

Foreign Credential Recognition Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What is foreign credential recognition?

Foreign Credential Recognition is the process of verifying that the education and job experience obtained in another country are equal to the standards established for Canadian workers.

Why is the Government of Canada taking action on FCR?

Canada will require a highly skilled workforce to sustain its economic growth and competitiveness, and to promote innovation in the knowledge-based economy. However, both employers and workers are experiencing the pressure of skills and labour shortages associated with the rapid demographic and technological changes affecting the Canadian economy.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) is implementing the Government of Canada's FCR Program. This initiative will involve working with provinces, territories, regulatory bodies and sector councils to foster fairer and more transparent credential recognition processes for skilled immigrants in targeted occupations and sectors, thus ensuring that Canadian employers have access to a large pool of talented workers.

Why are immigration and FCR so important in addressing skills and labour shortages?

Immigration is vital to our continued prosperity. Recent studies have shown that immigration will account for all net labour force growth in Canada within the next 10 to 15 years, and all net population growth in Canada within the next 30 years. Currently, however, the qualifications of some immigrants are not recognized in Canada, which prevents newcomers from contributing fully to our economic and social development. This situation also hinders our ability to attract skilled immigrants.

Ultimately, the FCR program will help us recognize foreign qualifications so that immigrants may better contribute to Canada's economic and social development.

Who else is involved in FCR?

FCR is a complex subject. It requires a variety of stakeholders and both the federal and provincial levels of government to work together. For example in the area of foreign credential recognition, there are 13 jurisdictions, more than 50 regulated occupations; more than 400 regulatory bodies; a vast employer community; and a large and active NGO community.

Credential recognition for regulated occupations is a provincial responsibility that has been delegated in legislation to regulatory bodies. Regulated occupations account for approximately 15% of Canada's labour market.

The Government of Canada is also playing a role in facilitating foreign credential recognition in non-regulated occupations, which make up about 85% of the labour market. Non-regulated occupations are in sectors such as tourism, textiles, software technology and aviation maintenance.



How is the Government of Canada addressing FCR?

The FCR Program will work with partners to facilitate a fairer and more transparent transition for skilled immigrants in targeted occupations into the Canadian labour market, thus ensuring that Canadian employers have access to a broad pool of talented workers.

Because of the various levels of government and range of professional organizations involved, the Government of Canada is taking a pan-Canadian approach to foreign credential recognition, which will help immigrants use their skills and credentials in all parts of the country. This approach will improve Canada's standing internationally as a destination of choice for skilled immigrants, and will help Canada's labour market function both effectively and efficiently.

Who will benefit?

All Canadians will benefit, because an effective and efficient pan-Canadian FCR system means that immigrants will be able to fully contribute their skills and talents to Canada. These activities will have direct benefits for the immigrants themselves, as they will be able to participate more fully in the Canadian labour market. This initiative will also help employers fill job vacancies, and bring talent, skills and expertise to Canadians and the Canadian labour market.

How soon will we see improvements as a result of FCR?

Initially, HRSDC has focussed on three significant skills issues: an influx of engineers, and a shortage of physicians and nurses.

Progress is already being made. For example, federal and provincial governments are working with key medical community stakeholders to improve procedures for licensing foreign-trained doctors so we can strengthen the health care system and increase the supply of doctors. And similar work is under way to speed the recognition process for foreign trained nurses and other health care professions – including pharmacists, medical laboratory technologists, medical radiation technologists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

HRSDC is also providing funding for all phases of the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE) project, *From Consideration to Integration*, which seeks to integrate international engineering graduates into the Canadian labour market.

Work has also begun on non-regulated occupations (in sectors such as aviation maintenance and tourism), by finding ways to recognize the skills and work experience of people trained abroad and by raising employers' awareness of FCR issues.