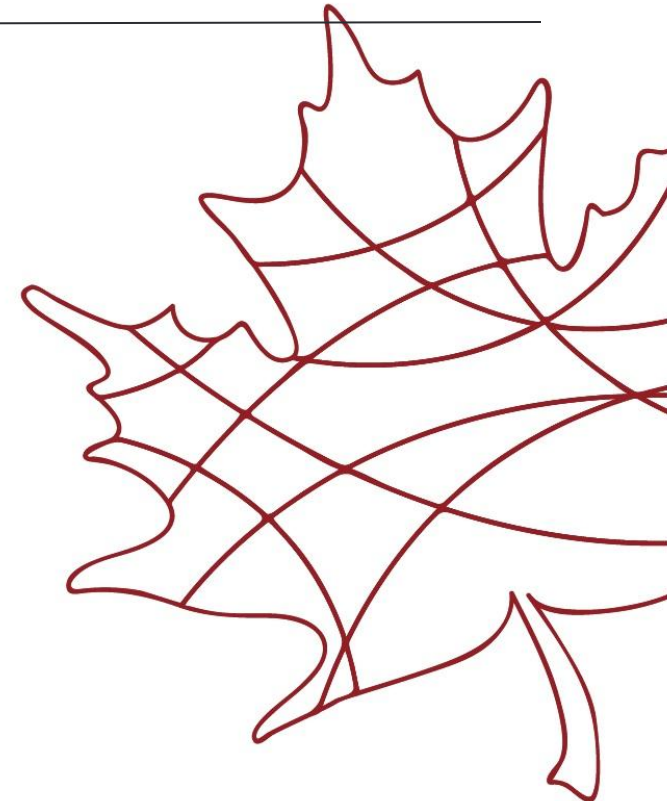


# Express Entry Reforms

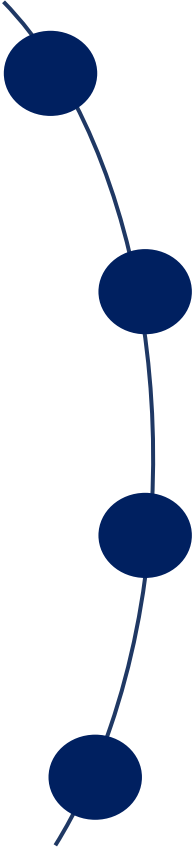
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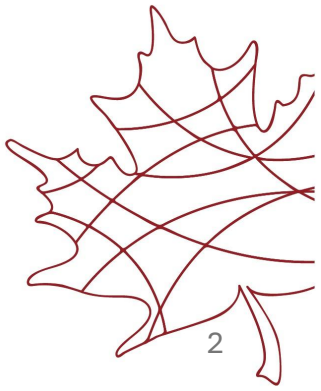


# Table of Contents

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- Current Express Entry System
- Looking Ahead: What's Next for Express Entry
- Potential Changes
- Discussion



# Topic of Consultations

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Opportunities to:

- ***Merge the Federal High Skilled programs***, and
- ***Recalibrate the Comprehensive Ranking System*** to achieve the greatest possible economic benefits to Canada.

Potential reforms would support the Government's mission ***to attract the best talent in the world*** by ensuring that highly skilled and high earning candidates are selected in greater numbers, and by enhancing client service and operational efficiencies.

# Current Express Entry System

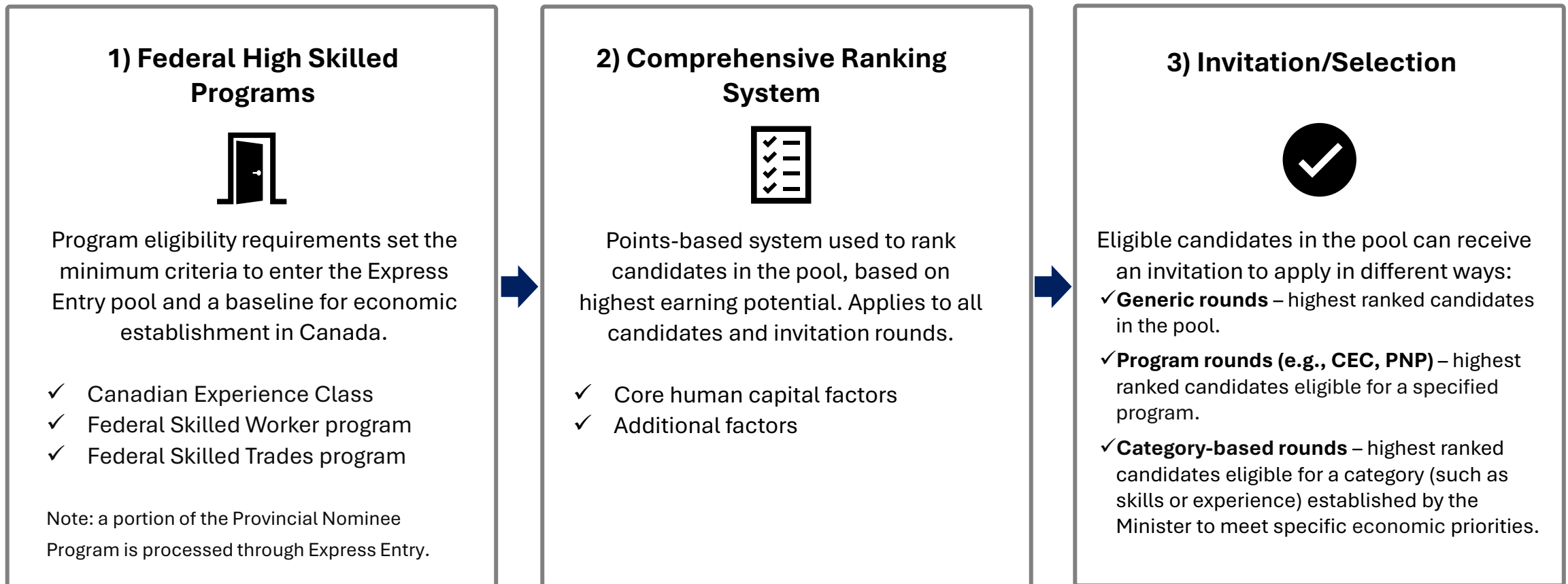
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# What is Express Entry

Express Entry is a “by-invitation-only” application management system for the Federal High Skilled programs (i.e., Federal Skilled Worker Program, Federal Skilled Trades Program, Canadian Experience Class) and a portion of the Provincial Nominee Program.

The Federal High Skilled programs, Comprehensive Ranking System and Category-Based Selection **work together to select skilled immigrants**. Express Entry relies on **human capital** and transparent economic priorities to prioritize selection.



# Current Express Entry Criteria

## Minimum Entry Criteria

To qualify for Express Entry and enter the pool, individuals must meet the **minimum requirements** of one of the federal economic immigration programs managed by the system.

- Canadian Experience Class
  - Federal Skilled Worker program
  - Federal Skilled Trades program
- ✓ All programs require candidates to have **work experience at higher skill levels** as defined by Canada's National Occupation Classification.
  - ✓ Programs have varying **language** and **education** requirements.
  - ✓ Some programs have **additional requirements** (job offer, trade qualification, adaptability points, etc.)

## Comprehensive Ranking System

The **Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS)** was designed to help select candidates with the **highest human capital** and who are therefore most likely to succeed economically.

It includes **core factors**...

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Education
- ✓ First Official Language
- ✓ Second Official Language
- ✓ Canadian Work Experience
- ✓ Skills Transferability

...as well as various **additional factors**.

- ✓ Provincial Nomination
- ✓ Sibling in Canada
- ✓ French Proficiency
- ✓ Canadian Study

# Labour Market Outcomes of Express Entry Immigrants

Express Entry selects economic immigrants for their ability to become established and **contribute to Canada's economy**.

Principal applicants in the economic category have the **best performance outcomes** among immigrants in Canada.

**EE immigrants consistently outperformed non-EE economic immigrants** in both **employment incidence** and **income levels** across all admission cohorts from 2015 to 2021.

In high-skilled programs, median annual earnings of principal applicants **surpass the Canadian median** soon after becoming permanent residents.

## Employment outcomes of Express Entry FHS principal applicants

(Source: IRCC Evaluation of the Federal High-Skilled Economic Immigration Programs)

**93%** were employed

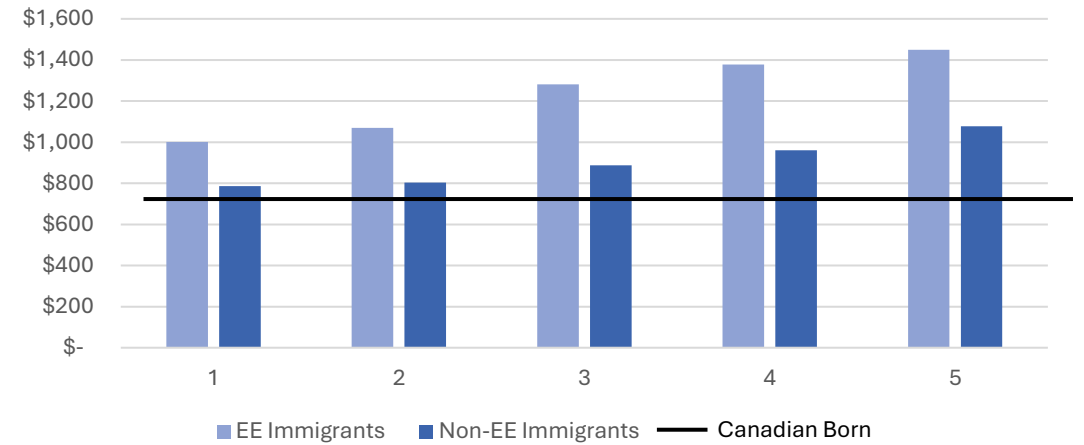
**77%** worked in their primary occupation

**88%** worked in a job matched their education and skills

**62%** worked in TEER 0 or 1 occupations in 2024

Median earnings of **\$57.7K** one year after admission

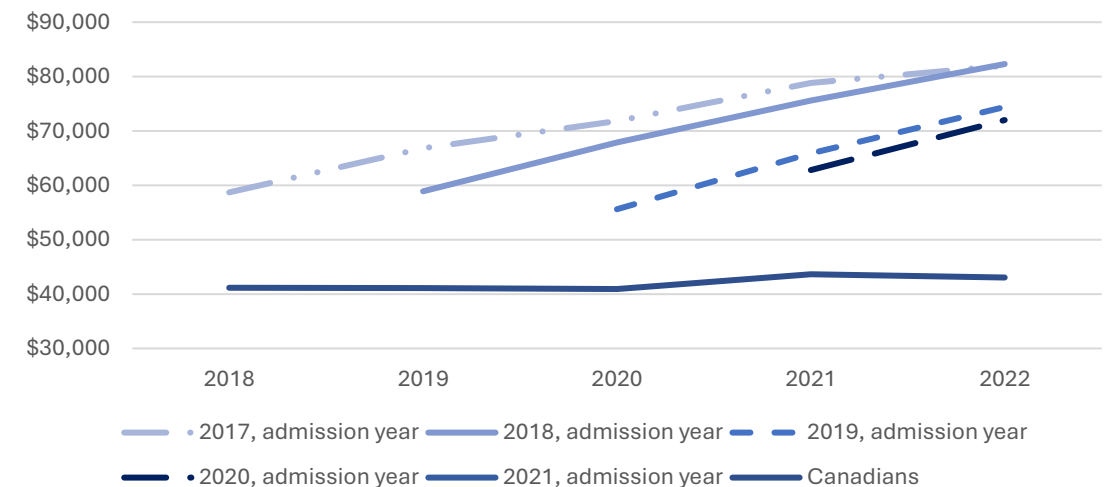
### Median Weekly Wages in 2021 by Years Since Admission



Source: IRCC Research and Knowledge Mobilization Division, Planning and Research Branch.

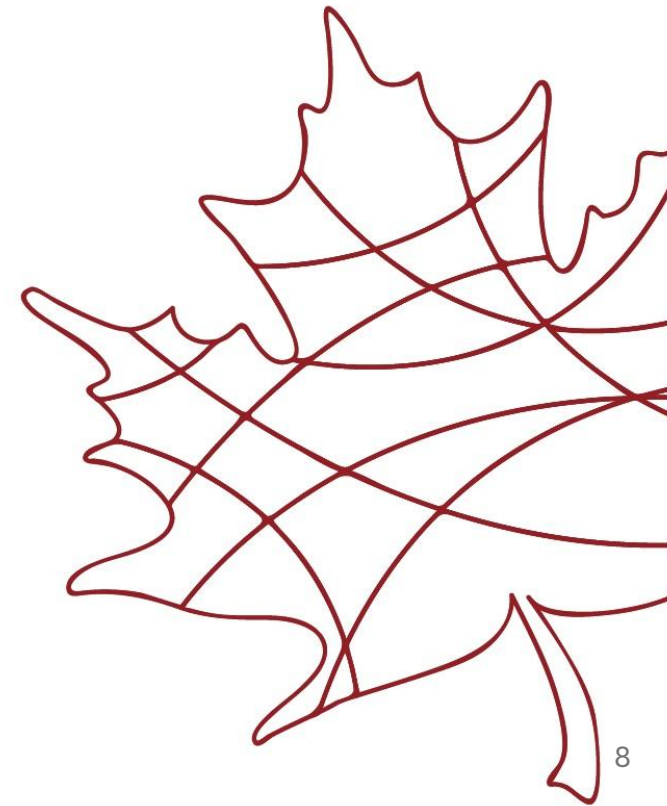
## Median employment earnings – Express Entry Principal Applicants vs Canadians

(Source: IRCC's 2024 Express Entry Year-End Report)



# Looking Ahead: What's Next for Express Entry?

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# Reform of Express Entry: An Opportunity to Further Refine the System

Looking ahead, there is an opportunity to reform Express Entry so that it will respond to emerging priorities, while considering available evidence, new tools, and what's needed to enable a digital future.

## Government Policy Priorities



Commitments to **attract the best talent in the world to help build our economy**, while returning our overall immigration rates to sustainable levels.

This includes policy commitments to facilitate **temporary to permanent transitions**, support the vitality and **economic development of official language minority communities**, and the **International Talent Attraction Strategy**.

## Category-Based Selection



**Category-based selection** offers a nimble selection tool for accessing top talent who can help address **changing economic needs**.

With this ability to target selection, there is an opportunity to assess the overlap and gaps within the system.

## Digital Platform Modernization



The Department is working towards **Digital Platform Modernization**, presenting an opportunity to improve system functionality and client experience in the Express Entry system.

## Available Evidence



**Recent research** shows that certain human capital factors are empirically better predictors of economic success for immigrants.

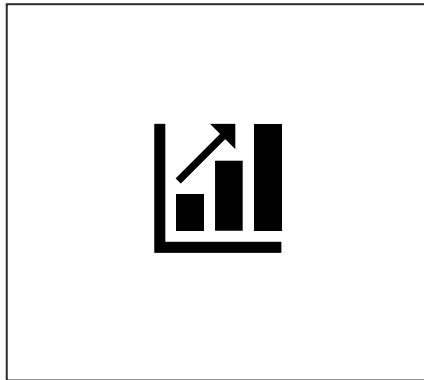
IRCC is currently conducting an **evaluation of Express Entry** to examine **longer-term outcomes of clients** selected through Express Entry, as well as the early results related to categories.

# Objectives of the Reform

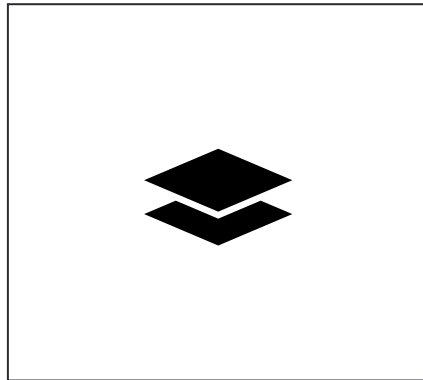
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To **reform the Federal High Skilled programs and Comprehensive Ranking System**, with a particular focus on enhancing the integrity, overall coherence, and effectiveness of the selection system to support better economic outcomes.

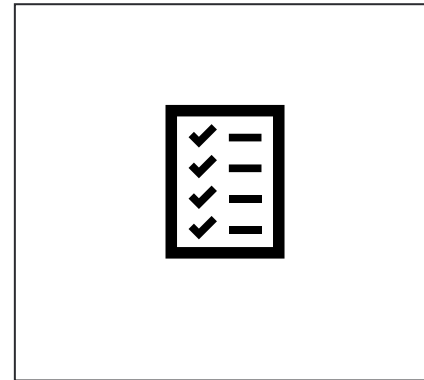
**Principles** to guide the reform:



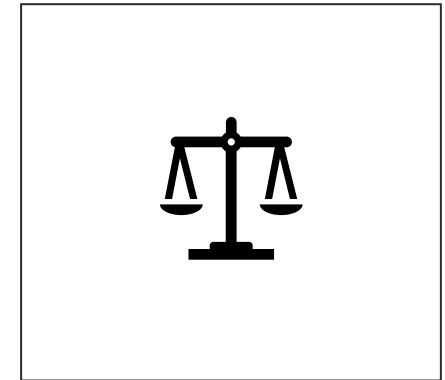
**Focus on Strongest  
Predictors of Economic  
Success**



**Reduce Overlap and  
Duplication Between  
Programs**



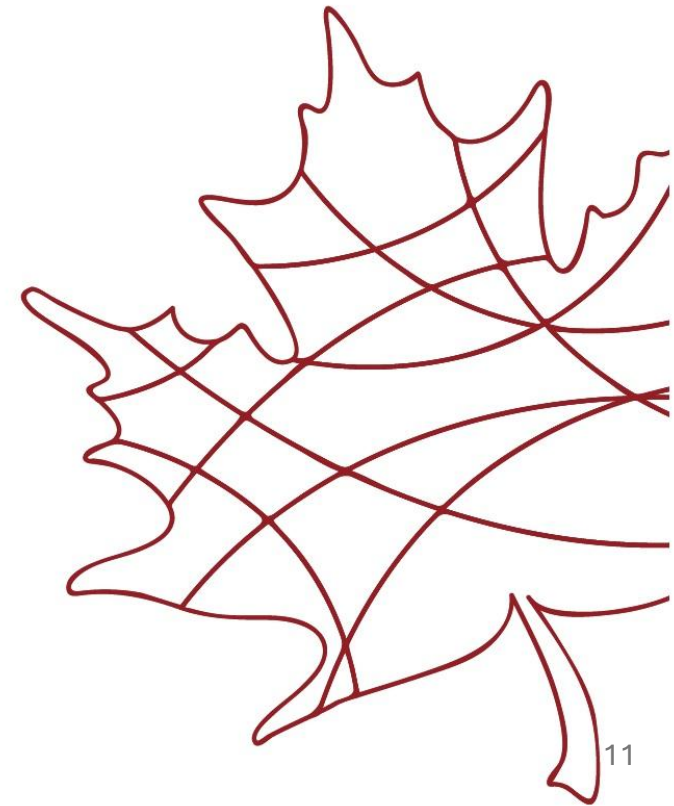
**Reduce Complexity**



**Promote Equity &  
Ensure Integrity**

# Potential Changes

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# Potential Program & Comprehensive Ranking System Reforms

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1

**Merge Express Entry's three federal programs into a single program** (via regulatory amendments):

- **Streamline minimum eligibility requirements** associated with economic establishment – i.e., education, official language proficiency, and work experience
- **Eliminate redundant intake control mechanisms** – e.g., FSW points grid

2

**Simplify the Comprehensive Ranking System to align with evidence on economic outcomes** (via amendments to Ministerial Instructions):

- **Remove or refine certain bonus points** to eliminate relatively weaker predictors of employment and earnings outcomes.
- **Remove spousal points** to address unintended consequences and enhance program integrity
- **Reward job offers/Canadian work experience in high wage occupations** to prioritize the selection of top talent
- **Strengthen recognition of Canadian licensure** to prioritize the selection of skilled tradespersons and regulated professionals who are “practice ready”

# Merging the Federal High Skilled Programs

The three Federal High Skilled programs pre-date Express Entry and were designed to be processed first-in-first-out. Now with Express Entry, the program requirements form the **minimum requirements** to get into the pool but are no longer the determining factor in selection.

There is an opportunity to reduce complexity and overlap by merging the three programs into one and simplifying eligibility requirements:

## Reduce Complexity:

- These programs have similar objectives and eligibility requirements (e.g., language skills, work experience), though specific criteria vary.
- Since the introduction of the Comprehensive Ranking System and category-based selection, IRCC may no longer need distinct programs to select specific populations in the Federal High Skilled space.
- Simplifying requirements will make it easier for clients to understand Express Entry and their own eligibility.

## Reduce Overlap and Duplication:

- Although designed to target different populations, applicants often qualify for more than one program.
- In recent years, roughly half of all invitations were sent to applicants who were eligible for at least two programs.
- There is significant overlap between the ranking system and program requirements (and between the programs themselves) leading to client confusion and application processing inefficiencies.

## Current

<b>Education</b>	<p><b>FSW:</b> Canadian high school or equivalent</p> <p><b>CEC &amp; FST:</b> N/A</p>
<b>Official Language</b>	<p><b>FSW:</b> CLB/NCLC 7</p> <p><b>CEC:</b> TEER 0,1 - CLB/NCLC 7; TEER 2,3 - CLB/NCLC 5</p> <p><b>FST:</b> reading/writing CLB/NCLC 4; speaking/listening CLB/NCLC 5</p>
<b>Work Experience</b>	<p><b>FSW:</b> 1 year continuous within the last 10yrs, in 1 TEER category 0-3</p> <p><b>CEC:</b> 1 year in Canada in the last 3yrs in 1 or more TEER categories 0-3</p> <p><b>FST:</b> 2 years within the last 5, in one eligible group of TEER 2 or 3</p>
<b>Job Offer</b>	<p><b>FSW:</b> contributes to 67 pts threshold</p> <p><b>FST:</b> Requires <i>either</i> job offer or Certificate of Trade Qualification</p> <p><b>CEC:</b> N/A</p>
<b>Minimum Points</b>	<b>FSW only:</b> 67 points

## Potential

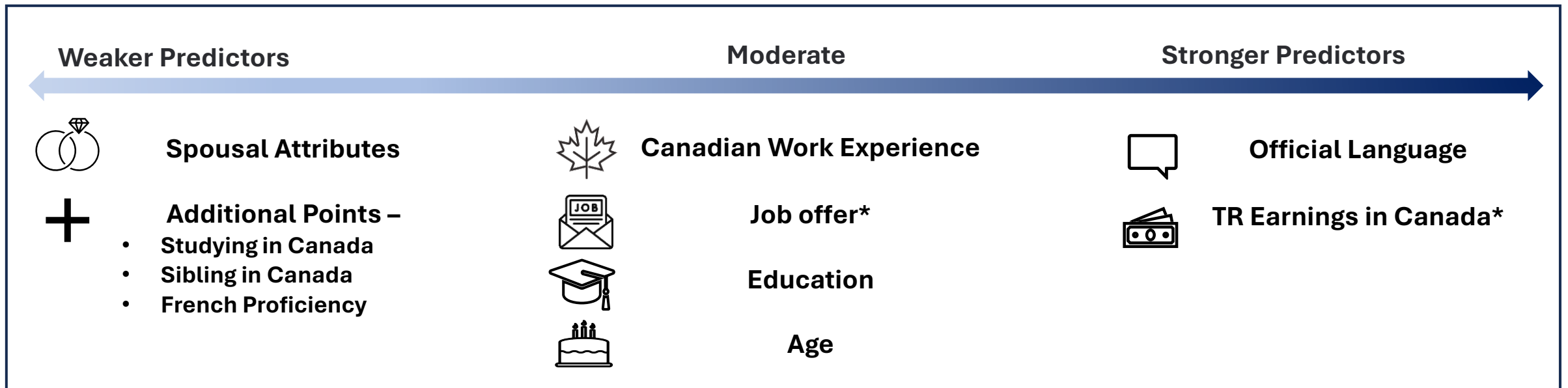
<b>Education</b>	Canadian <b>high school</b> , or equivalent (with ECA)
<b>Official Language</b>	<b>CLB/NCLC 6</b> for all TEERs and language areas
<b>Work Experience</b>	<b>1 year of cumulative work experience</b> , in one or more TEER 0-3 NOCs in the last 3 years for both Canadian and other work experience

## Simplifying the Comprehensive Ranking System

Within Express Entry, the **selection** of skilled workers is **largely determined** by the **Comprehensive Ranking System** (ranking based on candidates' economic potential) and **category-based selection** (tied to identified economic goals).

Recent studies have found that the effectiveness of factors in the ranking system in predicting candidates' potential economic outcomes varies:

- ✓ Core human capital factors are generally good predictors of economic outcomes.
- ✓ Some elements of the ranking system are relatively weaker predictors of economic outcomes.
- ✓ Other strong predictors are not currently considered.



*\*Not currently included in the Comprehensive Ranking System*

# Comprehensive Ranking System Scores and Labour Market Success

The **core human capital factors** in the ranking system are **empirically shown to contribute to better wage outcomes** for immigrants. Applicants with higher core points in the ranking system tend to be more successful in integrating into the Canadian labour market.

These factors include: Age, Education, Official language proficiency and Canadian work experience.

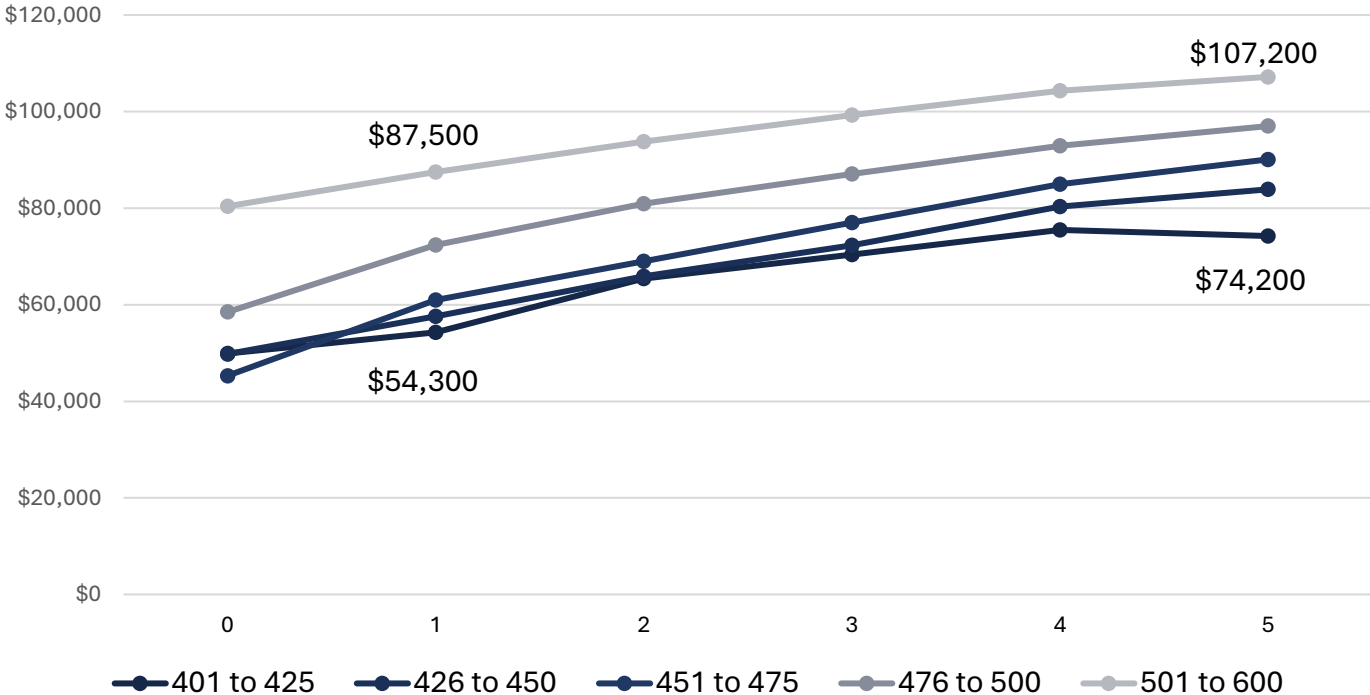


Express Entry principal applicants with **core points in the 401+ ranges** in the ranking system tend to have **higher median total earnings** in comparison to those who score in the 400 and below points range.



The median total employment earnings for those in the 401+ core point ranges increase over the years since admission, as well as with each additional points range.

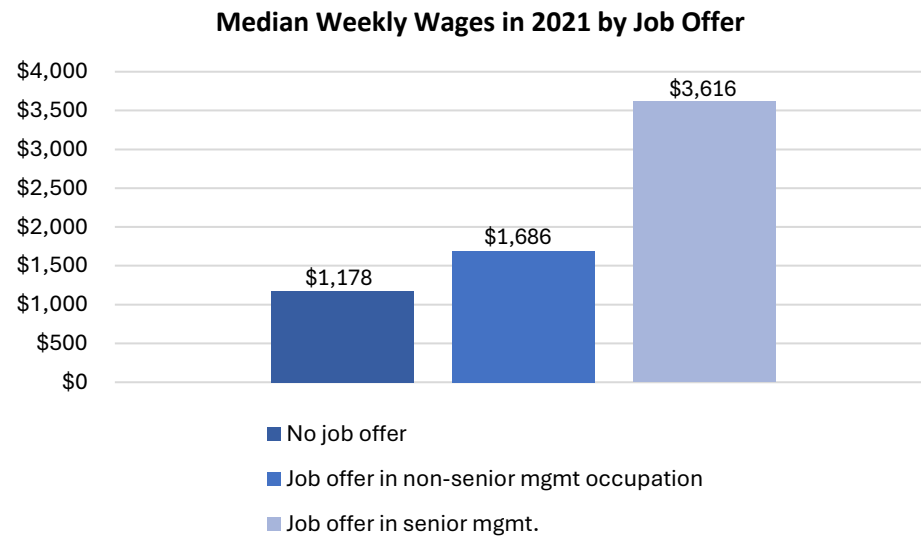
Median total employment earnings for EE PAs by CRS core scores (401 to 600)



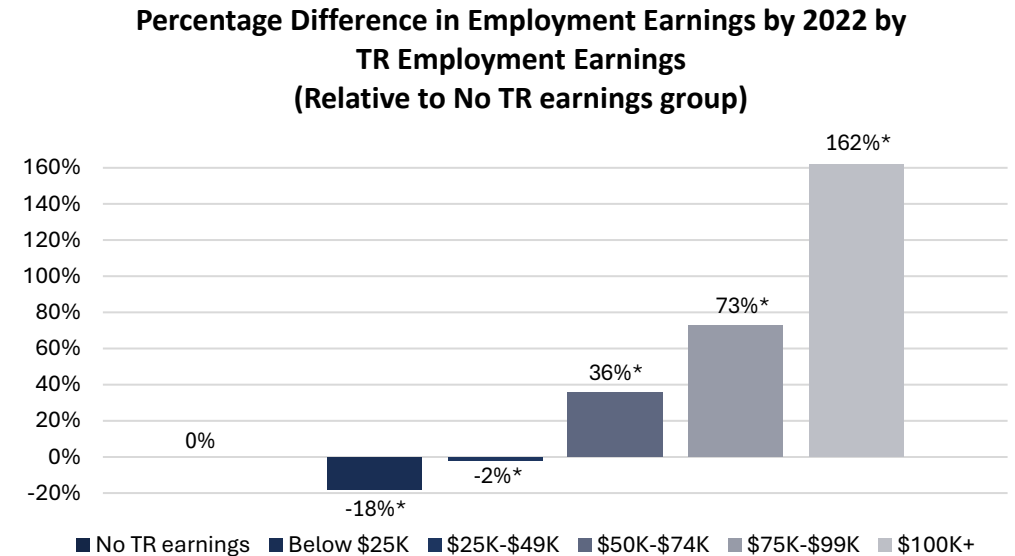
Source: IRCC Evaluation of the Federal High-Skilled Economic Immigration Programs, Evaluation Division, Audit and Evaluation Branch, January 2026.

## Potential New High Wage Occupation Factor

- The ranking system currently rewards **quantity but not quality** of Canadian work experience.
- Canadian earnings as a temporary resident are **strong predictors of economic success** for immigrants. The **higher the pre-landing earnings** that Express Entry immigrants had, the more likely they were to be employed, and earn more post-landing.
- Express Entry immigrants with a **job offer in a senior management position** earned 3 times the weekly wages of those who had no job offer since landing (43% more for those with a job offer in other occupation), based on 2021 Census data.



Source: *Wage Outcomes of Economic Immigrants by Express Entry and Non-Express Entry Admission Streams and Comprehensive Ranking System Factors*, IRCC Research and Knowledge Mobilization Division, Planning and Research Branch July 2025.



Source: *Labour Market Outcomes of Express Entry and Non-Express Entry Economic Immigrants*, IRCC Research and Knowledge Mobilization Division, Planning and Research Branch, June 2025.

# Potential New High Wage Occupation Factor

## Potential Approach:

Introduce a potential new factor to award points for **Canadian work experience or job offers in high wage occupations**, i.e., occupations that tend to earn wages above the national Canadian median wage.

- Focusing on **occupational earnings** rather than individual earnings would mitigate key operational and integrity issues, and potential unintended consequences.
- A list of high wage occupations could be established based on **thresholds above the national Canadian median**.
- For example:
  - **2x median national median wage** (e.g., physicians, university professors)
  - **1.5x national median wage** (e.g., engineers, teachers, transportation managers)
  - **1.3x national median wage** (e.g., financial analysts, bricklayers, heavy-duty equipment operators)
- The list could be updated regularly (e.g., on an annual basis).

### Canadian Work Experience

Base Points	
0 years	0
1 year	40
2 years	53
3 years	64
4 years	72
5 years	80
High Wage Occupation Boost	
0 years CWE in high wage occupations (HWO)	TBD
1+ years CWE in HWOs (e.g., 1.3x median)	TBD
1+ years CWE in HWOs (e.g., 1.5x median)	TBD
1+ years CWE in HWOs (e.g., 2x median)	TBD
<b>Max total</b>	TBD

OR

### Job Offer

#### Eligible candidates:

In-CND or overseas candidates

Job offer in HWO (e.g., 1.3x median)	TBD
Job offer in HWO (e.g., 1.5x median)	TBD
Job offer in HWO (e.g., 2x median)	TBD
<b>Max total</b>	TBD

**PR LMIA is required** for all job offers, unless exempt.

#### PR LMIA Exemption (under consideration)

- by the **same employer** for whom the candidate has been working for **at least 6 months** (qualifying CDN work experience only)

## 2 Recognizing Canadian Licensure

Explore opportunities to improve the selection of candidates who have demonstrated full licensure in Canada

### Certificate of Qualification for Trades

#### Potential Approach:

- Narrow the list of acceptable Certificates of Qualifications to **Red Seal designated trades**; and
- Introduce **new points for trade apprenticeship** work.

#### Rationale:

- To recognize the unique human capital of tradespersons.
- Prioritizes the selection of tradespersons who are fully licensed to work in Canada.
- Provides flexibility to award points to candidates who are working as apprentices in a Red Seal trade in Canada, signifying they are working towards their full certification in their trade.

### Other Regulated Occupations

#### Potential Approach :

- Facilitate the selection of **licensed professionals** in regulated occupations.
- The Department is exploring avenues to recognize Canadian licensure beyond trade occupations
- This will help identify those who are already licensed to practice in Canada and help address labour market shortages in key sectors.
- It is also exploring opportunities to reduce duplication in assessments (e.g., language testing) required for immigration and licensure purposes.

# Reconsidering the Role of Certain Factors

## Potential Approach:

Remove or modify the additional points and the spousal grid in the Comprehensive Ranking System

### Rationale:

- Compared to the core human capital factors in the ranking system, additional points for French proficiency, studies in Canada and siblings in Canada are **relatively weaker predictors** of the principal applicant's economic outcomes.
- Removing or refining these factors would help refocus the ranking system on factors most strongly associated with economic outcomes and reduce duplication between factors.
- The spousal grid, which awards points based on the human capital of accompanying spouses or common law partners, has in some cases reduced a candidate's score and their chances of an invitation to apply. This may have led to an unintended consequence of candidates making decisions on immigrating as a family.
- Since 2023, category-based selection has provided a more effective way to select French-speaking candidates to support economic growth in Francophone minority communities. As a result, additional points for French proficiency may no longer be necessary.
- The International Student Program and Post-Graduate Work Permit (PGWP) have undergone recent reforms to better align with long-term labour market needs and successful economic integration. These changes are expected help ensure future **candidates who studied in Canada are well placed to succeed in Express Entry.**

Potential removal or adjustments



## Current

<b>Age</b>	<b>Minimum:</b> 0 points after age 45 <b>Maximum:</b> 110 points for ages 20-29
<b>Education</b>	<b>Minimum:</b> 0 points for less than high school <b>Maximum:</b> 150 points for PhD
<b>First Official Language</b>	<b>Minimum:</b> 0 points for CLB 4 or less <b>Maximum:</b> 136 points for CLB 10 or more
<b>Second Official Language</b>	<b>Minimum:</b> 0 points for CLB 4 or less <b>Maximum:</b> 24 points for CLB 9 or more
<b>Canadian Work Experience</b>	<b>Minimum:</b> 0 points for none or less than 1 year <b>Maximum:</b> 80 points for 5 years or more
<b>Job Offer</b>	<b>Current:</b> N/A (Temporarily removed as of March 2025) <b>Previous:</b> 200 pts for Senior Managers   50 pts for all others
<b>Skills Transferability</b>	<b>Includes points for education, foreign work experience, certificate of qualification</b> (trades) combined with other OL or Canadian work experience <b>Minimum:</b> 0 points for no applicable combinations <b>Maximum:</b> 100 points for combinations with OL & Canadian work experience
<b>PT Nomination</b>	600 points
<b>Sibling in Canada</b>	15 points
<b>French Proficiency</b>	50 points
<b>Canadian Study</b>	15 points 1-2 years post-secondary education in Canada, 30 points 3-year degree or above
<b>Spousal Points</b>	<b>Maximum:</b> Up to 40 points within core human capital factors

## Potential

<b>Age</b>	No change
<b>Education</b>	
<b>First Official Language</b>	
<b>Second Official Language</b>	
<b>Labour Market Integration</b> <i>*Either Canadian Work Experience or Job Offer</i>	Canadian Work Experience + High Wage Occupation Work Experience
	Job Offer in High Wage Occupation
<b>Skills Transferability</b>	Enhance: Certificate of Trade Qualification  Maintain: Foreign work experience combinations
<b>PT Nomination</b>	Remove/Modify
<b>Sibling in Canada</b>	
<b>French Proficiency</b>	
<b>Canadian Study</b>	
<b>Spousal Points</b>	

# Anticipated Impacts of Potential Changes

**Changes to streamline the Federal High Skilled programs** could:

- Increase the **pool of eligible candidates**, supporting flexibility to meet Canada's diverse economic needs (e.g., tradespersons, French-speaking candidates)
- Make it easier for clients to understand the minimum requirements to enter the pool, while reducing the number of criteria to be assessed by officers.

**Changes to the Comprehensive Ranking System** could increase the selection of candidates with high earning potential and increase focus on factors that can be easily verified to enhance program integrity. Overall, most invitees are expected to have:



*Better **language** skills*



*Higher **education** Levels*



*At least **1 year of Canadian work experience** in a **high wage occupation***

Category-based selection would continue to offer flexibility to select candidates in response to **identified economic goals beyond earnings potential** (e.g., address occupational labour market shortages, support economic growth of Francophone minority communities).

Changes may **enhance outcomes of category-based selection** by ensuring that within a category, candidates with highest economic potential are prioritized.

# Discussion

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## Potential Program Changes

- What are your thoughts on the **overall direction** to simplify Canada's Federal High Skilled immigration programs and streamline eligibility requirements?
- How **effective** do you think this approach would be in **achieving the stated objectives** around client experience and operational efficiencies?
- What **opportunities and challenges** do you anticipate related to the possibility of merging the programs and streamlining requirements?

## Potential Comprehensive Ranking System Changes

- What are your thoughts on the **overall direction** to refocus the Comprehensive Ranking System on factors associated with positive economic outcomes?
- How **effective** do you think the potential changes to the Comprehensive Ranking System would be in **achieving the stated objectives** around economic outcomes and selection of top talent?
- What **opportunities and challenges** do you anticipate related to the possibility of refocusing the Comprehensive Ranking System on the best predictors of economic outcomes?



# How does Express Entry work?

## Profile Submission



### 1. Expression of Interest

Individuals create an online Express Entry profile via the Self Service Portal (IRCC Secure Account).

## Express Entry Pool



### 2. Minimum Entry Criteria (MEC)

Only individuals with skilled work experience that meet the program requirements (MEC) for FSWP, CEC, or FSTP enter the Express Entry pool.

### 3. Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) Scoring

Candidates in the pool are assigned a score according to the CRS, a factor-based ranking system that focuses on human capital and other established factors.



### 4. CRS Ranking

Eligible candidates who can be included in a given invitation to apply (ITA) round are ranked against one another based on their CRS score.



### 5. Invitation To Apply (ITA)

During invitation rounds, candidates with the highest CRS scores are invited to apply to a program; invitations are issued to align with levels space/targets.

## Application for Permanent Residence



### 6. Application Submission

Candidates have 60 days to submit an application.



### 7. Selection Decision

Officers assess applications against program and category requirements and verify Express Entry points claimed.



Eligible candidates can receive an invitation to apply through:

- ✓ **Generic rounds** – highest ranked candidates in the pool overall.
- ✓ **Program rounds (e.g., CEC, PNP)** – highest ranked candidates eligible for a specific program.
- ✓ **Category-based rounds** – highest ranked candidates eligible for a category (e.g., skills or experience to meet specific economic priorities).

# Express Entry Minimum Entry Criteria

- To qualify for Express Entry, **individuals must meet the minimum requirements** of one of the federal economic immigration programs managed by the system.
  - Candidates must have **work experience at higher skill levels** as defined by Canada's National Occupation Classification (management positions or those requiring college or university degrees).
  - Candidates with work experience at **lower skill levels** are **not eligible** for Express Entry programs.

## Federal Skilled Worker Program

- ✓ At least one-year continuous full-time skilled work experience
- ✓ Canadian Language Benchmark 7, supported by a language test
- ✓ Education level of high-school or above, foreign credentials supported by an Education Credential Assessment
- ✓ At least 67 points in the Federal Skilled Worker points grid based on skills, education, work experience, age, job offer and adaptability

## Canadian Experience Class

- ✓ At least 12 months skilled work experience in Canada, obtained with the proper authorization
- ✓ Canadian Language Benchmark 7 for managerial or high-skilled occupations; 5 for skilled occupations, supported by a language test

## Federal Skilled Trades Program

- ✓ At least two years full-time work experience in a skilled trade
- ✓ Canadian Language Benchmark of 5 for speaking and listening and 4 for reading and writing, supported by a language test
- ✓ Meet the job requirements of that trade as described by the National Occupation Classification
- ✓ Have an offer of full-time employment OR a certificate of qualification in a skilled trade from a Canadian province or territory

## Provincial Nominee Program

Candidates for the Provincial Nominee Program must meet the minimum requirements of one of the three federal programs listed above. PTs can nominate these candidates directly from the EE pool or find them outside the EE pool and have them create an EE profile.

All PT nominated candidates are quickly invited to apply.

# Express Entry's Comprehensive Ranking System

An [empirical study](#), conducted by STC/IRCC, served as the technical guide for the development of the human capital components of the Comprehensive Ranking System. Findings were replicated in 2020 study with updated data.

## Design of the Comprehensive Ranking System:

- Provided for a new selection method by ranking candidates for the purpose of intake management, thereby bolstering immigrant outcomes.
- The core of the ranking system was developed to reflect human capital factors that are **empirically shown** to contribute to better earnings outcomes for immigrants (e.g. education, language, Canadian work experience).
- Takes into account the **interaction effects** of certain factors (e.g. strong language skills and foreign work experience) referred to as 'skills transferability'.
- Provides a maximum of 600 points for **additional** policy considerations, including a provincial nomination, and other factors.

