

Welcoming More Immigrants

Proposed Eligibility Criteria for
Entrepreneur Stream
Nova Scotia Nominee Program

Discussion Paper
February 2008

Introduction:

In January 2005, Nova Scotia released its first immigration strategy which outlined the following goals:

- to help immigrants settle, succeed and stay – specifically, to increase our retention rate from 40 to 70 per cent for the 2006 – 2011 census period
- to more than double the number of immigrants coming to our province – to 3,600 annually within four years of full strategy implementation

One of the Province's key tools for attraction is the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP). The purpose of this paper is to gather feedback on a proposed new Entrepreneur stream of the NSNP. This stream will target senior managers and entrepreneurs who wish to live in Nova Scotia and establish a new or purchase an existing business in the province. The Entrepreneur stream will replace the former Economic stream.

Building on Success: Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP)

The NSNP is designed to allow Nova Scotia to increase the benefits of immigration to the province. It enables the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration to recruit and select immigrants who wish to settle in Nova Scotia and meet the labour market and economic needs of the province, resulting in a more diverse workforce and economy. A person who is nominated by Nova Scotia can apply for a permanent resident visa at a Canadian visa office under a federal Economic Class known as the Provincial Nominee Class. While processing will vary from post to post, processing times on average are faster for provincial nominees than for applicants through the other immigration streams. Nominees approved under this program may become permanent residents of Canada after the federal government conducts health, criminality and security reviews. The program is made possible through the Canada-Nova Scotia Agreement on Provincial Nominees.

There are currently four nominee streams:

- ∞ International Graduate
- ∞ Skilled Worker
- ∞ Family Business Worker
- ∞ Community Identified

Proposed Criteria for New Entrepreneur Stream:

The proposed Entrepreneur stream will replace the former Economic stream of the nominee program. It will target senior managers and entrepreneurs who wish to live in Nova Scotia and establish a new or buy or invest in an existing business in the province.

The new stream will not have any provincial application fees or require a good faith deposit.

As well, the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration is proposing two elements in the design of its Entrepreneur stream:

1. Using a Temporary Entry Model

At least one another province pre-selects applicants and supports their entry into Canada under a two-year Temporary Work Permit. It nominates the applicants after they have been in the province and have successfully met their entrepreneur terms. The Nova Scotia Office of Immigration is proposing to adopt a Temporary Entry model in its Entrepreneur stream. The Nova Scotia Office of Immigration would only nominate applicants who have fulfilled the Entrepreneur terms and conditions. This means that applicants would need to demonstrate their intention to live in Nova Scotia and their ability to establish or buy a business before they are eligible for nomination.

2. Using Different Selection Criteria for International Graduate Entrepreneurs

For the purpose of this paper, an international graduate is described as a person who has graduated within the last two years from a program of at least one academic year of full-time study in Nova Scotia and has received a certificate, diploma, or degree from a recognized Nova Scotia post-secondary institution. International graduates form an attractive pool of potential immigrants. They are well-educated, have often already settled in our communities and have obtained Canadian credentials which facilitate their getting a job. Many recent graduates, however, do not have extensive management experience or financial resources in their own name. Therefore, we propose to use different selection criteria for international graduates to assess three elements: their management, minimum net worth and minimum investment requirements.

The criteria proposed below are being circulated for comment and feedback.

PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR NSNP ENTREPRENEURS

Eligibility Criteria for Nominee Applicants	Supporting Detail
Age	Be between the ages of 21 and 55 (exceptions could be made on a case-by-case basis where the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration considers that the proposed business will be of exceptional economic benefit to the province.)
Education & Training	Have completed a minimum of Grade 12 or equivalent, or have a minimum of 13 years of schooling; and Have the appropriate education, training and qualifications, licensing and accreditation to support their business activity.
Language Ability	Have moderate proficiency for the ability to speak, listen, read and write in French or English, and sufficient language capability to own and operate a business and to be functional in Nova Scotia upon arrival. Abilities are verified by performance during the interview as well as of the following: <input type="checkbox"/> internationally recognized test results (benchmark of 6 or higher on Canadian

	<p>Language Benchmarks); or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ certificates from language classes; or <p>educational transcripts, employment references or other documentation indicating English or French as the principal language of instruction or communication</p>
Intention to Settle in Nova Scotia	Be able to satisfy the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration of sincere intention and ability to settle in Nova Scotia. Demonstration of established connections to Nova Scotia will strengthen your application.
Business Experience	<p>Have sufficient business experience (minimum of five years) as a senior manager or business owner, preferably in a private sector enterprise.</p> <p>Have never been involved in unacceptable business practices or activities.</p> <p>The evidence of work experience will be verified by certified education and/or work experience via résumé or curriculum vitae (CV) and supporting employment and business documents.</p>
Net Worth	<p>Have legally obtained a minimum total personal net worth of CDN \$400,000, including minimum liquid assets of CDN \$200,000.</p> <p>Have the financial ability to invest and settle in Nova Scotia for at least a period of two years.</p>
Investment	<p>Must make a minimum equity investment of CDN \$150,000 in establishing or purchasing a business in Nova Scotia, or in investing in an existing business.</p> <p>Will own at least 33.3% of a business in Nova Scotia (with a minimum investment of CDN \$150,000).</p>
Active Management	Must have an active management role in the day-to-day operation of the business. A business primarily for the purpose of deriving investment income, such as interest, dividends or capital gains is not eligible.
Business Proposal/Plan	<p>Must provide a Preliminary Application Form to the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration which outlines the business proposal and interests, as well as background information.</p> <p>If selected for an interview, applicants must provide a complete and detailed business proposal.</p>
Exploratory Visit and Interview	<p>If selected after review of the Preliminary Application Form, applicants must attend an interview with the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration during a mandatory 7-day exploratory visit.</p> <p>Applicants already living in the province must attend an interview but do not need to document an exploratory visit.</p>
Temporary Entry Model vs. Direct Nomination	The Nova Scotia Office of Immigration will require that pre-selected applicants enter Canada on a two-year Temporary Work Permit to establish their business in the province. Once they have acted in accordance with Entrepreneur stream criteria (e.g., have made the investment and are living in the province), the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration will nominate.

PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR INTERNATIONAL GRADUATES

The proposed criteria for International Graduates would be the same as those listed on the preceding page with the exception of the following three elements:

Eligibility Criteria for International Graduates	Supporting Detail
Business Experience	Sufficient education in areas related to the business proposal. Relevant management and work experience will also be an asset.
Net Worth	Must have the financial ability to invest and maintain proposed business and settle in Nova Scotia for at least a period of two years.
Investment	Minimum equity investment of CDN \$75,000. Will own at least 33.3% of a business in Nova Scotia (with a minimum investment of CDN \$75,000). Must attend an interview with the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration

Seeking Your Feedback

The table below presents some discussion points related to key criteria and obligations. Feedback does not need to be limited to these discussion points.

Criteria	Questions
<i>Age:</i> Most jurisdictions propose age ranges that: (a) begin high enough to allow the applicant to meet the minimum education requirements, and (b) end at an age where the applicant can still be expected to work for a reasonable number of years	The age range proposed is based on research in other jurisdictions. Is the range of 21– 55 years appropriate in Nova Scotia for an Entrepreneur stream?
<i>Education & Training:</i> The level of education required by applicants varies from province to province, ranging from the completion of secondary education to the completion of some post-secondary education.	Is the minimum completion of Grade 12 or equivalent too high? Or too low?
<i>Language Ability:</i> The ability to speak the language (English or French) in your new community is key to successfully integrating in all aspects of community life. For this reason, intermediate English or French skills are required in all existing Nominee Program categories.	What minimum language requirement is sufficient to ensure entrepreneurs can settle and conduct business in Nova Scotia?
<i>Business Experience:</i> Most jurisdictions require a minimum of 3 to 5 years of business experience as a senior executive or a business owner.	Is a minimum of five years senior management or ownership experience too much or not enough? How should management be defined?
<i>Investment:</i> Most jurisdictions require a minimum investment between CDN \$150,000- CDN \$200,000	Is a minimum equity investment of CDN \$150,000 too high? Or too low?

<p><i>Job Creation:</i> Most jurisdictions require the proposed business create a certain amount of jobs, not including the applicant or their immediate family.</p>	<p>If applicants are starting a new company, should there be a minimum amount of jobs, excluding family members, created by the proposed business? How many?</p> <p>If applicants are buying an existing company, should there be a requirement for maintaining existing jobs?</p>
<p><i>Exploratory Visit:</i> Most jurisdictions impose a mandatory 3-7 day exploratory visit to explore business options and meet with provincial representatives, settlement agencies, and business centres.</p>	<p>How long should be a mandatory exploratory visit? Whom should the applicant meet with during the exploratory visit?</p>
<p><i>Temporary Entry Model:</i> The Nova Scotia Office of Immigration is proposing to only nominate the applicants after they have come to Nova Scotia under a Temporary Work Permit and have demonstrated that they have met the Entrepreneur stream criteria.</p>	<p>Should the province adopt a Temporary Entry Model? What are the benefits? The challenges?</p>
<p>Different criteria for International Graduates</p>	<p>Questions</p>
<p><i>International Graduates:</i> Nova Scotia is considering having reduced criteria in the areas of investment, net worth, and work experience for international graduates.</p>	<p>Should there be different criteria for international graduates to facilitate their stay in Nova Scotia as entrepreneurs? How should the criteria be modified?</p>

Written comments are invited until **March 31, 2008** sent to:

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All feedback will be considered. The aim is introduce the entrepreneur stream in spring 2008.