

# *Frequently Asked Questions*

## *About Preparing for Canada*

**1. I am a doctor in my home country and I would like to know what the standards are in Canada before I move. I have a lot of friends who are professionals in various fields and they ended up driving taxis or working in factories after moving to Canada. What steps can I take to avoid ending up in the same situation myself?**

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Before you leave your country, it is crucial to find out as much as you can about the Canadian standards required to practice your profession. Many professionals and skilled trades' people encounter difficulty obtaining recognition of their training in Canada. The process for securing a licence or certificate to practice any of the "regulated" occupations varies from province to province and from job to job. Among the many regulated professions are nursing, engineering, teaching, electrical work, plumbing and doctors in Canada. (check out our Career Pathways section or download the download free ebooks for more information on your specific occupation).

The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC) can help you obtain the credentials and accreditation you need to find work in your occupational field. The CICIC does not assess anyone's qualifications or grant certification, but does provide guidance from its vast library of contacts in education, the professions and skilled labour.

Contact the professional or trade association governing your occupation in your country to determine if it has any affiliation with a similar association in Canada. You might also want to check with the Canadian consul or consulate in your country to obtain information about your occupation and possible licensing requirements, certification or registration as well as the procedure for obtaining an assessment.

Most Canadian diplomatic offices have a publication entitled National Occupational Classification that might help. Be forewarned that it may take you months if not years to obtain the additional training and pass the exams required to obtain a licence or certificate to practise in Canada.

**2. Should I start applying for jobs before I arrive in Canada?**

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Here are the facts – employers want people who can start working within a short period of time. In Canada the notice period is two weeks so that gives you some idea of how quickly employers want employees to start work. Even if you did qualify for a job, employers will not hire you as you have not yet arrived in Canada and you will take time to settle into

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the country as well. Lastly is the fact that you will not be using the Canadian style of resume so you may not even get to the interview stage. Most times I advise against it as I have yet to see someone actually getting a job before arriving!

### **3. I am a bit nervous about interviews in Canada as my English is not very good. Could you please provide information on how I can prepare for this?**

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Interviews are stressful no matter where you live and you may be a bit apprehensive about going for interviews. This is a real good reason for you to access the settlement agency services where you live. As mentioned earlier, they will help you upgrade your English language skills and help with preparing you for interviews by doing mock interviews. Since you recognize that your language skills are weak, this is the best time for you to go attend language classes in your home country so that you are better prepared.

### **4. On my visit to Canada, I came to know that most employers emphasize a lot on soft skills which may be different from our knowledge & experience. If true then, how do we deal with such shortcomings?**

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Yes you are quite right soft skills are critical to your success in Canada. On our website you can download a free ebook on soft skills or register for a free Job Search Strategy and Techniques webinar that will help you understand the subject a bit more.

### **5. If I worked in multinational Canadian company outside of Canada will this count as Canadian work experience?**

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Previous experience with a Canadian company may help as it is much easier to get references but that experience cannot count as 'Canadian work experience' as it was in another country! Some multinational companies may even offer you a job in Canada based on your previous history. This is rare but you may just get lucky!

### **6. What can I do in advance to prepare myself for a job interview in Canada?**

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Skilled immigrants are let into Canada on the basis of their technical skills, and often focus on improving these technical skills after landing to help them get a job in Canada. In Canada, most employers put a great deal of emphasis on soft skills. Improving these skills will help enormously with your next job interview.

There is a lot of information on this on the internet. Do some research and start brushing up and reading on these soft skills.

The job interview process in Canada is, in fact, mostly about determining these soft skills. The employer has already determined you have the necessary technical skills to land the interview. The remainder of the process is about determining whether you will be a good fit for the organization.

### **7.I have a friend who emigrated from India to Toronto recently and applied for welfare. Can you explain what welfare is?**

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In Canada welfare is the common term for financial (or social) assistance from the government, for those who do not qualify for employment insurance and are in financial distress. It is considered as a last resort to provide the basic necessities of life to those who cannot do so.

For some applicants, the program acts as a temporary bridge until they can find suitable employment, whereas for other applicants — for instance, those with debilitating health issues — it may be a long-term requirement.

Social assistance programs are designed somewhat differently in every province. Each province has its own criteria for eligibility and the programs operate under a variety of departments and names. In Ontario, it is known as Ontario Works. In B.C., it falls under the Ministry of Social Development, and in Alberta it is called Income Support under Alberta's Human Services ministry.

In order to be eligible for Ontario Works, for example, you must be a resident of Ontario, demonstrate that you are in urgent financial need and are willing to participate in employment assistance activities. How much you receive will depend upon a number of factors including the family size, rent, assets and any other income you might have. If you are eligible, you may also be entitled to drug benefits, dental coverage and various other allowances.

Those seeking social assistance will need to be prepared with various documents, such as:

- Social Insurance Number (SIN card)
- Health card number
- Proof of identity and date of birth
- Employment history/information
- Income and asset statements
- Shelter costs (i.e., rent)
- Status in Canada

Applicants for and recipients of social assistance must be prepared to work, unless they have been exempt by a medical professional and have provided medical documents to the satisfaction of their case worker. They must also be prepared to divulge all sources of income at all times (including but not limited to child benefits, salary, workers' compensation and disability pensions and other unusual sources of income such as an inheritance or sales of assets and possessions).

As a recipient, you should be prepared to report to your assigned case worker when requested to do so and be prepared to produce certain documents on a regular basis, such as rent and utility receipts and various identification.

## **8. What is the best way to search and apply for a job and when do I begin?**

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Most immigrants start unpacking laptops within hours of landing and send out resumes blindly! Do not do that! Now if you have gone to the settlement agency they will help you with your resume, the job finding process, as well as interview techniques. These services are all free for you and you should take advantage of it.

## **9. What exclusive steps and measures are being done by the Canadian government to welcome new immigrants in order to make it easier for them to adjust with the new life abroad?**

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Every year the Canadian government invests millions of dollars in creating services that will help immigrants succeed in their new home. There is even a program for pre-arrival called the Canadian Immigrant Integration Program funded by Citizenship Immigration Canada. More on that a little later.

There are numerous immigrant service agencies throughout Canada to help newcomers settle into Canadian society, and many of them provide their services for free. Many of these organizations are managed by staff or volunteers who may even speak your language and are probably familiar with your customs.

One of the most important services immigrant settlement agencies offer is government-funded (free to you) language training. The government knows that excellent English (or French) is critical to newcomer success, and it encourages all immigrants to take these courses.

Many have host programs, a volunteer-based program that matches immigrants with a host who can guide them through their first few months in Canada. Your “host” might be able to answer a multitude of questions about shopping, apartment hunting and schooling.

Settlement counselling is also a key service. Immigrating is often an emotional time. You might feel frustration, regret, and homesickness. Immigrant settlement agencies are there to help with support, counselling for the whole family and can also become a place where you make friends – both immigrants and Canadians!

## **10. Can I move from one province to another to pursue Employment?**

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You can work anywhere in Canada. You should of course, do you research on the city and Province that has the most demand for your skills. If you are coming to Canada under the Provincial Nominee program, I would suggest you go to the website of the Province you applied to as there are new rules about being sponsored by a Province and living in another.

## 11. What is the job market like in Calgary?

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With oil prices plummeting, the entire Province of Alberta is facing severe unemployment. Unless you have a letter of employment, it is advisable to look at other Provinces.

## 12. Can I get my credentials assessed after I land in Canada?

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Yes, you can. We recommend that you contact the professional or trade association governing your occupation in your home country to determine if it has any affiliation with a similar association in Canada. You might also want to check with the Canadian consul or consulate in your country to obtain information about your occupation and possible licensing requirements, certification or registration as well as the procedure for obtaining an assessment.

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If you are in a “non-regulated” occupation, on the other hand, you don’t need a licence to practise it although there may be an association or professional body related to your profession that offers voluntary membership, training and support services.

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## 13. Can I get my credentials evaluated online while I am still in India?

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