



# GMS Flash Alert

## Immigration Edition

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# Canada - Temporary Suspension of New Requirements under Quebec Experience Programs

There is a temporary suspension of the changes to Quebec's accelerated selection program for Permanent Residence, the Quebec Experience Program (PEQ), according to a November 8, 2019 announcement by Quebec's Minister of Immigration, Francization and Integration (MIFI). The government has restored the PEQ's selection criteria that prevailed before November 1, 2019.<sup>1</sup>

This suspension has been set for an undefined period of time to allow the government of Quebec to consult with public and private organizations with respect to the updates in occupations presently in demand for the province of Quebec.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

To date, foreign candidates established in Quebec and seeking permanent residence, have heavily relied on this fast-track selection program.

The changes that came into effect on November 1, 2019<sup>2</sup>, were focused on limiting access to the PEQ, particularly for students and temporary foreign workers. According to these changes, only graduates from studies in specified sectors or temporary foreign workers with experience in a job identified on the list published by the MIFI as being in a labor shortage, are eligible for the PEQ.

Nevertheless, the government has now temporarily suspended the enforcement of these restrictive changes until the occupation list is updated to reflect the actual needs of the local labor market and this may provide immigration counsel, global mobility program managers, and foreign employees entering via this program some breathing room. They may continue to abide by procedures and policies in place with respect to the selection criteria for the PEQ that prevailed before November 1, 2019. However, they will need to fulfill the requirements under the other changes scheduled for January 1, 2020.

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# Suspension Does Not Apply to Changes Scheduled for January 1, 2020

The current suspension will not delay the implementation of the upcoming changes projected for January 1, 2020, which will consist of the following:

- **The French language ability requirement for the principal applicant and his or her spouse or common-law partner** – As of January 1, 2020, the accompanying spouse or common-law partner of a temporary foreign worker or Quebec graduate applying under the PEQ (depending on the case) will need to demonstrate an intermediate-advanced level of oral communication in French as well. If both parties are unable to demonstrate the requisite language ability in French, they will be considered ineligible to apply under the PEQ.

As such, married individuals or those in a common-law relationship intending to apply for a Quebec Selection Certificate (CSQ) under the PEQ must establish that they both meet the minimum French knowledge requirement. Otherwise, if they are unable to meet the language requirement, they can still submit an application under the Quebec Skilled Worker Program (QSW) through the online platform, ARRIMA, which remains unchanged following January 1, 2020.

- **Acceptable evidence of French language ability** – The completion of a French course within an educational institution will no longer be accepted as evidence of one’s French language proficiency in order to meet this requirement. The following would be considered the only acceptable forms of evidence of French language proficiency:
  - a) Official results obtained following a French language test recognized by the MIFI;
  - b) Acceptance by a Professional Order of Quebec;
  - c) Having completed three (3) years of full-time studies in French at a secondary or post-secondary level.
- **Passing a Quebec Values Test** – As of January 1, 2020, candidates must further obtain an attestation confirming that they have passed the Quebec values test. The issuance of a CSQ under both the PEQ and the QSW via the ARRIMA platform will be contingent on adherence to this new requirement.

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## KPMG NOTE

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your usual qualified immigration counsel or the immigration team with KPMG Law LLP (Canada). We will continue to monitor the implementation of the changes affecting the Quebec immigration programs and provide you with immediate insight and strategies as appropriate.

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## FOOTNOTES:

- 1 For the minister’s November 8 announcement (in French) regarding the suspension, click [here](#).
- 2 For prior coverage, see GMS [Flash Alert 2019-167](#) (November 8, 2019).

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## Contact us

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional\* or one of the following professionals with the KPMG International member firm in Canada:



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