

Permanent Residence

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Immigration

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Canadian Experience Class

Since its launch in 2008, the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) has been one of the Canadian government's most popular paths by which individuals in Canada (typically, Temporary Foreign Workers) are able to apply for permanent residency. The popularity of the program was only increased in January 2013, when the requirements were amended to shorten the amount of Canadian work experience individuals must complete before applying from 24 to 12 months. This reduction was due largely to the government's desire to facilitate applications from international graduates working in Canada on post-graduate work permits. As a post-graduate work permit can be issued for up to 3 years, this generally is sufficient time for an applicant to (a) accumulate the requisite 12 months of work experience and (b) apply for and complete an application for permanent residency under CEC.

At present, general eligibility requirements are as follows:

- Applicants must plan to live outside of the Province of Quebec;
- Must have at least 12 months of full-time (or equivalent in part-time) work experience in a skilled level occupation within Canada in the three years prior to application; and
- Must meet required language proficiency for their job level.

It is noted that:

- individuals wishing to settle in Quebec may be eligible to apply, instead, under the Quebec Experience Class category that is specific to that province
- "full time" is defined as 30 hours per week or more
- "skilled level" is defined as an occupation falling within the Skill Levels O, A or B within the National Occupation Classification (NOC). Specifically:

Skill Type O

- includes senior management occupations, middle and other management positions

Skill Level A

- usually requires university education at the bachelor's, master's or doctorate level.

Skill Level B

- usually requires education obtained at a college or vocational institute, apprenticeship training or three to four years of secondary school followed by more than two years of on-the-job training, specialized training courses or specific work experience.

- work experience acquired as part of an academic program, such as an internship or a co-op placement, *cannot be counted towards the experience requirement* to apply for CEC. Part-time work completed *during* studies similarly does not qualify
- language proficiency can be demonstrated in English or French

Despite the limitations on the type of work experience that can be used towards meeting the requirements under this category and the mandatory language testing requirements, this category remains particularly attractive for individuals who wish to (a) apply for permanent residency in Canada and (b) do not wish to be necessarily dependent upon a continued relationship with a single Canadian employer throughout the process. By contrast, applications for permanent residency pursuant to the Arranged Employment stream of the Federal Skilled Worker category or certain streams under provincial nominee programs (including the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program—described later) are not only dependent upon the desire of a Canadian Employer to extend and maintain an offer of permanent employment to the individual after he/she is granted permanent residency status but, if the individual is already working for the sponsoring employer, would require