



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Canada - New Immigration Pilot Programs Introduced in Quebec

On October 28, 2020, Quebec's Minister of Immigration, Francization and Integration (MIFI) announced three pilot programs will be implemented to provide further pathways to permanent residence in Quebec. These pilot programs will benefit certain temporary foreign workers already living in Quebec or with previous experience abroad.¹ Other changes include the re-opening of both the Entrepreneur and Self-Employed Worker streams as of November 1, 2020.

Those who are not eligible for the pilot programs can continue to submit their applications for the regular Quebec Skilled Worker Program via the online platform, ARRIMA, along with the Quebec Experience Category, as they remain unchanged.²

WHY THIS MATTERS

The current economic crisis caused by COVID-19 has severely impacted various industries, particularly those related to the health, food and technology sectors. The government of Quebec is taking significant action to support individuals and businesses facing hardship as a result of the pandemic. These new pilot programs have been prepared to respond to the acute needs faced by the province and will help to attract and retain employees.

New Pilot Programs for Permanent Residence

The programs will be in place for an anticipated duration of five years. Further details will be disclosed during official public consultations, currently ongoing until December 12, 2020.

Each pilot will benefit from a maximum allotment of 550 Quebec Selection Certificates (CSQ) per year. The focus will be on attracting and retaining: nurse's aides and patient attendants, workers in the food processing industry, as well as key global talent distributed equally between the artificial intelligence (AI), information technology (IT) and visual effects (VE) sectors. The pilot program aimed at the AI, IT and VE sectors is summarized in the table below.

Pilot program for workers in the AI, IT and VE sectors (550 CSQs Total)

Areas of Focus	Artificial Intelligence (AI)		Information Technology	Visual Effects (VE)
Allotment	275/550		275/550	
Category	Foreign workers	Quebec Graduates ^a	Foreign workers	
CSQ available	Non-French-speaking applicants (137) French-speaking applicants with level B2 in Verbal French (138)		Non-French-speaking applicants (137) French-speaking applicants with level B2 in Verbal French (138)	
Education	Hold a university degree, equivalent to a bachelor's degree in Quebec	Hold an eligible diploma from a Quebec institution (Post graduate diploma (DESS), Master's degree or Doctorate)	Hold a diploma, equivalent to a Quebec college diploma – technical training (minimum DEC)	
Work Experience	A min. of 2 years of experience within the last 5 years in Quebec or elsewhere preceding the submission. This work must be in NOC 0, A or B.	Only post-graduate diploma (DESS) holders are required to provide evidence of 6 months of full-time experience in Quebec within the 12 months preceding the submission of their applications.	A min. of 2 years of experience within the last 5 years in Quebec or elsewhere preceding the submission. This work must be in NOC 0213, NOC 2171, NOC 2173, NOC 2133, NOC 2174, NOC 2281, NOC 2241.	A min. of 2 years of experience within the last 5 years in Quebec or elsewhere preceding the submission. This work must be in NOC 0213, NOC 2171, NOC 5241*, NOC 2173, NOC 2133, NOC 5131*, NOC 2174, NOC 5225*, NOC 2281, NOC 2241.
Comment	No previous work experience required if the applicant has a master's or PhD from a Quebec university issued within the preceding 12 months of the application submission	N/A	* NOC 5225, NOC 5241 and NOC 5131 for Visual Effects Stream only	
Employment or Offer of Employment	Occupy or have accepted a full-time position by the <i>Comité sectoriel de main-d'oeuvre en technologies de l'information et des communications</i> (CSMTIC) confirming that the field of practice corresponds to the artificial intelligence sector and that the applicant's background meets the requirements of the position		Occupy or have accepted a full-time position in one of the eligible NOC codes	
Salary threshold	C\$ 75,000 for those working outside the Greater Montreal region. \$100,000 for those working in the Greater Montreal region	N/A	Occupy or have accepted a full-time position under the IT or VE stream with an hourly wage exceeding the <i>9th decile</i> of the Quebec median wage established back to 2017 for the related occupation	

Entrepreneur and Self-Employed Worker Programs

The Quebec Entrepreneur Program will re-open over the course of the next year. This program is directed at those who are willing to create and manage a business in the province. To qualify and obtain a CSQ via this program, they will need to be supported by a service offered by either a business accelerator or incubator, or a university entrepreneurship centre in Quebec. Therefore, until further notice, Quebec is excluding those applicants who would otherwise have the intention of acquiring a business by investing in or taking majority ownership of an existing business. This decision is intended to help promote the province's IT and AI eco-systems, to compete with one of the world's largest concentrations of academic research in the industry. The MIFI will accept up to 25 applicants who are not able to satisfy the French language requirements.

The Quebec Self-Employed Program will benefit individuals intending to practice their profession or business activities, alone or with support. To qualify, candidates will need to provide evidence of at least two years of self-employed work experience abroad in the same profession they plan to practice in Quebec. They will also need to prove they have C\$100,000 in net assets. The MIFI will accept up to 50 applicants who are not able to satisfy the French language requirements.

* Entrepreneurs and self-employed individuals with an approved language test showing their French language proficiency would be exempt from this intake threshold under each program and be able to apply at any time.

KPMG NOTE

Impact on Employers and Employees

These new pilot programs will help to attract and retain employees in the AI, life sciences, health technology, VE and animation industries. In addition, contrary to Quebec Experience Program (PEQ), there is no French-language-proficiency requirement for accompanying spouses or common-law partners under the new pilot programs. Further information regarding each pilot program's processes and selection criteria will be shared throughout the current ongoing public consultations.

Note that special attention should be given to IT workers, currently employed or who have accepted an employment under NOC 5241, *Graphic designers and illustrators*, and whose expertise is related to product content or digital marketing creation. To qualify under the new pilot programs, they would need to be employed in the VE sector.

Additional efforts may be needed to meet the required hourly wage, which may be challenging for some businesses in the present economic circumstances. This is particularly relevant for IT and VE workers for companies who would not be able to offer the hourly wage exceeding the 9th decile of the Quebec median wage established back to 2017 for some occupations.³ (Ex. NOC 0213, *Computer and Information Systems Managers*, requires an annual salary of C\$155,563.20 based on a 40-hour week (subject to change)).

Lastly, entrepreneurs may benefit greatly from the announced program. It will help to create the necessary foundation to establish status in Quebec as they continue to build their enterprises with the collaboration of local accelerators, incubators, or academic research centres. Although limited in number, entrepreneurs who are not fluent in French will have a new path to securing permanent residency in Quebec. This is encouraging news that supports job creation and innovation for the province.

We Are Monitoring the Situation

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your qualified immigration professional or a member of the KPMG Law LLP (Canada) team (see the Contact Us section).

We will continue to monitor the implementation of all upcoming Quebec immigration programs and provide you with insight and strategies as they become available.

FOOTNOTES:

1 For the October 28 press release (in French), “Programmes en immigration” on the Ministry of Immigration, Francization and Integration (*Ministère de l’Immigration, de la Francisation et de l’Intégration* or “MIFI”), website, see: <http://www.mifi.gouv.qc.ca/fr/presse/communiqués/com20201028.html> .

2 For “Arrêté numéro 2020-005 de la ministre de l’Immigration, de la Francisation et de l’Intégration en date du 16 octobre 2020” in the October 28 *Gazette Officielle du Québec* (in French), see: <http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=1&file=73431.pdf> .

3 For the *Guide des Salaires Selon Les Professions au Québec, Edition 2017* (in French), see: https://www.emploiquebec.gouv.qc.ca/uploads/tx_fceqpubform/00_imt_guide-salaires-professions_2017.pdf .

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Contact us

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