

# Make The Federal Skilled Worker Program Eligible Occupation List Work For You



Individuals all around the world look to Canada's Federal Skilled Worker Program in order to facilitate their immigration to and settlement in Canada, but the restrictive occupation list for the program can lead many people to the mistaken belief that they do not qualify.

The Federal Skilled Worker (FSW) program is one of Canada's most popular immigration programs, allowing for foreign nationals to obtain permanent residence in Canada if they meet a points threshold based on their education, language proficiency, work experience, and other factors.

Despite being one of the most popular programs, it is also one of the most restrictive, as applicants without a job offer are only able to apply if they have at least one year of experience in an occupation featured on the eligible occupations list. The eligible occupation list changes with each year the program is open, and only 50 occupations are eligible for the program in 2014.

The inclusion of only 50 occupations inevitably means that many interested individuals with impressive credentials do not find their current occupation on the list, leading them to believe that they are ineligible for the program.

In order to qualify for the FSW program, an individual must have at least one year of continuous full time work experience during the past ten years in one of the program's eligible occupations. There is no requirement that the occupation a person applies under is their current occupation, which allows for individuals to apply under the NOC code of any occupation they have held in the past 10 years.

This means that even individuals who do not find their current occupation on the list can still qualify for the program. For example, many managerial careers that presuppose prior experience in a lower level occupation are excluded from the list, while the lower level positions are included.

For example, IT Manager (NOC 0213) is an occupation that was excluded from the 2014 eligible occupations list, but this does not necessarily mean IT Managers cannot immigrate to Canada under the FSW program. In order to become an IT Manager, it is likely that the individual worked in other IT occupations earlier in their career in order to advance to the managerial position. As long as the experience in the other occupations was gained in the past 10 years, that individual could use their prior experience in the same field in an eligible occupation to qualify for the Federal Skilled Worker program. Although IT Managers are not on the eligible occupation list, a variety of other IT occupations including Computer Network Technician (NOC 2281), a Software Engineer or Designer (NOC 2173), Information Systems Analyst or Consultant (NOC 2171), Database Analyst or Data Administrator (2172), and Computer Programmer and Interactive Media Developer (NOC 2174) are on the eligible occupation list. A current IT manager with at least one year of experience in one of these other eligible occupations in the IT industry can use that experience to qualify for the FSW program without having to wait in uncertainty for IT Managers to be recognized in future years of the program.

Similarly, Engineering Manager (NOC 0211) is another occupation that is noticeably absent from the eligible occupations list this year. Despite the managerial position being ineligible, the FSW program currently has a number of other engineering occupations on the eligible occupation lists. Most managers have at least one year of experience in a lower level occupation prior to becoming a manager, so an Engineering Manager could use their prior experience as a Civil Engineer (NOC 2131), Mechanical Engineer (2132), Electrical or Electronic Engineer (NOC 2133), Petroleum Engineer (2145), Mechanical Engineering Technologist or Technician (NOC 2232) or Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technologists and Technicians (NOC 2241) to qualify for the FSW program.

Individuals interested in immigrating to Canada should not be discouraged by the realization that their current occupation is excluded from the eligible occupation list, but should instead look to their resume to take advantage of their past work experience, which may afford them the opportunity to immigrate to Canada.

To find out if you may qualify for the Federal Skilled Worker program, contact FWCanada or fill out our free online assessment form.

Last Updated: August 13 2014

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