the-job training).

Table C2: Organizations serving newcomers (OSNs) responses to the question, “In your opinion, what practices, tools or programs are helping newcomers, before or after they arrive in Canada, get jobs that make full use of their skills and experience? (80 total responses)”

Responses	References
Pre-arrival information and supports	27
Canadian education/upgrading	26
Language programs	25
Social/professional networking supports (mentorship, career counselling)	23
Specific programs targeted at newcomers	20
Job search/resume writing/interview assistance	20
Opportunities for Canadian work experience (internships, volunteer)	17
Help with the recognition of foreign credentials processes	13
Cultural support (workplace culture training)	10
Online sources (job search sites)	4

For OSNs, Table C2 indicates that they believe the top three employment-related supports are: pre-arrival information and supports; Canadian education/upgrading; and language programs. One OSN respondent mentioned that making an early link between immigrants and employers is beneficial.⁴

Table C3 demonstrates the difference in the perception of most helpful supports, as ranked by individuals and OSNs.

Table C3: Practices, tools and programs that are helping newcomers, before or after they arrive in Canada, obtain jobs that make full use of their skills and experience, as ranked by newcomers and OSNs.

Responses	Individuals	OSNs
	Rank	Rank
Pre-arrival information and supports	8	1
Canadian education/skills gap training	4	2
Language programs	5	3
Social/professional networking supports (mentorship, career counselling)	3	4
Specific programs targeted at newcomers	1	5
Job search/resume writing/interview assistance	5	5
Opportunities for Canadian work experience (internships, volunteer)	7	7
Help with the recognition of foreign credential processes	–	8

⁴ This citation was originally provided in French, as follows: « Un lien hâtif (avant départ) entre la collectivité d'accueil (incluant l'employeur) et l'immigrant est une belle approche. »

Responses	Individuals	OSNs
	Rank	Rank
Cultural support (workplace culture training)	10	9
Online sources (job search sites)	9	10
Nothing is helping	2	–

Again, priorities for helpful practices tools and programs varied when comparing the responses of individuals to those of organizations supporting immigrants. For example, respondents from OSNs indicated that pre-arrival information and supports and Canadian education/upgrading were most important while immigrants identified specific programs targeted at newcomers and networking supports as their top two supports.

Among academics, the importance of accessing language training was the most frequently mentioned support identified as means to prepare newcomers for entry into the Canadian workforce. One academic respondent noted that:

“[enhanced language training] helps newcomers understand the cultural expectations, how to present themselves on paper and during the interview and how to behave on the job with a placement at the end. This is a very successful program and I often hear – ‘This should be mandatory for all newcomers.’

Respondents from governments frequently indicated that providing newcomers with accurate pre-arrival online foreign credential recognition information is helping newcomers make use of their skills and experience.

Like individuals and OSNs, some government representatives also indicated that specific settlement programs are helping newcomers; however, some also noted that there is a need for these programs to service more regions.

Organizations involved in the assessment of foreign credentials suggested that pre-arrival supports were of great assistance to newcomers. Supports mentioned included in-country programs such as the Canadian Immigrant Integration Program, pre-registration (for regulated occupations), online information (from various levels of government, professional organizations and stakeholders) and pre-arrival assessments.

What could help: “Pre-arrival services focusing on FCR processes, job search skills, job-related language training and professional networking opportunities such as a mentoring program.”

– Organization Supporting Newcomers

Other respondents also cited several helpful post-arrival supports including: opportunities for Canadian experience, financial supports, bridging programs, occupational orientations, certification preparation courses and integration supports (social programs and cross-cultural seminars).

Remaining challenges described by respondents were linked to language competency and access to available supports.



Section D: Role of Employers

Similarities in key challenges relating to the role of employers cut across all categories of respondents. For example, the importance of obtaining Canadian work experience and the need for employers to understand the value of foreign credentials and experience were key concerns expressed by almost all respondents.

Many respondents from the business community had largely positive feedback with respect to the impact of newcomers on their organizations/workforce. Some business representatives felt that newcomers often had strong work ethics which positively influenced the work of existing employees. Additionally, several respondents felt that newcomers expanded their markets, increased diversity, filled critical skills gaps, and brought new and innovative ways of doing things.

“We celebrate that everyone on the team has a diversity of attributes and experience.”

– Business Respondent

However, a few businesses also indicated that they faced challenges in hiring newcomers, with soft skills listed as the most frequently mentioned barrier. One respondent indicated,

“Newcomers often do not understand the soft skill requirements of the Canadian workplace.”

Other challenges included interpersonal conflicts, language barriers, creating a welcoming workforce culture, and delays linked to documentation and the recognition

of foreign credentials. Some respondents indicated that there were no problems associated with hiring newcomers. To overcome challenges, some business respondents indicated that they provided an employer-based bridging program, and paired up newcomers with co-workers or the owner to provide guidance as needed.

In terms of what else could be done to help businesses hire more newcomers, several employers indicated that immigrants should have access to networking and language classes. Other employers noted that: permanent funding for employer-based bridging programs would assist in

“providing focused training to newcomers on the importance of essential employability skills (soft skills) which are culturally-based.”

Some respondents indicated that Canada must attract immigrants with the needed skills, improve the recognition of foreign credential processes and create a “pool” of skilled workers from which businesses could recruit. One employer emphasized the importance of celebrating diversity, stating that,

“We don’t try to integrate newcomers so that ‘they’ are more like ‘us’ and instead we celebrate that everyone on the team has a diversity of attributes and experience to bring to our workplace and organizational goals.”

Many individual respondents felt strongly that employers needed to be more open-minded with regard to hiring newcomers (Table D1). Many felt that employers were biased toward Canadian-born applicants who were often



less qualified. Several respondents also felt that employers need to establish better connections with the immigrant workforce, such as through partnerships between human resources departments and OSNs. One respondent articulated this as follows:

“Employers should work in a joint manner with the immigrant institutions in order to match the workforce requirements with the immigrants’ qualifications.”

Many mentioned that employers should give them the chance to demonstrate their skills, whether through short-term volunteer positions or mentorships/internships. One respondent stated simply,

“Just give us the opportunity.”

Table D1: Individual responses to the question, “Based on your experience, what could employers do to hire, integrate and retain more newcomers in Canada? (110 total responses)

Responses	References
Fair hiring practices	30
Provide opportunities for Canadian workplace experience	30
Value foreign credentials and experience	22
Workplace cultural training (for employees and employers)	16
On-the-job training	15
Partnering with relevant stakeholders (OSNs, training facilities)	10

Additionally, some respondents felt that the hiring practices of Canadian employers tend to exclude newcomers, and that access to networks, along with fair hiring practices, would help with their employment outlook. One respondent indicated that employers should not be afraid to hire immigrants, recognizing that they bring distinct advantages, as stated here,

“Do not be afraid to hire immigrants first. Each immigrant arrives with his or her cultural baggage and it is important to think of using that.”⁵

Other suggestions from individuals to improve employer-based practices included: providing employees with cultural sensitivity training; providing on-the-job training and essential skills training; developing workplace orientation tailored to newcomers; and establishing a workplace mentor/buddy for newcomers. Some respondents also mentioned that starting salaries for newcomers often do not reflect their experience; rather, they are treated as new entrants into the workforce.

“Employers should make sure that the diversity in Canadian society is reflected in their work environments.”

– Individual Respondent

⁵ This citation was originally provided in French, as follows: « Ne pas avoir peur de le faire (embaucher des immigrants) tout d’abord. Chaque immigrant arrive avec ‘son bagage culturel’, il faut donc penser à utiliser ça ! »

OSNs agreed with individuals that the top two priorities for employers included the use of fair hiring practices and the provision of opportunities for Canadian workplace experience (Table D2). One OSN stated that employers should,

*“give (newcomers) a chance to obtain Canadian experience through part-time or volunteer positions.”*⁶

Many OSNs also indicated that financial support could be provided to employers to grant internships and jobs for newcomers.⁷

Table D2: Organizations serving newcomers (OSNs) responses to the question, “In your opinion, what could employers do to hire, integrate and retain more newcomers? (78 total responses)”

Responses	References
Fair hiring practices	29
Provide opportunities for Canadian workplace experience	22
Workplace cultural training (for employees and employers)	19
Partnering with relevant stakeholders (OSNs, training facilities)	18
On-the-job training	18
Value foreign credentials and experience	10

When faced with the question, “What could employers do to hire, integrate and retain more newcomers?”, academics most often mentioned cultural training and awareness programs for employers, newcomers and existing employees as an area of focus. One academic wrote,

“Focus(ing) on cultural proficiency training within existing organizations, government departments and businesses will ensure retention”.

Government responses regarding the role of employers largely aligned with those of other respondents. Their suggestions included: fair hiring practices, opportunities for Canadian experience, partnering with OSNs, streamlining of immigration and foreign credential recognition processes, and on-the-job training and mentorship.

Most frequently mentioned by this group were ways to connect employers and immigrants, including educating employers on ways to access the immigrant talent pool. For example, one respondent wrote *“Employers in our area are interested, but they don’t necessarily know where to find the talent pool. In the end, recruitment is a competitive process and a new immigrant does not have a competitive advantage.”*

Other respondents mentioned the need for employers to provide immigrants with clear information about workplace expectations.

⁶ This citation was originally provided in French, as follows: « Donner la chance d’obtenir cette expérience canadienne par des postes à temps partiel ou en acceptant le bénévolat dans leur entreprise. »

⁷ This citation was originally provided in French, as follows: « Le gouvernement devait aussi accorder des moyen financiers aux employeurs pour l’octroi des stages et emplois pour des nouveaux arrivants. »



For organizations involved in the assessment of foreign credentials, once again, many felt that employers must use and promote fair hiring practices. Many respondents mentioned the need to engage newcomers pre-arrival so they acquire a better understanding of the requirements to practice their occupation in Canada and are better prepared to enter the workforce upon arrival. Some respondents also noted that, in addition to providing more opportunities for work experience to newcomers, employers could also provide cultural training for both newcomers and existing employees.

Other suggestions included providing employers with the means to better understand and assess foreign credentials, providing financial support for newcomers during the recognition of foreign credentials process, and providing training to fill the gaps in foreign experience and skills.

In general, respondents largely agreed that employer attitudes toward newcomers play a key role in the recruitment and retention of immigrants. Business respondents often highlighted the importance of newcomers obtaining the necessary language, soft skills and cultural understanding of Canadian workplace norms to facilitate their employment. One business respondent also highlighted the importance of aligning immigration with employers' needs by stating that,

"We need to have more immigrants with the skills we are seeking."⁸

⁸ This citation was originally provided in French, as follows: « Il faudrait avoir plus d'immigration avec le profil de compétence que nous recherchons. »

Section E: Additional Actions to Help Newcomers Find Jobs

While Section D describes stakeholders' perception of the role of employers in providing employment for newcomers, section E takes a broader approach, focusing on responses to the more general question, question, "What else could be done to help newcomers, before or after they arrive in Canada, get jobs that make full use of their skills and experience?"

Answers tended to focus on challenges faced by individuals as key areas for future action. Among individuals and OSNs, improving the quality of, and access to, pre-arrival information was foremost among areas for further action (Tables E1 and E2). Better credentials and skills testing, as well as the use of personal contacts (such as through mentoring or OSNs) were also important for newcomers. One individual stated,

"Personal contact with people was the most important tool to get a position in my field when I arrived in Canada."

Table E1: Individual Responses to the question, "What else could be done to help newcomers, before or after they arrive in Canada, get jobs that make full use of their skills and experience?" (107 total responses).

Responses	References	Rank
Pre-arrival		
Improve information/ access to information available (including foreign credential recognition info)	20	2
Contacts (mentors, OSNs)	16	5
Assessment of credential/skills testing	13	8
Language training and testing	6	12
Post-arrival & in general		
Connect newcomers and employers (networking)	21	1
Improve foreign credential recognition processes	20	2
Training, career counselling	18	4
More opportunities for Canadian experience	16	5
Fair hiring practices by employers	14	7
Language training	13	8
Improve labour market information (including access and awareness)	8	10
Cultural awareness training (for employers and/or newcomers)	7	11



Other suggestions included pre-arrival language training and qualification assessment and connecting immigrants to OSNs before landing in Canada. One respondent proposed that Canada require visa applicants to complete an action plan, including a career path and path to licensing if in a regulated profession, as a means to help immigrants become better informed about the foreign credential recognition process before arriving in Canada.

Among individuals, post-arrival suggestions most often included ways to connect immigrants and employers through, for example, an online repository of immigrants that employers could access. Many respondents indicated that the lengthy and costly foreign credential recognition process needed to be improved.

For example, one individual stated that foreign credential recognition must be strengthened and additional training offered where necessary, with the government providing financial assistance to professional orders to develop the necessary foreign credential recognition tools.⁹

“Regulators need to really determine what is necessary to do the work (not what their ideal member looks like).”

– Government Organization

Several respondents suggested establishing quotas for hiring newcomers based on the regional immigrant population, while cultural awareness programs for employers and

employees were also highlighted. Responses from OSNs are similar to those of individuals, and can be found in Table E2.

Table E2: Organizations serving newcomers (OSNs) responses to the question, “In your opinion, what else could be done to help newcomers, before or after they arrive in Canada, get jobs that make full use of their skills and experience?” (74 total responses)

Responses	References	Rank
Pre-arrival		
Improve information/ access to information available (including FCR info)	24	2
Assessment of credential/skills testing	9	6
Contacts (mentors, OSNs)	3	10
Language training and testing	3	10
Post-arrival & in general		
Improve foreign credential recognition processes	25	1
Connect newcomers and employers (networking)	17	3
Training, career counselling	15	4
More opportunities for Canadian experience	14	5
Cultural awareness training (for employers and/or newcomers)	8	7
Improve labour market information (including access and awareness)	7	8
Language training	6	9
Fair hiring practices by employers	3	10

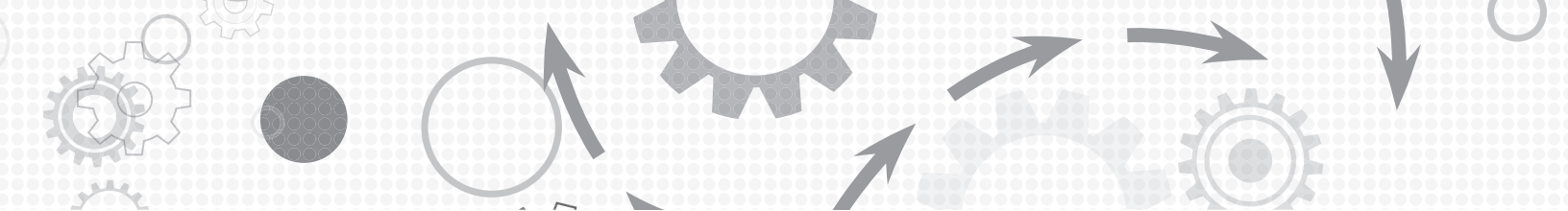
⁹ This citation was originally provided in French, as follows: « Renforcer la reconnaissance des titres étrangers et offrir la formation manquante s’il y a lieu. Le gouvernement doit s’assurer (et contribuer au financement de outils) que les ordres développent les outils nécessaires. »

A summary comparing the responses of individuals and OSNs to the question, “What more can be done?” can be found in Table E3.

While many academic responses to the question of what more could be done are generally in line with the responses from other groups, some mentioned the need for more funding, both for settlement agencies and for newcomers. One proposal was for “funding incentives, grants or loan which will cover the cost of the bridging programs conditional on successful completion.” Many responses mentioned the need for pre-arrival supports; one respondent suggested that potential candidates for immigration develop an integration plan at the beginning of the immigration process.

Table E3: Responses to the question “What can be done to help newcomers, before or after arrival in Canada, get jobs that make full use of their skills and experience?” as ranked by individuals and OSNs.

Responses	Individuals	OSNs
	Rank	Rank
Pre-arrival		
Improve information/ access to information available (including foreign credential recognition info)	2	2
Assessment of credential/skills testing	8	6
Contacts (mentors, OSNs)	5	10
Language training and testing	12	10
Post-arrival & in general		
Improve FCR processes	2	1
Connect newcomers and employers (networking)	1	3
Training, career counselling	4	4
More opportunities for Canadian experience	5	5
Cultural awareness training (for employers and/or newcomers)	10	7
Improve labour market information (including access and awareness)	10	8
Language training	8	9
Fair hiring practices by employers	7	10



Government representatives most frequently mentioned pre-arrival supports as a means to help newcomers make full use of their skills and experience. They indicated that accurate and timely pre-arrival information with regard to foreign credential recognition processes as well as pre-arrival assessment and training could help to manage newcomers' expectations upon arrival.

In response to the question, "What else could be done": "Financial support for bridging programs, language training and support to develop language skills within the profession."

– Foreign Credential Assessment Organization

In addition to proposing settlement support services, some government respondents also suggested providing resources to train settlement workers about foreign credential recognition processes. Some respondents also mentioned establishing employment initiatives for immigrants such as training and hiring incentives.

When asked to analyze what else could be done to assist newcomers with employment, several foreign credential assessment organizations highlighted the importance of developing common, national application systems, funds to help foreign credential assessment organizations develop harmonized assessment processes, and support for workplace cultural integration, including language training and training to better understand Canadian workplace norms.

In response to the question, "What else could be done?" some respondents from foreign credential assessment organizations mentioned the need to inform potential immigrants about the realities of credential and foreign work experience recognition. Responses indicate that many newcomers were given the impression through the immigration process that their profession was in demand in Canada and as such, they would be able to practice their profession upon arrival in Canada.

Some respondents indicated that although they were able to enter Canada as skilled immigrants, they nonetheless encountered difficulties with recognition of credentials and finding work.



Annex A: Online Consultation Questions

A Panel on Employment Challenges of New Canadians is holding consultations to:

1. identify ways to better integrate newcomers into the workforce, especially in the areas hiring, retention and licensing; and
2. identify the barriers faced by employers when hiring and retaining newcomers.

If you are an employer or an organization involved with newcomers, or if you have an interest or expertise in this area, the Panel would like to hear from you.

The submissions or views provided as part of this consultation will be used to develop a public report expected to be available in early 2015.

Definitions

Newcomer: For the purpose of this consultation, a newcomer is defined as a person who was not born in Canada, who was not a Canadian citizen by birth and who has settled in Canada permanently. Newcomers are those who settled in Canada less than five years ago.

Employment Challenges: Highly educated immigrants have many skills to offer and are very important to Canada's social and economic well-being. Nevertheless, newcomers to Canada have a hard time finding work in Canada, especially work related to their skills and experience. As a result, many immigrants end up in jobs for which they are over-qualified.

Participant Information

The following information will be used for internal research purposes. The report will include aggregate information so that answers cannot be attributed to individual participants.

I consent to answering this survey.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

I am or I represent a/an... (select one)

- Individual
- Academia
- Business
- Government
- Organization involved in the assessment of foreign credentials
- Organization supporting newcomers
- Other (please specify)

Individual

- 1) Age
 - under 20
 - 20–34
 - 35–49
 - 50–64
 - 65+
 - Prefer not to answer
- 2) Province or territory where you reside.
- 3) City where you reside.



4) Country or region of birth

- Canada
- Africa
- Asia and Pacific
- Central America
- Europe
- Middle East
- South America
- United States
- Prefer not to answer

5) If you were not born in Canada, how long have you been living in Canada?

- Less than 1 year
- 1–2 years
- 3–5 years
- 6–10 years
- 11–20 years
- 21+ years
- I do not live in Canada
- Prefer not to answer

Question 1:

Have you faced or are you facing challenges in getting a job in Canada that makes full use of your skills and international experience?

Question 2:

If applicable, what practices, tools or programs have helped you, before and after you arrived in Canada, to get a job that made full use of your skills and experience?

Question 3:

Based on your experience, what could employers do to hire, integrate and retain more newcomers in Canada?

Question 4:

In your opinion, what else could be done to help newcomers, before or after they arrive in Canada, get jobs that make full use of their skills and experience?

Business

1) Company size

- Small (1–99 employees)
- Medium (100–499 employees)
- Large (500+ employees)
- Don't know/Prefer not to answer

2) Industry type. Please select all that apply.

- Agriculture/Food
- Energy/Utilities
- Financial services/Insurance
- Government/Public sector
- Health
- Human resources/Consulting
- Marketing
- Retail/Manufacturing
- Technology/Communications
- Other (please specify)
- Don't know/Prefer not to answer

- 3) Province(s)/territory(ies) where your business operates. Please select all that apply.
- [National, NL, NS, PEI, NB, QC, ON, MB, SK, AB, BC, NU, NT, YK, Overseas, Don't know/Prefer not to answer]

- 4) City of the head/main office.
Please specify.

Question 1:

In the past 5 years, has your organization hired newcomers?

- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know/Prefer not to answer
- 1.1. If applicable, please describe the challenges you have faced in hiring newcomers.
- 1.2. If applicable, what impact, if any, have newcomers had on your workforce and your organization.

Question 2:

What practices, tools and programs does your organization have in place to help newcomers integrate into your workplace? Please select all that apply and, if applicable, comment on the degree of success of these initiatives.

- Active recruitment of newcomers (e.g. job fairs): Please describe and comment on the degree of success.
- Career and employment counselling: Please describe and comment on the degree of success.
- Developed assessment process of foreign qualifications: Please describe and comment on the degree of success.

- Language classes and programs: Please describe and comment on the degree of success.
- Mentoring programs: Please describe and comment on the degree of success.
- Paid or unpaid internships: Please describe and comment on the degree of success.
- Partnerships with immigrant-serving organizations: Please describe and comment on the degree of success.
- Specific training for newcomers: Please describe and comment on the degree of success.
- Other practices, tools and programs: Please describe and comment on the degree of success.
- Don't know.

Question 3:

Has your organization had difficulties integrating newcomers into your workforce and retaining them? Please describe.

(Integration is the result when an individual is able to work in an occupation and have the opportunity to make efforts to retain their cultural identity from their society of origin.)

(Retention is the process of implementing initiatives to encourage the retention of staff in the workplace.)

Question 4:

What else could be done to help your organization hire, integrate and retain newcomers?



Organization Involved in the Assessment of Foreign Credentials

- 1) Field of occupation for which your organization is involved in the assessment of foreign credentials. Please select all that apply.
 - Accounting
 - Education
 - Engineering
 - Healthcare
 - Science
 - Trades
 - Other (please specify)
 - Don't know/Prefer not to answer.
- 2) Province(s)/territory(ies) where your organization provides service. Please check all that apply.
National, NL, NS, PEI, NB, QC, ON, MB, SK, AB, BC, NU, NT, YK, International, Don't know/Prefer not to answer.
- 3) What level of licensing or certification is required for this field of occupation? Please check all that apply.
 - Mandatory licensing/Certification
 - Voluntary licensing/Certification
 - No licensing/Certification is necessary
 - Other (please specify)
 - Don't know/Prefer not to answer.
- 4) City of the head/main office. Please specify.

Question 1:

In your opinion, are newcomers facing challenges getting their foreign credentials recognized? Please describe.

Question 2:

To your knowledge, what practices, tools or programs are helping newcomers, before or after they arrive in Canada, get their foreign credentials recognized?

Question 3:


In your opinion, what could employers do to hire, integrate and retain more newcomers?

Question 4:

In your opinion, what else could be done to help newcomers, before or after they arrive in Canada, get jobs that make full use of their skills and experience?

Organization Supporting Newcomers

- 1) Annual revenue of the organization
 - 0–29K
 - 30–100K
 - 100–249K
 - 250–499K
 - 500–1M
 - 1M+
 - Don't know/Prefer not to answer
- 2) Province(s)/territory(ies) where your organization operates. Please select all that apply.
[National, NL, NS, PEI, NB, QC, ON, MB, SK, AB, BC, NU, NT, YK, Overseas, Don't know/Prefer not to answer]
- 3) City of the head/main office. Please specify.

- 
- 4) Type of organization
 - Community organization
 - Immigrant association
 - Immigration consultant/Lawyer
 - Labour/Union group
 - Settlement/Integration service provider
 - Other (please specify)
 - Don't know/Prefer not to answer
 - 2) Province(s)/territory(ies) where you provide service
[National, NL, NS, PEI, NB, QC, ON, MB, SK, AB, BC, NU, NT, YK, Don't know/Prefer not to answer]
 - 3) City where you work. Please specify.
 - 4) Name of government/department. Please specify.

Academia

- 1) Institution type
 - Primary school
 - Secondary school
 - Cégep
 - Career college
 - College
 - University
 - Other (please specify)
 - Don't know/Prefer not to answer
- 2) Province(s)/territory(ies) where your institution operates
[National, NL, NS, PEI, NB, QC, ON, MB, SK, AB, BC, NU, NT, YK, Overseas, Don't know/Prefer not to answer]
- 3) City(ies) where your institution operates. Please specify.

Government

- 1) Government type
 - Federal
 - Provincial/Territorial
 - Municipal
 - Other (please specify)
 - Don't know/Prefer not to answer

Long Answer Questions for Organizations Supporting Newcomers, Academia, and Government:

Question 1:

In your opinion, are newcomers facing challenges in getting jobs that make full use of their skills and experience? Please describe.

Question 2:

In your opinion, what practices, tools or programs are helping newcomers, before or after they arrive in Canada, get jobs that make full use of their skills and experience?

Question 3:

In your opinion, what could employers do to hire, integrate and retain more newcomers?

Question 4:

In your opinion, what else could be done to help newcomers, before or after they arrive in Canada, get jobs that make full use of their skills and experience?

