

Employer's Guide to Hiring International Workers



For more information:

Nova Scotia Office of Immigration
902-424-5230
1-877-292-9597 (toll free in Nova Scotia)
immigration@gov.ns.ca
www.novascotiaimmigration.com


NOVA SCOTIA
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“Hiring immigrants can help you achieve your export development objectives. Their expertise can speed up market entry and development, help you provide top-notch customer service and improve your competitiveness. There’s no doubt, **hiring immigrants is good for business.**”

Jean-Paul Deveau, President,
Acadian Seaplants Limited, Dartmouth

Acadian Seaplants Limited (ASL) is a biotech company and the largest independent manufacturer of marine plant products of its type in the world. The company produces quality products for global food, health & beauty and agricultural industries. ASL exports to 70 countries and has 300 employees in 8 countries.

Introduction



Finding the right person for the job is becoming ever more difficult for many employers in Nova Scotia. The province is facing the demographic challenges of an aging population and labour force, declining birth rates, and out-migration. We are the first province in the country to have more seniors than youth. Very soon, there will be more people leaving the labour force than entering it.

The Nova Scotia Office of Immigration can provide information to employers that will help them recruit the international talent required to meet their human resource needs.

According to the Economic Council of Canada, immigrants do not take away jobs from non-immigrants. In fact, immigrants are a net gain to the economy and society. When compared to the general provincial population, Nova Scotia immigrants have higher education levels, higher income, higher levels of entrepreneurship and less dependency on government transfers as a source of income.

There are many benefits to hiring international workers:

- Addressing labour market needs
- Bringing investment opportunities and connections to global markets
- Bringing new ideas, new perspectives and new voices of optimism
- Strengthening our communities
- Contributing to our cultural diversity
- Becoming consumers and paying taxes

This guide has been prepared to help employers understand the process involved in hiring both temporary workers and immigrants. It also contains valuable tips and information to make that process easier and includes a list of resources to help you prepare, recruit and keep international workers.

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Hiring International Workers – Overview



While hiring international workers can seem like a difficult process at first, it really is quite easy to understand – and there are plenty of resources available to help you along the way. Employers must keep in mind that international workers from all categories have the same rights and responsibilities in the workplace as any Canadian citizen.

Determine what category your candidate falls under.

This is an important first step that will help to establish what requirements must be met and what permits are necessary. In some cases, no additional steps will need to be taken in the hiring process.

Most international workers fall into one of four categories:

1 Permanent Residents

Immigrants who are already living in the country and are legally entitled to work in Canada, with the same rights and obligations as Canadian citizens.

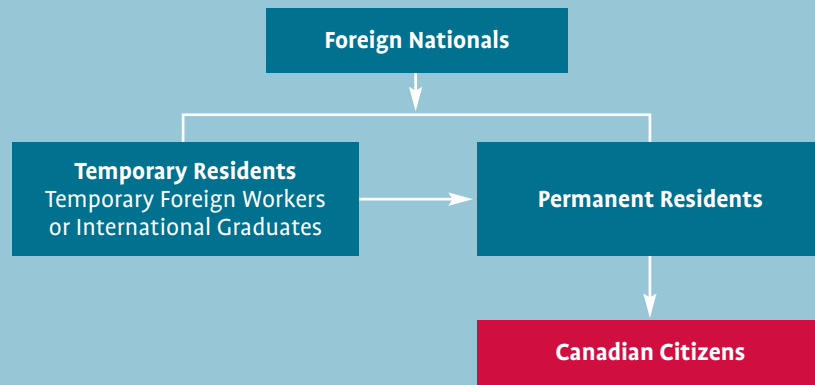
2 International Graduates

International students who have obtained student visas and have recently graduated from their Canadian educational program.

3 Temporary Foreign Workers

Individuals who require authorization (work permit) to perform specific jobs that cannot be filled within the Canadian work force, for a fixed period of time.

Immigration Flow Chart



4 International Students

While enrolled at an eligible post-secondary institution in Nova Scotia, international students who retain a satisfactory academic standing can apply for permits to work for a maximum of 20 hours per week off-campus while classes are in session and full-time during study breaks.



“Bringing diversity to our workplace gives our company a chance to work with some of the most intelligent young people in the world. There is nothing to lose in this partnership; everyone wins.”

Sandra Kelly, Human Resources Manager
Moog Components Group, Halifax Operations
Focal Technologies Corporation

Focal Technologies designs, manufactures and markets rotary coupling products and oceanographic instruments on a global scale.

Permanent Residents

The simplest way to hire international workers is to hire a permanent resident already living in Nova Scotia. There is no special permit required and the hiring process is the same as the one you use to hire Canadian citizens. *Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services* has a database of permanent residents currently seeking employment. Visit the website of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services: www.isisns.ca or call (902) 406-8850.

Hiring International Graduates / Temporary Workers

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If you cannot find permanent residents living in Nova Scotia or Canada with the required skills you are seeking, you may want to hire new international graduates or temporary foreign workers. Should you eventually wish to hire them permanently, they can apply to become permanent residents of Canada (see next section: Permanently Hiring International Workers/ International Graduates).

International Graduates

Hiring international graduates can be beneficial to your business. Not only do they bring added skills to the workplace that are beneficial when targeting foreign markets, but they have studied at a Canadian post-secondary institution and are already accustomed to life in Canada. An added advantage of hiring international graduates is having no problem with foreign credential recognition.

There are different options available to hire international graduates, depending on the length of time since their graduation day.

Under 90 Days

International students have 90 days from their graduation day to apply for a post-graduate open work permit which allows them to work for up to three years, depending on their length of study.

For an employer, hiring graduates who already have a post-graduate work permit requires **no additional steps**; it is the same as hiring Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

Over 90 Days

If you wish to hire an international student who has not applied for a post-graduate work permit within 90 days of graduation, the student can apply to *Citizenship and Immigration Canada* for a work permit through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. In most cases, the employer will also need a Labour Market Opinion.

Temporary Foreign Workers

The federal government, through *Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Service Canada*, will decide if hiring the skilled worker you have selected does not impact the labour market for Canadians and supports economic growth in Canada, therefore determining eligibility for a work permit.

Generally, apart from selecting and hiring a candidate, there are **3 steps** involved in hiring a temporary foreign worker from outside Canada:

STEP 1

The employer contacts Service Canada to find out if a Labour Market Opinion is required
www.servicecanada.gc.ca

STEP 2

The employer applies for a Labour Market Opinion from Service Canada (approx. 2 to 4 weeks)
(if not required, go to step 3)

STEP 3

The worker applies to Citizenship and Immigration Canada for a Temporary Work Permit (approx. 2 to 6 weeks for Processing)

The Temporary Foreign Worker Unit of *Citizenship and Immigration Canada* offers guidance to employers and/or their authorized representatives seeking to employ foreign workers. In the Atlantic region contact the Moncton Temporary Foreign Worker Unit by telephone **506-851-2664**, fax **506-851-3238** or e-mail **TFWU-Atlantic-UTET@cic.gc.ca**.

Note: A Labour Market Opinion (LMO) for a vacant position can be issued by Service Canada when an employer can show that a reasonable effort has been made to fill the position locally and within Canada. It is only issued if it meets prevailing wages and if it does not contravene any existing agreement.

Permanently Hiring International Workers / International Graduates Nova Scotia Nominee Program

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If the employer wishes to keep a worker by offering a permanent job and the worker wishes to settle permanently in Nova Scotia, the worker may be eligible to apply to become a permanent resident. There are **TWO OPTIONS** for hiring international workers permanently:

OPTION 1

Applying to the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration through the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP)

This program enables the *Nova Scotia Office of Immigration* to nominate (recommend) potential immigrants to the federal government through *Citizenship and Immigration Canada* for permanent resident status.

The **NSNP** is usually a quicker application process for immigration, as the federal government attempts to prioritize provincial nominees.

Program Streams

The NSNP currently has 5 different streams under which applicants can apply. The highlighted streams involve employers:

- 1 Skilled Worker:** for applicants who have a full-time job offer from a Nova Scotia employer and can fill a skill shortage.
- 2 International Graduate:** for international graduates of recognized Canadian post-secondary institutions who have a full-time job offer in their field of study and have been working for the employer for at least 3 months.

3 Family Business Worker: for applicants who have a full-time job offer from a Nova Scotia business owned by a close relative and who also possesses the required skills.

4 Community Identified: for applicants who are employable, have a long-established connection to a particular Nova Scotia community and have received a Letter of Identification from a mandated organization (Regional Development Authorities and certain community groups).

5 Non-Dependent Child of Nova Scotia Nominees: for individuals who are the non-dependent children of immigrants who were nominated under the NSNP.

Benefits of the NSNP

The average processing time for provincial applicants to receive a nomination certificate is 2 to 3 months, significantly less than for applications through the other federal classes of immigrants.

Once a temporary worker is nominated for permanent resident visa, the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration can write a letter which replaces the need for a Labour Market Opinion and can be used to secure a new work permit (if required). **Note: A nomination by the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration does not guarantee the issuing of a permanent resident visa.**

For more information, visit the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration website: www.novascotiainmigration.com or call **902-424-5230** to speak with an officer directly.

OR

OPTION 2

Applying to Citizenship and Immigration Canada through federal immigration streams

As an alternative to the provincial nominee program discussed above, candidates may apply for permanent resident status directly to the federal government. There are several programs/streams to consider, depending on the applicant's situation and experience. For more information on federal immigration streams, please visit the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website: www.cic.gc.ca

Preparing Your Workplace

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Hiring international candidates has endless benefits for your business, but before the process begins, it could be useful to evaluate your current workplace to ensure it is a welcoming environment.

Here are some questions you may want to consider when preparing for newcomers.

Do you have a cross-cultural workplace?

Understanding and respecting different cultures is critical for effective working relationships in any organization – particularly when it comes to communication. Cross-cultural training in your workplace can help ensure a smooth transition for international employees, and will promote cultural awareness and diversity in your team.

Do you have the right leadership model?

It is important to examine different ways of managing your team as you transition to a diverse workplace. Being aware of how your management style considers different cultural backgrounds is necessary to get the most from your team and to foster a positive and efficient working environment.

Are your human resource policies up-to-date?

Make sure that all of your policies and practices are appropriate for successful workplace integration. Establishing employee orientation and mentoring processes will be valuable. Ensure the business ethics described in your code of conduct foster a respectful workplace that values diversity and safety, while having zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment.

Is your interview style appropriate?

Determine whether your interviewing practices will be effective when communicating with candidates from different countries, and how language barriers will be addressed.

What are their qualifications?

Assessing and recognizing credentials is one of the biggest challenges in hiring newcomers. Job titles, education, and accreditations are not always consistent, therefore it is important to verify international standards or equivalencies, and determine if additional training will be necessary upon hire. For more information, visit the web site of the Foreign Credentials Referral Office:

www.credentials.gc.ca

Will language barriers threaten performance?

It is important to know what level of English or French will be crucial for success at an early stage in the hiring process. These requirements should be reflected in the job description and reiterated during the interview process. It is important to remember that just because someone may have an accent does not mean they cannot speak English effectively.

Do you have support?

Having the complete backing of your management team is extremely important when hiring newcomers, as that will impact how the new employee is perceived and welcomed into the organization.

Will the candidate's family have support?

You may need to help new employees and their families find the resources and supports to help them in settling and integrating into the community. You may also wish to help them directly with essential first steps that include finding accommodation, getting a Medical Services Insurance card and Social Insurance Number card, and opening a bank account.

The family's integration is a key factor in a new employee's successful transition and retention. You may want to develop a support plan for new employees and their families. For more information, visit the web site of Immigration Settlement & Integration Services: www.isisns.ca/settlement_integration.php

“Our international professionals are supporting us in the design of complex structures and sophisticated detection and alarm systems. We recognize their technical capability and their commitment to building a better life for themselves, our company and our region.”

David C. Preston, P.Eng.
SNC-Lavalin Inc., Halifax

SNC-Lavalin is one of the leading engineering and construction groups in the world, and a major player in the ownership of infrastructure and in the provision of operations and maintenance services. The SNC-Lavalin companies have offices across Canada and in over 35 other countries around the world and are currently working in some 100 countries.

Common Questions



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How does an employer find potential candidates?

The simplest way to find potential candidates is to look for permanent residents already living in Nova Scotia. There is no special permit required and the hiring process is the same as the one you use to hire Canadian citizens. The Office of Immigration participates in immigration fairs held throughout the world. If you have immediate job openings or are planning for the future, and are interested in recruiting internationally, contact us to see which immigration fair might be a good match: immigration@gov.ns.ca; 1-877-292-9597; 1-902-424-5230

How do you know if an applicant's credentials are recognized?

In Nova Scotia, a number of professions are regulated by associations or by the provincial government. If an applicant has been trained in a regulated profession outside of Canada and wishes to work in Nova Scotia (i.e., doctor, nurse, engineer, etc.), the employer should contact the regulatory body for information on licensing procedures and to discuss any possible credentials issues. Immigrant Settlement & Integration Services maintains a list of Professional Associations in Nova Scotia: www.isisns.ca/iep.php

Does the potential newcomer need an immigration representative (i.e. lawyer or consultant)?

No. Applicants are not required to have a paid immigration representative. The application forms are designed to make them easy to understand and complete. If someone is hired, the application will not receive special attention or be treated differently from other applications.

How long will it take to receive a permanent visa?

The NSNP is usually a quicker application process for immigration, as the federal government attempts to prioritize Nova Scotia provincial nominees. While processing times will vary, the average processing times at visa offices for nominee files is 9 to 12 months depending on the office and the application.

Is the employer responsible for background checks?

No. All immigrants to Canada undergo a background check by Citizenship and Immigration Canada for security and criminality purposes.

Does the newcomer require a medical check?

A medical check is required before a newcomer can become a permanent resident of Canada. For temporary workers, a medical check is only required for those coming from designated countries or working in Health Care, the food handling industry or working with children.

Resources For Employers

Immigration Resources

Nova Scotia Office of Immigration
www.novascotiaimmigration.com

Citizenship and Immigration Canada
www.cic.gc.ca

Service Canada
www.servicecanada.gc.ca

If your employee is one of the following they can access the settlement & integration supports listed below: Canadian citizen, permanent resident, protected person or a foreign national that has received their letter of nomination from the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration.

**Settlement Support
Immigrant Settlement and
Integration Services**
902-423-3607
www.isisns.ca

YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs
902-457-9622
www.ymcahrm.ns.ca

**Fédération acadienne de la
Nouvelle-Écosse**
902-433-0065
www.fane.ns.ca

**Language supports
Halifax Public Libraries ESL for Adults**
902-490-5990
www.halifaxpubliclibraries.ca/services

**Halifax Regional School Board –
Metro Region**
902-464-2868

Immigrant Language Services (MILS)
www.milsns.info

Halifax Regional School Board Adult ESL*
902-421-7779
www.hrsb.ns.ca/content/id/869.html
*Only serves permanent residents and protected persons.

**Immigrant Settlement and Integration
Services**
902-423-3607
www.isisns.ca

**Nova Scotia Community College –
English for Academic Purposes**
902-491-6722
www.nsc.ca

You can also contact community and rural development organizations and private language schools for assistance:

Regional Development Authorities

Annapolis Digby Economic Development Agency

902-638-3490
www.annapolisdigby.com

Antigonish Regional Development Authority

902-863-3330
www.antigonishrda.ns.ca

Cape Breton County Economic Development Authority

902-562-2201
www.cbceda.org

Colchester Regional Development Agency

902-893-0140
www.corda.ca

Cumberland Regional Economic Development Association

902-667-3638
www.creda.net

Guysborough County Regional Development Authority

1-800-355-3731
www.gcrda.ns.ca

Greater Halifax Partnership

902-490-6268/7464
www.greaterhalifax.com

Hants Regional Development Authority

1-877-284-2687
www.hantscounty.com

Kings Regional Development Agency

902-678-2298
www.kingsrda.ca

Lunenburg Queens Regional Development Agency

1-800-303-1541
www.lqrda.ns.ca

Pictou Regional Development Commission

902-752-6159
www.prdc.com

South West Shore Development Authority

902-742-3210
www.swsda.com

Strait-Highlands Regional Development Agency

902-625-3929
www.strait-highlands.ns.ca

Francophone Economic Development Council

Le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse

902-424-7230
www.cdene.ns.ca

Private language schools

Apex Language and Career College

902-446-1818
www.alcc.ca

Canadian Language Learning College

902-461-9577
www.clc.ca

East Coast School of Language

902-491-1526
www.ecslcanada.com

International Language Institute

902-429-3636
www.ili.ca

Saint Mary's University

902-420-5691
www.smu.ca

Université Sainte-Anne

902-431-3583
www.usaintanne.ca

“The diverse skills and qualifications that newcomers bring to an organization, and our business community, help us in building global links, adding expertise, as well as adding skilled candidates to our workforce.”

Sarah Collins, Manager, Human Resources
Nautel Limited, Hackett's Cove

Nautel is a global leader in the design, manufacture, sales and support of high power Radio Frequency products for AM and FM broadcast, navigation, industrial and space-based applications. Nautel has thousands of customers in more than 170 countries.