



CAPIC's Submission Regarding the Economic Priorities for Category-based Selection in Express Entry in 2026

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The Canadian Association of Professional Immigration Consultants (CAPIC) appreciates Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)'s public consultation on economic priorities for category-based selection in Express Entry (EE) in 2026.

This submission incorporates feedback from CAPIC members and research conducted by CAPIC's team, following the sequence of questions presented in the public online [survey](#), except for Q36 relating to consent for publication by IRCC. For this item, CAPIC provides IRCC permission to include this submission in its official reports. All CAPIC submissions are available on the [Advocacy](#) page of the CAPIC website.

About CAPIC – Qs 1 to 9

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CAPIC promotes competency, ethical standards, and consumer protection within the immigration consulting sector by representing over 4,000 members, including Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultants (RCICs) and Regulated International Students Immigration Advisors (RISIAs). The organization delivers ongoing professional development opportunities and essential practice resources, supporting members in maintaining their skills, acquiring competencies, and engaging with fellow authorized representatives. CAPIC offers services in both English and French. Membership comprises authorized representatives who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents, with members operating domestically across Canada as well as internationally, serving both urban and rural communities.

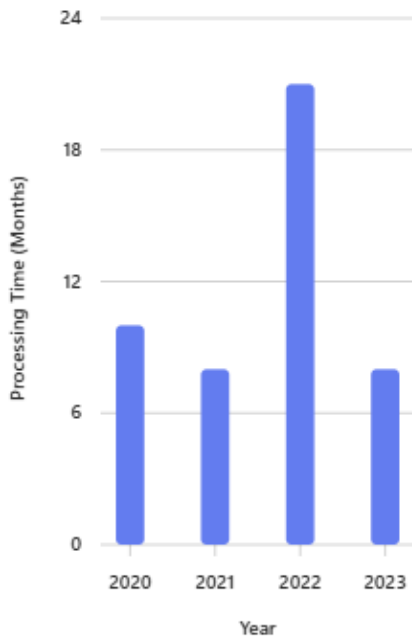
Express Entry review – Qs 10 to 12

Q10 – The contribution of the components of EE to the timely selection of immigrants over the last five years.

The Express Entry (EE) system, introduced in January 2015, aims to efficiently identify foreign nationals who demonstrate strong potential for economic integration

and success in Canada.¹ The first-come, first-served method was replaced with selection based on the highest Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) scores. Creation time of an EE profile only matters if multiple candidates tie for the lowest selection spot. The EE application process has a 180-day service standard, which is faster than other permanent residence programs.² The program components and selection grid ensure efficient immigrant selection by design.

However, processing time plays a significant role in facilitating timely selection. Below, Figure 1 shows that the 180-day standard has seldom been achieved in the past four years. 2024 EE data is unavailable. IRCC has prioritized backlog reduction in its 2024-25 Departmental Plan.³



The category-based selection (CBS) was introduced on June 23, 2022. It allows additional flexibility to IRCC to invite EE candidates based on identified economic goals. Therefore, technically, it should contribute to the timely selection of candidates. The first CBS occurred on June 28, 2023. In 2023, 25,870 ITAs were issued to CBS candidates.⁴ So far, the Department has one publicly available publication on this component, which has no data showing the processing time for this type.⁵ Due to the absence of processing time data, CAPIC is unable to comprehensively evaluate this component in relation to its efficiency and timeliness in selection.

Figure 1 Source: IRCC Express Entry Year-End Report, 2022, Table 37, p.36; IRCC Express Entry Year-End Report, 2023, Table 50, p.57.

¹ IRCC, “Express Entry Mid-Year Report,” modified October 16, 2017, [online](#).

² IRCC, “Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada service standards,” modified July 11, 2025, [online](#).

³ IRCC, “immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada’s 2024-25 Departmental Plan at a glance,” modified June 26, 2025, [online](#).

⁴ IRCC, “Express Entry Year-End Report 2023,” modified August 9, 2024, [online](#), Table 10a, p. 23.

⁵ IRCC, “2023-2024 Report to Parliament - Category-Based Selection in Express Entry,” modified June 2, 2025, [online](#).



Q11 - The contribution of the components of EE to filling labour market needs in Canada over the last five years.

Permanent residents (PRs) who obtained their status through the programs managed by the EE demonstrate positive employment earnings, reflecting the effectiveness of EE programs and the selection grid in benefiting Canada's labour market.⁶ PRs with at least three years of Canadian education tend to earn more, while those with one- or two-year Canadian post-secondary credentials have the lowest employment earnings.⁷ Therefore, it may be worth examining the effectiveness of EE candidate selection concerning the additional points for one or two years of post-secondary education in Canada.⁸

Based on the lack of EE data on this factor, CAPIC cannot assess CBS's impact on meeting labour market needs, but brings two things for IRCC reference:

First, the transportation occupations were removed from CBS on February 27, 2025,⁹ though occupation selection and categories in 2023 were set by COPS (ESDC) to address projected Canadian labour shortages from 2022 to 2031, and COPS projected long-term labour shortages in some transportation occupations.¹⁰

Second, a recent IRCC study in Estrie, Quebec, with its general population, found that most people believe low wages cause labour shortages and that increasing pay is the solution.¹¹

Q12 - The contribution of the components of EE to the selection of French-speaking immigrants outside of Quebec over the last five years?

Since the establishment of the CBS on June 28, 2023, the French language proficiency category has consistently led both in the volume of invitations issued and in frequency during selection rounds.¹² There is not enough data yet to assess this initiative's impact. CAPIC recommends that IRCC consider the facts below when evaluating this category for 2026 CBS:

- In the IRCC 2024 consultations regarding economic priorities for CBS in EE, this category received minimal support and ranked lowest in response to the question: To what extent should category-based selection continue to

⁶ *Supra*, note 2, Figures 4 and 5, pp. 63 and 64.

⁷ *Supra*, note 2, Table 58, p. 65.

⁸ Ministerial Instructions respecting the Express Entry system – [current](#), s. 30(1)(b).

⁹ IRCC, “Canada announces 2025 Express Entry category-based draws, plans for more in-Canada draws to reduce labour shortages,” modified February 27, 2025, [online](#).

¹⁰ *Supra*, note 5, “Selection Criteria for the Establishment of Categories.”

¹¹ Zaid Jivani. June 20, 2024. *FOR MINO INFO: POR Summaries Regarding Refugees, Foreign Credential Recognition and Out-of-Status* [internal email correspondence obtained through ATIP request]. Ministerial Liaison Unit, Communications, IRCC.

¹² IRCC, “Ministerial instructions respecting invitations to apply for permanent residence under the Express Entry system,” modified April 8, 2025, [online](#). See also *Supra*, note 2.



emphasize selection on existing categories in 2025?¹³ The penultimate category on this list, transport, was removed from the CBS on February 27, 2025.¹⁴ This one, being the last, not only survives but also continues to dominate the CBS.

- Francophone and bilingual PRs admitted via EE have lower earnings than their Anglophone counterparts.¹⁵
- In 2024, 70% of Francophone admissions through Express Entry selected Ontario as their destination, with more than half choosing to settle in Ottawa.¹⁶ Of the 24 Francophone Communities participating in the Francophone Communities initiative across Canada, Ontario has two: Hawkesbury and Sudbury.¹⁷

Feedback on selection approaches in EE – Qs 13 to 14

Q13 – Should EE focus more heavily on category-based selection, general and program-specific rounds, or equal focus on both and reasoning?

Given the substantial population of temporary residents in Canada, CAPIC recommends that EE prioritize program-specific draws, with particular emphasis on the Canadian Experience Class (CEC). Selections may incorporate a blend of CEC and CBS.

The suggestion was first based on the following data:

- As of November 27, 2024, there were 845,000 temporary foreign workers in Canada.¹⁸
- As of November 20, 2024, 2.2 million international students were enrolled in Canadian colleges and universities.¹⁹
- Permanent residency transition rates differ by work permit type, with nearly 50% of post-graduation work permit holders making the transition—the highest rate.²⁰

Here is the rationale built on the data above:

¹³ IRCC, “2024 consultations on economic priorities for category-based selection in Express Entry,” modified February 27, 2025, [online](#), “On our proposed economic priorities” and “On existing (2024) categories.”

¹⁴ *Supra*, note 9.

¹⁵ *Supra*, note 2, Table 60, p.66.

¹⁶ IRCC, “Dashboard on Francophone immigration to Canada (outside Quebec) – 2024,” modified June 16, 2025, [online](#), Tables 6 and 7.

¹⁷ IRCC, “Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative,” modified March 24, 2025, [online](#).

¹⁸ CAPIC, “CAPIC’s Submission Regarding the 2025 Consultations on Immigration Levels,” [online](#), p.6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*



Firstly, on February 27, 2025, IRCC announced that the focus of the EE draw will be on the CEC for 2025.²¹ After the announcement, 25 EE draws occurred, including five CEC-specific draws that issued 10,500 ITAs to CEC candidates.²² The count is not high compared to the frequency and ITAs issued.

Secondly, the first CEC draw among the five was conducted on May 13, 2025,²³ after the arranged employment was removed from the CRS.²⁴ The lowest CRS score for a candidate invited under the CEC across the five CEC program-specific draws was 518.²⁵ CEC candidates with high CRS scores, even without arranged employment, demonstrate strong human capital factors and are likely to make a positive contribution to Canada's labour force.

Third, Canadian work experience counts towards the work experience requirement of the CEC if it was gained within the past three years. Due to this timeframe, most CEC applicants are temporary workers. Having Canadian work experience and high-skilled employment in Canada are contributing factors for successful integration.

In short, integrating the CEC with the CBS enables CEC candidates who have current or previous experience in CBS-eligible occupations to leverage CBS more effectively.

Categories to be focused on in 2026 – Qs 15 to 32

Qs15 and 16 – Focus on economic priorities in 2026 and reasoning

CAPIC supports the EE categories' focus on addressing long-term labour shortages in Canada through research-backed, balanced methods. Ideally, all major factors, such as earnings trends, unemployment rates, and employment insurance data, should be considered to provide a comprehensive view of the Canadian labour force.²⁶ It is also important to consider the variations in labour shortages for different occupations across provinces and territories. Furthermore, it is necessary to identify the underlying reason for long-term labour shortages, given the fact that the record-high number of permanent residents were admitted to Canada in recent years,²⁷ and currently, more than one million foreign nationals in Canada hold a work permit.²⁸

²¹ *Supra*, note 9.

²² IRCC, "Ministerial instructions respecting invitations to apply for permanent residence under the Express Entry system," April 8, 2025, [online](#).

²³ *Ibid*, see no. 347 EE draw.

²⁴ *Supra*, note 12.

²⁵ *Ibid*, see no. 355 EE draw.

²⁶ Statistics Canada, "Labour Statistics," modified July 28, 2025, [online](#).

²⁷ IRCC, "2024 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration," modified November 14, 2024, [online](#).

²⁸ *Supra* note 18, pp. 6 and 7.



Current data does not show that Francophone immigration outside Quebec boosts economic growth. See Q12 for details. As a result, CAPIC is cautious about making Francophone immigration outside Quebec an economic priority in CBS category determination.

Q17 - Does IRCC need to continue to prioritize candidates eligible to each of the 2025 categories to address long-term shortages into 2026?

CAPIC suggests that when considering this aspect, both the occupations projected by the updated Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS) that have a risk of long-term labour shortages,²⁹ and the occupations in demand in each province and territory are taken into consideration.

We have observed that the structure of CBS occupations differs from the organization found in the broad occupational categories of both NOC and COPS, with COPS fully adhering to the NOC matrix. Although the variation implemented by CBS may appear minor, it is inconsistent with the official NOC matrix and has the potential to confuse EE candidates. It would be better if CBS occupations are aligned with NOC and COPS for clarity and consistency.

CAPIC recommends selecting candidates using both CEC and CBS to enable a smooth transition; CEC applicants can keep working in high-demand jobs without a transition period needed for those lacking Canadian work experience.

Q18 - For each of these categories, should IRCC focus more heavily on selecting skilled workers in Canada (students or temporary workers) or outside Canada?

CAPIC's response emphasizes selecting skilled workers in Canada. Refer to the Q13 answer for details and rationale.

Q19 – One category in Express Entry in 2025 focuses on selecting skilled workers with work experience in 1 occupation in agriculture and agri-food.

CAPIC is not an agri-food industry organization, but its members have supported Canadian employers in this sector and can provide relevant input.

The current eligible occupation, identified as an agri-food occupation, 63201 Butchers – retail and wholesale,³⁰ which is related to agriculture, falls under occupations in sales and service in the National Occupational Classification (NOC).³¹ It is on the list of occupations expected to face shortage of conditions in the

²⁹ ESDC, “Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS) Summary of results (2024-2033),” modified January 30, 2025, [online](#), Table 3 – Step 3: Future labour market conditions Detailed list of occupations expected to face risks of shortage conditions (2024-2033).

³⁰ IRCC, “Express Entry: Category-based selection,” modified August 21, 2025, [online](#).

³¹ ESDC, “View matrix,” accessed August 26, 2025, [online](#).



timeframe from 2024 to 2033. While CAPIC has no doubts about its continuous eligibility for CBS, we would like to raise a question for IRCC to consider: How to facilitate workforce supply in the agriculture sector, as four agriculture occupations are identified in COPS³² to have a risk of long-term labour shortage, but none are eligible for EE, as they are all low-skilled occupations:

- 84120 – Specialized livestock workers and farm machinery operators
- 85100 – Livestock labourers
- 85101 – Harvesting labourers
- 85103 – Nursery and greenhouse labourers

Q20 - One category in Express Entry in 2025 focuses on selecting skilled workers with work experience in 37 occupations in healthcare (including dental care) and social services.

CAPIC has responded affirmatively to this question, as the COPS projections indicate that these 37 occupations will experience long-term labour shortages. To maintain consistency, CAPIC recommends reclassifying three occupations under the education category:

- NOC 41300 – Social workers
- NOC 41301 – Therapists in counselling and related specialized therapies
- NOC 42201 – Social and community service workers.

Although these occupations encompass aspects of both healthcare and education, they are classified as education occupations in the NOC.

Q21 - One category in Express Entry in 2025 focuses on selecting skilled workers with work experience in 11 occupations in STEM.

CAPIC observes that NOC 63100 - Insurance agents and brokers, is currently listed among the 11 STEM occupations. Although COPS projects long-term labour shortages for this occupation, CAPIC suggests considering a separate category for sales and services occupations, with in-demand occupations grouped under this broader occupational category prescribed by the NOC.

Similarly, NOC 22303 - Construction estimators is currently classified as a Trade occupation for CBS but may be reclassified under the STEM category.

Additionally, one NOC projected by COPS to have long-term labour shortages is not included in the current STEM CBS category:

- NOC 22313 - Aircraft instrument, electrical and avionics mechanics, technicians and inspectors

³² *Supra*, note 29.



Q22 - One category in Express Entry in 2025 focuses on selecting skilled workers with work experience in 25 occupations in trades.

Among the current 25 occupations in trades for the CBS, 22 fall under this broad occupational category. The other three below belong to three other broad occupational categories according to the NOC:

- NOC 22303 – Construction estimators
- NOC 63200 – Cooks
- NOC 82021 – Contractors and supervisors, oil and gas drilling and services

All of these occupations are projected by COPS to face long-term labour shortages. As such, CAPIC supports their continued inclusion in the CBS. Nevertheless, CAPIC recommends reclassifying these occupations in alignment with the NOC matrix to ensure consistency and clarity. Additionally, it is important to consider that provincial and territorial occupational outlooks may differ from COPS projections. Here are a couple of examples: New Brunswick currently does not accept applications under NOC 63200 – Cooks.³³ All in-demand occupations identified by the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) are low-skilled occupations.³⁴

Furthermore, CAPIC has observed that the following three high-skilled occupations—classified alongside trades within the NOC and projected to experience long-term labour shortages—are not included in the list of CBS eligible trade occupations:

- NOC 72404: Aircraft mechanics and aircraft inspectors
- NOC 72410: Automotive service technicians, truck and bus mechanics, and mechanical repairers
- NOC 73300: Transport truck drivers

Q23 - One category in Express Entry in 2025 focuses on selecting skilled workers with work experience in 5 occupations in education

CAPIC answers yes to this question and suggests moving three occupations currently under the healthcare category to this category (see the answer to Q 20).

COPS projects that two EE-eligible occupations in broad category 4, along with education occupations, may face a long-term labour shortage:

- 42100 Police officers (except commissioned)
- 42101 Firefighters

As these two occupations directly concern public safety protection, it is preferable to assess the root cause of the labour shortage. If they are to be considered for 2026

³³ New Brunswick, “Important notices,” accessed August 27, 2025, [online](#).

³⁴ OINP, “OINP Employer Job Offer: In-Demand Skills stream,” updated July 2, 2025, [online](#).



CBS, 12 months of Canadian experience in the occupation for the past three years is preferred.

Q24 - A category focusing on transportation occupations that had been in place in Express Entry in 2023 and 2024 was not renewed for 2025.

CAPIC supports reinstating transportation occupations with projected long-term labour shortages to the CBS, in line with both COPS projections and provincial/territorial occupation outlooks.

Q25 - Other labour needs that IRCC could consider prioritizing in Express Entry categories

CAPIC recommends that IRCC evaluate high-skilled occupations that are projected to experience long-term labour shortages by COPS but are currently excluded from CBS eligible occupations, as well as similar occupations identified by provincial and territorial forecasts.

Q26 - Do you think the work experience eligibility criteria for categories focusing on labour shortages should require 12 months of continuous work experience in a listed occupation within the past 3 years (rather than 6 months)?

CAPIC recommends adjusting work experience requirements based on specific occupations. 12 months in a relevant job within the past three years is preferred, as six months may be insufficient for some high-skilled occupations, e.g., healthcare and education. Within the past three years, at least 12 months of eligible accumulated work experience, among which six months in consecutive may be considered.

If the six-month work experience is Canadian work experience, an alternative approach may be applied. This work experience qualifies for the CBA occupation; however, candidates in this group must meet additional requirements. These include being employed in the same occupation when invited and maintaining employment throughout the permanent residence application process.

Q27 - Would restricting prioritization to candidates with Canadian work experience in a regulated profession be an effective strategy to mitigate this barrier whilst also addressing labour shortages?

CAPIC recommends that IRCC assess the transition success rates for regulated professions, as well as evaluate the foreign credential recognition programs associated with these professions. The findings from this assessment could inform the development of a comprehensive strategy to reduce obstacles faced by PRs who are admitted as regulated professionals but subsequently work in unrelated fields,



particularly those included on lists of professions experiencing long-term labour shortages.

Q28 - The need for Express Entry to continue to prioritize candidates with a minimum score of 7 in all 4 language abilities on NCLC.

CAPIC does not identify a necessity for this initiative. Although CAPIC acknowledges the Government of Canada's intent to promote bilingualism throughout Canada, there is currently no evidence indicating that prioritizing Francophone admissions in regions outside Quebec is an effective approach.

Q29 - A more proactive immigration approach could also focus on occupations that are not documented to experience long-term and national shortages, but that could benefit Canada's competitiveness in specific areas. To what extent would you recommend this expanded approach?

CAPIC maintains a neutral position on this expansion, believing that conclusions should not be drawn in a general context without adequate research. The long-term labour shortages identified by the COPS span from 2024 to 2031. As this timeframe includes 2024 and 2025, consideration of short-term shortages is also warranted.

Q30 - To what extent do you think we need an Express Entry category to further prioritize candidates in leadership and innovation positions?

CAPIC considers this to be within the scope of business immigration programs (BIPs), which are currently experiencing stagnation. As part of its ongoing analysis, CAPIC has reviewed the BIPs and submitted a [blueprint](#) aimed at revitalizing these programs for IRCC's consideration.

Qs 31 to 32 – A need for category-based selection to prioritize senior managers, skilled military recruits for the Canadian Armed Forces, scientists and researchers and reasoning.

CAPIC remains neutral about such a need. None of the occupations is identified by the COPS in its long-term labour shortage projection in general terms.

For senior managers, entrepreneurial experience may be considered as a human factor for CRS with proper design. CAPIC recommended a qualified work experience category, for which stream B is an entrepreneurial work experience category.³⁵

CAPIC has concerns about the approach of skilled military recruits for the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). CAF is Canada's ultimate defense force that requires

³⁵ CAPIC, "CAPIC's Submission on 2024 Consultations on Economic Priorities for Category-based Selection in Express Entry," posted July 29, 2024, [online](#), p.10.



comprehensive vetting for its personnel recruitment and admission for national security reasons.

Scientists and researchers work in various fields. It is unclear which fields this proposed category-based draw will target. Adding desired occupations to the existing CBS may work. For example, if this initiative aims at STEM, then the category can expand to include the occupations of scientists and researchers in the CBS; if it aims at professors, the inclusion of this occupation in the education CBS may serve this purpose.

Feedback on the survey – Qs 33 to 35

This survey serves as an effective mechanism for public engagement. CAPIC recommends monitoring response rates closely; if adult participation is insufficient, targeted strategies may be employed to enhance involvement. While stakeholder and partner engagement remains essential, direct participation by Canadians and permanent residents provides IRCC with valuable micro-level insights into the impact of immigration.

For CAPIC, comprehensive research and analysis are required to prepare responses to the survey. Looking ahead, written submissions, group discussions, meetings, and hybrid events represent the most effective channels for CAPIC's future engagement activities.

Recommendations

Based on the factors and analysis above, CAPIC makes the following recommendations:

- **Occupation focus:** Establish category-based occupations that are aligned with projected high-skilled roles experiencing long-term labour shortages, as identified in COPS, as well as occupations in demand in provinces and territories.
- **Consistency in NOC grouping:** Adjust CBS occupational categories to correspond with the broad occupational categories in the NOC matrix.
- **PR pathways for low-skilled but in-demand occupations:** Develop permanent pathways outside EE for projected low-skilled occupations with long-term labour shortages, following adequate, meaningful consultations with provinces and territories.
- **Prioritizing CEC candidates:** Conduct draws that focus on CEC candidates who meet CBS occupation eligibility. Also, give priority to in-Canada CEC candidates.



- **Increase work experience requirement:** Revise the work experience requirement for CBS to 12 months, unless other criteria are satisfied, such as six months of Canadian work experience in the CBS occupation, continuous employment in the same occupation, and ongoing employment throughout permanent resident processing.
- **Remove French-language proficiency from the CBS.**

Conclusion

The CBS prioritizes EE candidates in occupations projected to experience long-term shortages within Canada. While COPS provides insight into national labour market requirements, a balanced approach should also account for provincial and territorial in-demand occupations. The effectiveness of this strategy remains to be evaluated through reliable data, with both the reduction of long-term labour shortages and retention rates serving as important metrics.

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