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# COMMON TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

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Refer to Summary of Resources  
Tip Sheet #12 for a listing of  
information sources.

**diversity**

An Employer Advantage

*Alberta* 

## **Asylum**

Protection that is offered to persons with a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group, as well as those at risk of torture or cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.

## **Business Class Immigrants**

Permanent residents in the economic immigrant category selected on the basis of their ability to establish themselves economically in Canada through entrepreneurial activity, self-employment or direct investment. Business immigrants include entrepreneurs, self-employed people and investors. The spouse or common-law partner and the dependent children of the business immigrant are also included in this category.

## **Category**

Immigration categories are shown for the three main groups of permanent residents (family class, economic immigrants, and refugees). On an exceptional basis, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act gives Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) the authority to grant permanent resident status to individuals who would not otherwise qualify in any category. For example, in cases where there are strong humanitarian and compassionate considerations.

## **Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)**

The Canadian standard used to describe, measure, and recognize English language ability of adult immigrants and prospective immigrants who plan to live and work in Canada. The categories tested include reading, writing, listening and speaking.

## **Convention Refugee**

A person who is outside of their home country or country where they normally live and fears returning to that country because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion.

## **Diversity**

The practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds, and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc.



## **Duty to Accommodate**

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that an employer has a legal duty to take **reasonable** steps, in policies or conditions of work, to accommodate an employee's individual needs. This duty applies to all grounds covered under the Alberta Human Rights Act. However, this legal duty does not apply if the only way to resolve the problem will cause the employer undue hardship.

## **Economic Class Immigrants**

Permanent residents selected for their skills and ability to contribute to Canada's economy. The economic immigrant category includes skilled workers, business immigrants, provincial or territorial nominees, live-in caregivers and Canadian Experience Class.

## **Equity**

Workplace equity is the concept of providing fair opportunities for all of your employees based on individual needs.

## **Enhanced Language Training (ELT)**

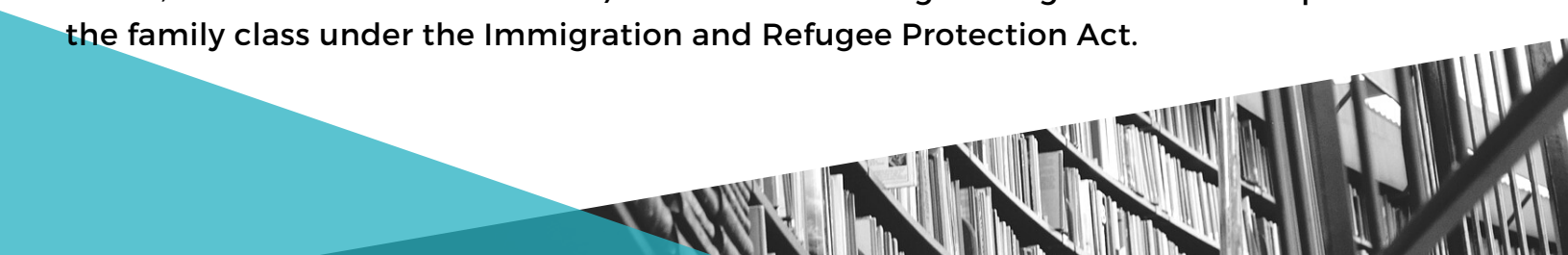
A program that provides adult newcomers with advanced, job-specific language training in English or French. ELT also uses mentoring, job placements and other ways to help newcomers find work.

## **Explicit Bias**

Individuals are aware of their prejudices and attitudes toward certain groups.

## **Family Class**

Permanent residents sponsored by a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident living in Canada who is 18 years of age or over. Family class immigrants include spouses and partners (spouse, common-law partner or conjugal partner); parents and grandparents; and others (dependent children, children under the age of 18 whom the sponsor intends to adopt in Canada, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, and grandchildren who are orphans under 18 years of age, or any other relative if the sponsor has no relative as described above, either abroad or in Canada). Fiancés are no longer designated as a component of the family class under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.



## **Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR)**

Foreign credential recognition is the process of verifying that the education and job experience obtained in another country are equal to the standards established for Canadian professionals. Credential recognition for regulated occupations is mainly a provincial responsibility that has been delegated in legislation to regulatory bodies.

## **Foreign Student**

Temporary residents who are in Canada principally to study in the observed calendar year. Foreign students have been issued a study permit. Under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, a study permit is not needed for any program of study that is six months or less. Foreign students exclude temporary residents who have been issued a study permit but who entered Canada principally for reasons other than study.

## **Foreign Workers**

Temporary residents who are in Canada principally to work in the observed calendar year. Foreign workers have been issued a document that allows them to work in Canada. Foreign workers exclude temporary residents who have been issued a work permit but who entered Canada mainly for reasons other than work.

## **Inclusion**

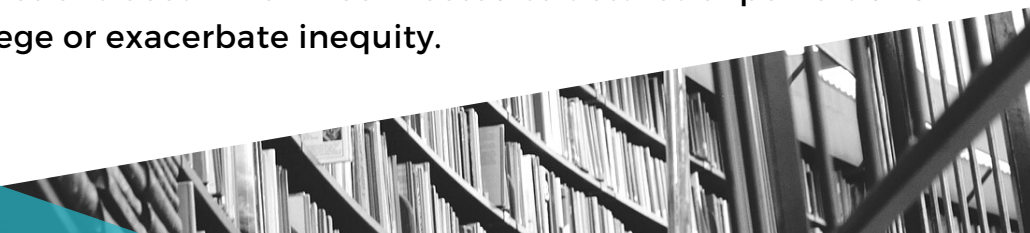
Ongoing efforts to ensure that a company values and proactively cultivates differences so that each individual can achieve their full potential. A key piece of inclusion is allowing room for people to authentically be themselves (expression of religion, sexual orientation, national origin) without fear of negative consequences

## **Immigrant**

A broad term referring to diverse job-ready people born outside of Canada, including long-term and recent arrivals from immigrant streams: economic and family class immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and international students.

## **Intersectional Lens**

An understanding that individuals are shaped by the interactions of different demographics. (ex: race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, disability or ability, mitigation status, and religion). These interactions occur within connected structures of powers and operate together to create privilege or exacerbate inequity.



## **Jum'ah Prayers**

Jum'ah prayer refers to when Muslims gather for congregational worship during Friday Midday prayer time. Prayer is followed by a sermon (khutbah) from an imam. Friday prayer is required only for men, but women may attend. Friday prayers bring together Muslims of many diverse backgrounds under one community.

## **Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)**

This is a free English language training program for adult Newcomers to Canada. This program is funded by the federal government and delivered by school boards, colleges, and local organizations that provide services to Newcomers.

## **Newcomer**

An immigrant or refugee who has been in Canada for a short time, usually less than 5 years is considered a Newcomer.

## **Naturalization**

The formal process by which a person who is not a Canadian citizen can become a Canadian citizen. The person must usually become a permanent resident first.

## **Permanent Residents**

Permanent residents must live in Canada for at least 730 days (two years) within a five-year period or risk losing their status. Permanent residents have all the rights guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms such as equality rights, legal rights, and mobility rights, freedom of religion, freedom of expression and freedom of association. They do not, however, have the right to vote in elections.

## **Onboarding**

Onboarding refers to the ongoing processes in which new hires are integrated into the organization from first contact until the employee becomes established within the organization. It includes activities that allow new employees to complete an initial new-hire orientation process, as well as learn about the organization and its structure, culture, vision, mission and values.





## **Orientation**

This is a stage of onboarding where new employees learn about the company, their job responsibilities, work environment, and co-workers.

## **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)**

This is a process that is used across Canada by schools, colleges, universities, employers and governments to formally recognize a person's skills that they have acquired outside of formal education settings. This process allows people to have these skills assessed and possibly recognized in the form of academic credits.

## **Privately Sponsored Refugee (PSR)**

A person outside Canada who has been determined to be a Convention refugee or member of the Country of Asylum class and who receives financial and other support from a private sponsor for one year after their arrival in Canada.

## **Protected Person**

A person who has been determined to be a Convention refugee or person in similar circumstances by a Canadian visa officer outside Canada, a person whom the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada has determined to be a Convention refugee or in need of protection in Canada, or a person who has had a positive pre-removal risk assessment.

## **Protected Temporary Resident**

A person admitted to Canada on a temporary resident permit because a Canadian visa officer abroad has determined that they face an immediate threat to their life, liberty or physical safety.

## **Refugee**

Permanent residents in the refugee category include government-assisted refugees, privately sponsored refugees, refugees landed in Canada and refugee dependents (dependents of refugees landed in Canada, including spouses and partners living abroad or in Canada). A person who is outside of their home country or country where they normally live and fears returning to that country because of well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group of political opinion.



## **Ramadan**

Ramadan is a Muslim holiday that falls the 9th month of the Muslim calendar and is considered a time of spiritual cleansing. It is a holy month that is observed and celebrated by fasting during daylight hours, breaking the fast in the evening, and by completing various other unique activities during the holy month.

## **Reasonable Accommodation**

Reasonable accommodation is a means used to put an end to any situation of discrimination based on disability, religion, age or any other ground prohibited by the Canadian Human Rights Act. Accommodating a person may involve adapting a practice, or a general operating rule or granting an exemption to a person in facing discrimination.

## **Refugee Landed in Canada**

A permanent resident who applied for and received permanent resident status in Canada after their refugee claim was accepted.

## **Refugee Protection Status**

When a person, inland or overseas, is determined to be a Convention refugee or protected person, they are said to have refugee protection status in Canada. Refugee protection is given to a person in accordance with the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

## **Salah Prayers**

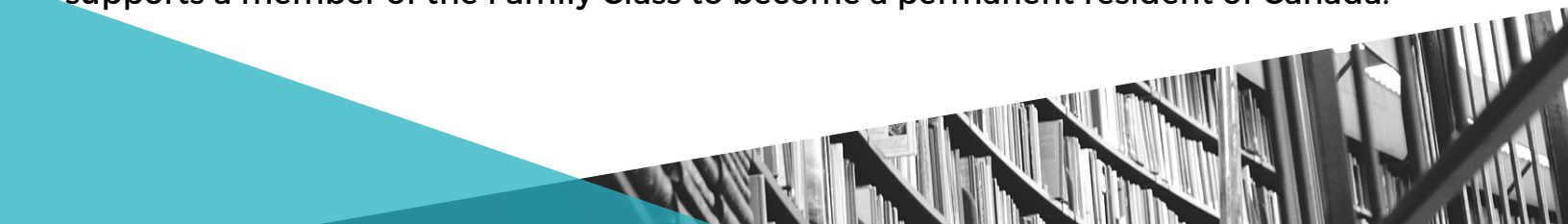
Salah (salat) is the Arabic term for the ritual prayer that is obligatory for Muslims to perform five times a day. It forms the second of the five pillars of Islam.

## **Skill Level**

To be eligible for the Federal Skilled Worker Class and Canadian Experience Class, foreign workers must have work experience at specified skill levels. Skill levels for occupations come from the National Occupational Classification (NOC) system. They are classified by type of work and training required to be proficient.

## **Sponsor**

A Canadian citizen or permanent resident who is 18 years of age or older, and who legally supports a member of the Family Class to become a permanent resident of Canada.



## **Sponsored Person**

A foreign national who has applied for permanent residence under the Family Class, has an approved Canadian sponsor and meets the requirements of the Family Class.

## **Temporary Foreign Worker**

Workers are hired to fill short-term labour and skill shortages after a Labour Market Assessment has concluded that no Canadians are available to do the job.

## **Temporary Resident**

Status of a foreign national who is in Canada legally for a short period. Temporary residents include students, temporary foreign workers and visitors, such as tourists.

## **Tokenism**

The practice of making only a symbolic or hasty effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of sexual or racial equality within a workforce.

## **Unconscious Bias (also known as Implicit Bias)**

Attitudes, stereotypes, and biases that are held subconsciously and affect the way individuals feel and think about others around them.

## **Undue Hardship**

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled the employer's hardship must be "substantial in nature." An accommodation is not possible because it would cost too much or create a health and safety risk. For more information regarding the Duty to Accommodate and undue hardship, refer to the Alberta Human Rights Act.

## **Work permit**

A document issued by IRCC that authorizes a person to work legally in Canada. It sets out conditions for the worker such as the type of work they can do, the employer they can work for, where they can work, and how long they can work.







## **For more tips and strategies to improve diversity in your workplace, check out our other Tip Sheets:**

1. Job Descriptions
2. Recruitment and Job Sourcing
3. Assessing Skills and Competencies
4. Interviewing and Selection
5. Orientation
6. Onboarding
7. Creating a Welcoming and Inclusive Work Environment
8. Training and Development
9. Communication
10. Employee Retention
11. Common Terms and Definitions
12. Summary of Resources

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