

HIRING IMMIGRANT TALENT

This Tip-Sheet provides ideas, skills and resources to effectively hire immigrant talent.

Reviewing Resumes:

- Begin with as many resumes as possible** - effective recruitment practices will increase your candidate pool and give you the best chance of hiring the right individual.
- Focus on abilities vs. specific skills** - try to determine if the candidate has the ability to learn a specific skill based on work they have performed in the past e.g. the candidate has never worked with an MS Access database but has learned many other software programs in the past and seems very comfortable with their computer skills.
- Look at all areas of experience** - past work positions as well as volunteer work. A person that has not done the specific job before can bring in other valuable skills, different perspectives and innovation.
- Ask yourself if formal education is truly required** - look for the qualities or knowledge needed to perform the work effectively, rather than a specific credential (a degree, diploma, certificate or license).
- Explore communication ability** - review any spelling or grammar problems in a resume or cover letter carefully as a person whose first language is not English may make errors, but they can communicate at an acceptable level for the position.
- Cultural norms** - immigrants may include other information in their resumes and cover letters that Canadians may not normally include. Although it may seem strange, try to look past any unusual information and focus on the applicant's skill, experience and attitude.
- Formal credentials** - if specific credentials are required for the position, ask candidates to provide an independent assessment and verification of their credentials, or commission an assessment yourself through an organization such as the International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES) at BCIT.

Conducting Interviews:

- Use immigrant friendly language** -keep the language simple and straightforward. Try to avoid slang or jargon and allow for differences in communication style.

- ❑ **Expect some miscommunications and awkwardness** - “small talk” could be uncomfortable.
- ❑ **Meet face to face** - because of communication challenges, screening potential candidates over the phone may not be effective.
- ❑ **Practice re-phrasing questions** - if you receive an inaccurate or short answer during the interview you may need to ask the question a different way in order to ensure the candidate understands.
- ❑ **Try to make the candidate as comfortable as possible** - most people are very nervous in a job interview so keep in mind that someone who is interviewing in a second language could be even more nervous. They might make communication errors that they might normally make.
- ❑ **Use scenario-based questions to assess how the candidate would perform on the job** - ask for examples and specifics or enable the candidate to demonstrate their skills.
- ❑ **Be prepared for different cultural norms** - assumptions about basic Canadian cultural norms may not be accurate e.g. handshakes, eye contact, personal space, body language etc.
- ❑ **Provide a pen and notepad** - allows candidates to record information and details from the interview as well as help organize their thoughts if needed during the interview.
- ❑ **Don't hesitate to check references** - check local references (work, volunteer activities or character references). If local references are not available, many international references do speak English... so don't be afraid to pick up the phone. You may also want to send specific questions for referees via email ahead of time so that they may prepare their responses.
- ❑ **Offering the position** - be very clear when describing starting wages, benefits, start dates, times, where to park, what to bring, who will meet them etc.

The above list of tips on hiring new immigrant talent was created by [Douglas College - the Training Group](#) for the [Surrey Board of Trade's](#) IEC-BC [Employer Innovation Fund](#) project.