

MONTHLY IMMIGRATION BULLETIN

The latest immigration news, views and announcements

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STATE AND TERRITORY NOMINATIONS FOR JANUARY 2024

Between 31 December 2023 and 31 January 2024, the number of nominations made by each State and Territory government are the following:

Visa subclass	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
Subclass 190	22	26	3	121	9	49	254	443
Subclass 491	9	683	50	55	131	28	75	295

CANADA

AUSTRALIA

CANADA

CANADA

MOBILITY ARRANGEMENT FOR TALENTED EARLY-PROFESSIONALS SCHEME (MATES)



The Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early-professionals Scheme (MATES) is a new scheme, established under the Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement (MMPA) between India and Australia. MATES gives Indian university graduates and early career professionals the opportunity to live and work in Australia for up to two years, and to gain employment and valuable experience in their areas of expertise. The scheme will be **3000 places** for primary applicants per program year. Primary applicants will be able to apply to bring dependents. Dependents will be provided work rights and do not count towards the annual cap.

The scheme has no set timeframe for commencement.

Eligibility:

MATES will be open to Indian nationals who:

- Are aged 30 or younger (inclusive) at the time of application;
- Have not previously participated in MATES;
- Have proficient English language skills (overall IELTS or equivalent score of at least 6, with a minimum score of 5 for each of the four parts);
- Have graduated within 2 years from an eligible educational institution at the time of application; and
- Hold a qualification (Bachelor’s degree or higher) in one of the following: -
 - ⇒ Renewable energy
 - ⇒ Mining
 - ⇒ Engineering
 - ⇒ Information Communications Technology (ICT)
 - ⇒ artificial intelligence (AI)
 - ⇒ Financial technology (FinTech)
 - ⇒ Agricultural technology (AgriTech).

VETASSESS UPDATES FOR PLUMBER (GENERAL)

VETASSESS has resumed taking new Pathway 1 skills assessment Applications for the occupation of Plumber (General), ANZSCO code 334111, on Monday, February 12.

Last September 2023, VETASSESS paused acceptance of new Pathway 1 applications for Plumber (General) because the qualification they assessed against was superseded.

The new CPC32420 Certificate in Plumbing qualification came into effect on January 31 2024 and VETASSESS will now be assessing applicants against these criteria.

Members should note that currently there is no nationally agreed Australian Minimum Context Gap Training package for migrant plumbers who hold an Offshore Technical Skills Record (OTSR).



A NEW TEMPORARY VISA PATHWAY FOR ELIGIBLE UK CITIZENS

Innovation and Early Careers Skills Exchange Pilot (IECSEP) is a new temporary visa pathway for eligible UK citizens under the A-UKFTA.

The IECSEP is offered across an Early Careers stream (12-month visa) and an Innovation stream (3-year visa). The opportunity is not restricted to any particular business sector.



- The Early Careers stream is open to tertiary qualified applicants aged 21-45, with a minimum of three months employment in their current role. Prospective occupations in Australia must be defined at the ANZSCO Skills Levels 1-3.
- The Innovation stream is open to applicants who have a demonstrated contribution to innovation in any sector, and who are highly skilled and experienced. These applications are assessed on a merit-basis. There is no age cap for the Innovation stream. Prospective occupations in Australia must be defined at the ANZSCO Skill Level 1.

All applicants **must have** prospective employment in Australia, confirmed through a letter of offer or an employment contract. IECSEP is also open to UK citizens already working in Australia. 1000 places are available across both streams to June 2024, with a further 2000 places available to June 2025.

IECSEP applicants planning on working in occupations requiring licensing or registration must already hold full and unconditional Australian licences, registrations or certification to be eligible.

Australian employers are not required to sponsor applicants and labour market testing and nominated occupation lists **do not apply**.

Successful IECSEP applicants will be provided with a letter of support by DFAT for the purposes of applying for a **Temporary Work (International Relations) subclass 403 visa Government Agreement stream**.

DFAT is currently processing IECSEP applications within 7 days.

TRA PROCESSING TIMES DELAYS



Migration Skills Assessment and Migration Points

Advice delays

TRA's Migration Skills Assessment (MSA) and Migration Points Advice (MPA) programs are currently experiencing a significant increase in application rates. This is affecting processing times and assessments are taking longer than 120 days to complete. TRA has noted that any requests to expedite applications may not be able to be accommodated during this time.

Job Ready Program delays

TRA's Job Ready Program is experiencing a high number of applications and the average processing times are currently longer than expected.

As at February 2024 the average processing times from online submission date are the following:

- Job Ready Employment Application- 7 months
- Job Ready Workplace Assessment - 5 months
- Job Ready Final Assessment - 1.5 months
- General document processing - 2.5 months

STATE AND TERRITORY UPDATES

Western Australia



WA has stopped accepting new GSM nomination applications for the 2023-24 program year as the number received has now exceeded the available allocation. Existing applications that have been lodged prior to 2 February 2024 will continue to be assessed under existing eligibility criteria, and nominations will be issued subject to availability.

Some eligible applications lodged prior to the program closure date will not be considered part of the 2023-24 program year. Applicants will be contacted if this applies to their application.

New South Wales



The NSW Government has opened its Skilled Work Regional Subclass 491 program under Pathway 1: applying directly to Investment NSW if the applicant has an established work history with a regional NSW-based employer.

The stated aim of this pathway is to 'bolster those applicants who are already making a significant contribution to regional NSW and have been working in regional NSW for 12 months.

Pathway 1 has additional criteria to the alternate pathways, including:

- That the applicant is currently living and working in a designated regional area of NSW and have continuously done so for the past 12 months
- The qualifying skilled employment in the twelve months immediately before applying must be with a single regional NSW-based employer and in the nominated (or closely related) occupation
- The occupation must be deemed skilled by NSW
- The position must be paid at the minimum TSMIT of \$70,000 (prorated if under 38 hours per week) by the qualifying employer.

EXPRESS ENTRY: IRCC INVITES CANDIDATES IN LATEST GENERAL DRAW



The Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) recently conducted its latest Express Entry draw, wherein 1,490 candidates were invited in a general draw. To be eligible, candidates needed to have a minimum Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) score of 535. This marks the fifth draw of 2024, with the first draw occurring on January 10, inviting 1,510 candidates with a minimum CRS score of 546 in a general draw. Subsequent general draws took place on January 23, inviting 1,040 candidates with a minimum CRS of 543, and on January 31, inviting 730 candidates with a minimum score of 541.

The most significant draw of the year occurred on February 1, where 7,000 candidates were invited in a category-based selection draw specifically for Express Entry candidates with proficiency in French. Overall, the IRCC is actively managing immigration through multiple draws, each with specific criteria and quotas.

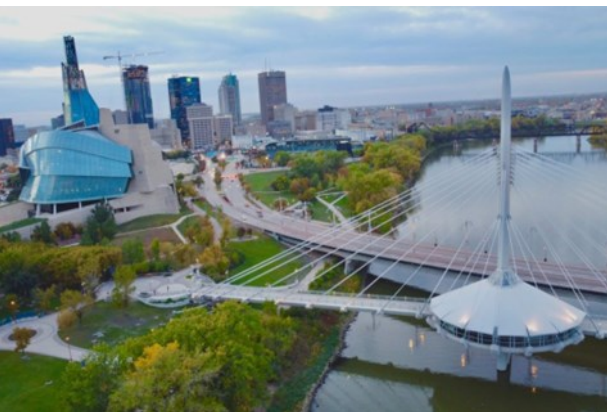
IRCC SETS CAP ON THE NUMBER OF STUDY PERMIT APPLICATIONS IT WILL CONSIDER IN 2024

Following the Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) announcement on January 22nd, the department has established a limit on the number of study permit applications it will consider in 2024. According to ministerial instructions from IRCC, a maximum of 606,250 study permit applications will be taken into consideration throughout the year. It is essential to note that this cap differs from the one specified on January 22nd, which pertained specifically to study permit approvals and set a cap of 360,000 applications.



These latest instructions outline the total number of study permit applications that IRCC will entertain in 2024. In essence, over the next 11 months, IRCC will adhere to processing a maximum of 606,250 study permit applications, irrespective of the outcome of each application. The instructions also mention that this new cap on study permits being processed is subject to potential amendments based on subsequent instructions from the minister. This suggests that if IRCC falls short of reaching the cap of 360,000 approved study permit applications within the processing limit of 606,250 applicants, the minister may consider increasing the latter number.

FOUR PROVINCES ISSUE INVITATIONS IN LATEST PROVINCIAL IMMIGRATION RESULTS



This week, the provinces of Ontario, British Columbia (B.C.), and Manitoba have issued nominations through their respective Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs). In addition, Quebec has also extended invitations through its provincial immigration program. Among Canada's 13 provincial and territorial governments, excluding Quebec and Nunavut where PNPs are not in operation, 11 utilize their PNPs to identify immigration candidates aligned with their regional labor force and demographic needs.

When candidates receive an Expression of Interest (EOI) from a province or territory, they have two pathways:

1. **Base PNP Stream:** Candidates can utilize the EOI to directly apply for permanent residence through the PNP program.
2. **Enhanced PNP Stream:** Candidates can use the Notification of Interest to apply for a provincial nomination certificate while in the Express Entry pool. This nomination through the Enhanced PNP Stream significantly enhances their candidacy for economic immigration through Express Entry. Provincial nominees are granted an additional 600 Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) points, strengthening their position for an Invitation to Apply for permanent residence in subsequent draws from the Express Entry pool.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND WEBINARS

**YOU CAN
NOW WATCH
OUR PREVIOUS
VIDEOS
AND WEBINARS
FROM BELOW
LINKS,**

- ⇒ [General Skilled Migration Australia - Current Outlook](#)
- ⇒ [Business Visa to Australia \(English Session\)](#)
- ⇒ [Business Visa to Australia \(Sinhala Session\)](#)
- ⇒ [Business Migration pathways to Australia](#)
- ⇒ [Introducing the Sanji Caldera Education foundation](#)
- ⇒ [Get your PR in Australia with employer sponsored visa? How would an employer-sponsored visa help you achieve your Australian permanent residency?](#)
- ⇒ [Are you skilled and lacking in work experience? How can 407 training visa help you?](#)
- ⇒ [Discover much more about 482 subclass](#)
- ⇒ [How do you apply for permanent residency in Australia?](#)
- ⇒ [New Budget announcement 2021](#)
- ⇒ [Employer Nomination scheme recent updates](#)



The information contained within this newsletter is to provide advice of a general nature only and is not to be taken as individual advice for your personal circumstances. Information provided is subject to change at any time, and before proceeding with an application you should seek professional personalized advice about your circumstances.

We cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions. Because Australian immigration law and regulations change regularly, it is best to contact us before making any decisions. Alternatively, up to date information can be checked on the website of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA).

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