

EMPLOYER INFO SESSION:

Strategies for Retaining International Talent

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Canada



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LAND

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that IEC-BC's office operates on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples - The Squamish, Tsleil- Waututh & Musqueam First Nations.



ABOUT IEC-BC

A photograph of two women in a professional setting. One woman with curly hair is smiling and looking towards the other woman, whose back is partially to the camera. The image is overlaid with a blue tint.

**CONNECTING EMPLOYERS
WITH IMMIGRANT TALENT**

A photograph of a group of people in a meeting room. Two men in the foreground are engaged in a conversation, with one gesturing. Other people are seated at a table in the background. The image is overlaid with a blue tint.

**THOUGHT
LEADERSHIP**

A photograph of a woman with curly hair speaking and gesturing with her hands in a meeting. Another person is partially visible in the foreground, looking towards her. The image is overlaid with a blue tint.

**EMPLOYER
LEARNING &
WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT**

AGENDA

- Introduction
- How to sponsor an employee's work permit extension
- How to support an employee's PR pursuit
- Q&A

SPEAKERS



Craig Natsuhara
Partner
EY Law LLP



Kelvin Wu
Immigration Consultant
Loughlin Wu Immigration

Why we're talking about this today – “the current landscape”

Canadian immigration policies have shifted significantly in the last 2 years

- Reduced permanent resident admission targets
 - Increased competition in Express Entry
 - Changes to LMIA and TFW programs
 - Changes to international student and PGWP programs
 - More uncertainty for employers and foreign workers
-
- Retaining international talent is becoming more complex and requires **earlier planning**

Setting the stage

A common situation for employers – hiring an international graduate:

You hired a talented international graduate (Mary) for a control systems tester position in Metro Vancouver on January 1, 2024:

- Mary received an MBA degree from a BC university outside of the Lower Mainland
- You didn't have to sponsor her work permit ("WP") application to bring her onboard. She had applied for a three-year post-graduation WP on December 25, 2023. The WP is "open" and is valid from April 25, 2024 to April 24, 2027
- Her current base wage is \$34.00 an hour

Additional information:

- She holds a valid Chilean passport
- She earned an electrical engineering degree outside of Canada that is equivalent to a Canadian four-year electrical engineering degree
- Before relocating to Canada to attend university on August 15, 2021, she worked in electrical engineering type employment positions outside of Canada from January 1, 2018 to August 30, 2021
- She also proactively took a prescribed French language test and scored the equivalent of NCLC Levels – Speaking 8, Listening 7, Reading 6, and Writing 6

How to retain your valued employee short term

How does Mary, a control systems tester, extend her temporary working status and secure another WP?

- First consideration is probably timing – a WP extension application needs to be made before the current WP expires on April 24, 2027
 - Look up the currently published extension processing time – e.g., 117 days (~4 months) - [Check current IRCC processing times - Canada.ca](#)
- Second consideration is whether the company/organization wants to support Mary by:
 - Offering to pay a portion or all of the processing fees and the professional fees of an Immigration practitioner to advise on a WP category that can be used and to prepare the WP extension application
 - Offering to arrange the Immigration practitioner, one that you can trust, since the application may include representations made by the employer (e.g., a Labour Market Impact Assessment (“LMIA”) or online Offer of Employment form (“OOE”) as well as Mary
- Third consideration (for the practitioner) is what WP category does Mary qualify for. The post-graduation WP is a special category that is not extendable
- Fourth consideration may be whether the company/organization is willing to increase Mary’s base wage from \$34.00 an hour if the WP category for the extension application requires it. The prevailing median wage for NOC 22310 Electrical and electronics engineering technologists and technicians in the Lower Mainland – Southwest Region of BC is \$35.90

How to retain your valued employee short term - timing

Mary's WP expires on April 24, 2027

- It's August 20, 2026, so her WP expires in eight months
- Mary is anxious. She asks if it's possible to submit an extension application ASAP
- If an application is submitted, for instance, on September 1st and IRCC processes the application and issues a new WP on January 1, 2027 (~4 month processing time), it will be valid from January 1, 2027 for the duration requested
- For instance, if the WP category used has a maximum duration of one year, it will be valid from January 1, 2027 to December 31, 2027, instead of until April 24, 2028
 - Mary will actually lose time for the WP because the application was submitted too early relative to the processing time. This premature expiration date for the WP can be a disadvantage for permanent residence planning because it will result in shorter than anticipated Canadian work experience

How to retain your valued employee short term - timing

Mary's WP expires on April 24, 2027

- Alternatively, for whatever reason, if an application is submitted on April 1, 2027, IRCC won't process the application and issue a new WP until August 1, 2027, that is, after the expiry date of the current WP. Does Mary have to suspend working during the period after her WP expires and a new WP is issued, that is, from April 25 to August 1, 2027?
 - No, she can continue working in Canada because she has "maintained" working status as long as she remains in Canada, until the application is processed

How to retain your valued employee short term - timing

Mary's WP expires on April 24, 2027. If Mary loses track of time and does not submit an extension application by April 24, 2027, what are her options?

- She has a 90-day window to submit a restoration application, until July 23, 2027, which will reinstate her temporary working status and issue her a new WP. IRCC's processing time may be somewhat shorter than the published processing time for extension applications (e.g., ~4 months), but Mary will not be authorized to work while waiting
 - If she can not afford to remain in Canada while waiting, she may need to leave Canada in the interim. In this case, it is not guaranteed that IRCC will process the application if they realize that she is no longer in Canada
- She may leave Canada and apply for a new WP from outside the country
 - The new WP application would not qualify for Global Skills Strategy ("GSS") processing (often faster processing) because the occupation (TEER 2) does not qualify. GSS processing is limited to TEERs 0 and 1
 - The new WP application would likely take ~4 weeks to process if submitted from Chile, based on the currently published processing time for WPs (from outside Canada) for said country
 - She would need to activate the approval letter at a Canadian international airport to receive the actual new WP

How to retain your valued employee short term - timing

Mary's WP expires on April 24, 2027

Does the same WP category have to be used for the WP application to be considered an extension application that will confer Mary with maintained status in the event the application is not processed by the WP expiry date of April 24, 2027?

- No, another category can be used except for the International Experience Canada ("IEC") categories. For instance, if the new category is based on an LMIA, as a Provincial Nominee, or under Francophone Mobility, despite the category changing, the application is still considered an extension application
- The IEC categories (e.g., Working Holiday and Young Professional categories) are normally applied for outside Canada even if the employee is still in Canada, so they do not confer maintained status

How to retain your valued employee short term - timing

Mary's WP expires on April 24, 2027

What happens if Mary leaves Canada while on maintained status?

- Her maintained status will end, meaning that if she does not receive the new WP before re-entering Canada, she will not be authorized to resume working until the new WP is issued
- To be authorized to resume working right away, if she is visa-exempt, she can apply for a new WP at a Canadian international airport (but not at a Canadian border crossing unless she is a US citizen or US permanent resident)
 - As a Chilean citizen, Mary is visa-exempt and so can apply for a new WP at a Canadian international airport

How to retain your valued employee short term – supporting financially

How often do employers support a WP application financially?

- In my 26 years of experience supporting employers, basically 100% of the time
- Some employers do not pay for the legal fees and processing fees for spouses and dependent children
- Maybe consider having an agreement with the employee that they will refund a portion of the legal fees and processing fees if they resign within specified timeframes, e.g., within a year, within two years, especially if the WP category for the extension application is an open category that would authorize the employee to work for a new employer

How to retain your valued employee short term – supporting financially

What are the advantages of an employer using the same Immigration practitioner consistently, versus using different practitioners chosen by different employees?

- Different practitioners have different styles and capabilities
 - Some practitioners draft employer letters and legal cover letters, while others will ask the employee to ask the employer to draft an employer letter. Employer letters, for instance, may include relevant background about the employer's business, a detailed job description, the benefits generated from the employee's work, and the employee's qualifications
 - Some practitioners do not include legal cover letters. Some include a legal cover letter only when a complex issue needs explaining. Conversely, some legal cover letters are very long and repetitive with the employer letter and therefore of questionable quality
 - There are good practitioners at small, medium and large Immigration law firms. Ask HR associations, contacts at other employers for recommended practitioners

How to retain your valued employee short term – supporting financially

What are the advantages of an employer using the same Immigration practitioner consistently, versus using different practitioners chosen by different employees?

- Different practitioners have different styles and capabilities
 - When the same practitioner regularly represents the employer (so the employer is the primary client), they may be more likely to share information with both parties
 - Note that ESDC and IRCC are conducting compliance inspections and issuing larger administrative monetary penalties than before, so employers need to know what is being said in LMIA and WP applications on their behalf in LMIA forms, online OOE's and employer letters
 - Note that RCC is motivated to facilitate ~725,000 temporary residents leaving Canada in 2026. They are making WP category requirements more strict and so issuing more refusals. They are also issuing refusals for questionable reasons. In some cases, they are alleging that employees are making misrepresentations. Employees therefore need to know what is being said in WP applications on their behalf, including application forms

How to retain your valued employee short term – which WP category

- What WP category does Mary qualify for?
- What background information is relevant to this determination?
 - Mary's position title - control systems tester -> NOC 22310 Electrical and electronics engineering technologists and technicians
 - Location of the position – Metro Vancouver
 - Her relevant educational credentials - electrical engineering degree (and MBA degree)
 - Duration of her relevant Canadian work experience - from April 25, 2024 to present
 - Duration of her relevant foreign work experience - electrical engineering experience from January 1, 2018 to August 30, 2021
 - She holds a valid Chilean passport
 - She is 28 years old (date of birth is January 1, 1998)
 - She is single, meaning she doesn't have a spouse or common-law partner
 - She took a prescribed French language test and scored the equivalent of NCLC Levels – Speaking 8, Listening 7, Reading 6, and Writing 6

How to retain your valued employee short term – which WP category

- What WP category does Mary qualify for?
- Any open WP category feasible?
 - Post-graduation WP – not extendable beyond three years, so not feasible
 - **IEC WP** – available for Chilean citizens (both Working Holiday (open) and Young Professionals (employer-specific WP)), up to two times, up to 12 months at a time. For ages 18 to 35
 - Mary is eligible, currently aged 28 and may be 29 at time WP extension application is processed
 - Spousal / common-law partner WP – not feasible because she doesn't have a foreign spouse or common-law partner
 - Spouse or common-law partner in Canada (SCLPC) class – not feasible because she doesn't have a Canadian spouse or common-law partner

How to retain your valued employee short term – which WP category

- What WP category does Mary qualify for?
- Any employer-specific WP category feasible? Ranked from simpler to more complex
 - **Francophone Mobility** – Mary is eligible because she is working outside of Quebec, her position is in an eligible occupation TEER category (category 2), and her French language proficiency (speaking and listening) meets the NCLC Level 5 requirement
 - Up to three years and extendable
 - **Canada-Chile Free Trade Agreement Professional** category as a Scientific Technician / Technologist
 - Mary is qualified with her engineering degree
 - Up to three years at a time and extendable
 - Global Talent Stream (“GTS”) LMIA -> NOC 22310 Electrical and electronics engineering technologists and technicians if base salary is \$86,000+ (\$41.35 an hour, @40 hours a week)
 - Mary’s base wage of \$34.00 an hour is too low

How to retain your valued employee short term – base wage

If the most feasible WP category for the WP extension application had a requirement to pay Mary at least equal to the prevailing median wage in the region of the province, would it be feasible to increase her base wage from \$34.000 an hour to \$35.90 (the prevailing median wage for NOC 22310 Electrical and electronics engineering technologists and technicians for the Lower Mainland – Southwest Region of BC)?

- Which WP categories have a prevailing median wage requirement?
 - High-Wage LMIA stream
 - Some other Free Trade Agreement Professional and Technician categories, e.g., CPTPP Professional and Technician category for citizens of Australia, Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico and Peru

Employer involvement for PR

Recognize your role and responsibilities as the employer when supporting PR pursuit

- Ensure your employee is aware of the employer's role
- Recognize your responsibilities, but also know the limitations
 - Examples:
 - Identifying the NOC (varied approach)
 - Immigration advising support, if any
 - Providing documentation
 - Not agreeing to edit terms of employment for the sole purpose of meeting immigration eligibility criteria
 - Employment details – i.e., wages, job titles, work locations, etc.
- **! Know Your Resources ! [Internal HR ↔ Government Resources ↔ External Advisors]**

Economic immigration pathways

Express Entry (“EE”)

- Federal economic immigration selection system
- Candidates are ranked using the Comprehensive Ranking System (“CRS”)
- Includes the Canadian Experience Class (“CEC”), Federal Skilled Worker Program (“FSWP”), and Federal Skilled Trades Program (“FSTP”)

Provincial Nominee Programs (“PNPs”)

- Province and territory-specific pathways aligned with labour market needs
- May provide opportunities for workers who are not competitive through Express Entry alone
- **Requires employer support with a qualifying job offer**
- Can operate independently or linked to Express Entry

Other Economic Programs

- Atlantic Immigration Program (“AIP”)
- Rural Community Immigration Pilots
- Other programs designed to address specific regional or demographic workforce needs

BC Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP)

Program Overview (current – August 2026)

- 2026 allocation is 6,254 nominations (includes 1000 additional nominations, August 18, 2026)
- Points-based invitation system
- Nominee applicants must:
 - Demonstrate an intent to live, work and economically establish in B.C.
 - Provide economic benefit to B.C.
 - Maintain legal immigration status
- **Employer Considerations:**
 - Supporting documents are required
 - Job offer must be valid and meet program requirements
 - Not an option for all positions due to the occupation-specific pathways or the high wage requirements under the “High Economic Impact” stream
 - Site visits and company documents can all be requested and examined as part of the BC PNP process, both pre- and post-nomination

BC Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP)

Evaluate

- Confirm the ongoing need for the position
- Does this position fill a critical need for the organization?

Recruit

- Review previous recruitment efforts
- Was it difficult to fill this position?
- Are qualified Canadian Citizens and Permanent Residents likely available if recruitment is conducted again?

Explore

- Discuss steps the employee has taken to maintain work authorization
- Could the employment be independently eligible for permanent residence?
- Are there immigration pathways available that do not require employer sponsorship?

Pathways

- Determine whether the position and employee may qualify under programs such as the BC Provincial Nominee Program
- Consider the employer involvement required

Mary continued - How to support an employee's permanent residence pursuit

A Common Situation: Hiring an International Graduate

- Your organization hired **Mary**, a Control Systems Tester in Metro Vancouver

Employee Profile

- Hired: January 1, 2024
- Occupation: Control Systems Tester, NOC 22310
- Current wage: \$34.00/hour
- Works full-time in Metro Vancouver
- Holds a Post-Graduation Work Permit (“PGWP”)

Education

- Master of Business Administration from a public B.C. university, located outside of the Metro Vancouver Regional District

Current Work Permit

- Open work permit (PGWP)
- Valid until April 24, 2027

Mary continued - How to support an employee's permanent residence pursuit

Mary's Immigration Profile – additional background information

- Age: 28 years old, (Date of Birth: January 1, 1998)
- Citizen of Chile
- Single
- Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering (foreign credential)
- Nearly three years of Canadian skilled work experience by the end of 2026
- More than three years of foreign skilled work experience
- No Canadian family members

Language Test Results

- English: Speaking: 10, Listening: 9, Reading: 9, Writing: 7
- French: Speaking: 8, Listening: 7, Reading: 6, Writing: 6

Express Entry CRS Score Assessment:

As of today: **534 points**

As of December 31, 2026 (three years of Canadian Work Experience): **545 points**

Recent Canadian Experience Class Invitation Round (August 18, 2026)

CRS score of lowest-ranked candidate: **523 points**

NOC 22310 – Eligible for STEM Category-Based Draws

Alternate Scenario – Insufficient Express Entry Points

BC Provincial Nominee Program

Scoring Factor	Mary's Profile	Points
Directly Related Work Exp.	5 or more years (inclusive of foreign exp.) Additional: At least 1 year in Canada & Currently working for the employer in the occupation	20 points + 10 points + 10 points
Highest Level of Education	Master's Level – MBA Additional: Post-secondary education completed in BC	22 points + 8 points
Language Proficiency	English: CLB 7 Additional: CLB 4+ in both English & French	20 points + 10 points
Hourly Wage of BC Job Offer	\$34.00 per hour	19 points
Work Location/Area of BC	Works in Metro Vancouver Additional: Regional Alumni (MBA outside of the MVRD)	0 points + 10 points
Total:		129 points

Q&A

**LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAMS
AT IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT
COUNCIL OF BC**

<https://iecbc.ca/>

***Join the conversation on LinkedIn
@Immigrant Employment Council of BC!***

THANK YOU!

FLORENCE BELLANASTASIA

florence.bellanastasia@iecbc.ca