

FAST: Bridging the gap through Collaborative Competency Assessments and Training

Improving Newcomer Employment
Outcomes: A Key to Labour Market
Efficiency

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Funded by:



Who is IEC-BC

IEC-BC is dedicated to helping skilled immigrants find meaningful employment by connecting them with employers who value their skills and experience.

We work closely with various stakeholders, including employers, government agencies, and educational institutions, to bridge the gap between international talent and the Canadian labour market.

Key Initiatives

Facilitating Access to Skilled Talent (FAST) program, which supports immigrants in navigating the Canadian job market and overcoming barriers such as lack of recognition for international credentials and the absence of the Canadian job market.



Overview

FAST Facilitating Access
to Skilled Talent

What is FAST?

- Launched in 2015, Originally a pilot in British Columbia for Skilled Trades, the FAST program has grown into a national initiative supporting skilled immigrants across multiple sectors like IT, biotech, and life sciences.
- Supported by FSC in 2020, FAST expanded its reach and enhanced its tools and resources.

Purpose:

- Address the lack of recognition for international credentials.
- Help immigrants prepare for the Canadian job market even before arrival.

Impact:

- Employment outcomes improved from 45% at program exit to 72% after nine months. Increased weekly earnings by 25%.

Framing the Problem

Immigrants to Canada face chronic underemployment while Canadian employers cry out for skilled workers

- Employers often lack the awareness or ability to identify, assess, and hire immigrants into jobs that make the best use of the skills they bring
- Newcomers lack crucial information about how their skills can be best applied in the Canadian labour market

Challenges Faced



Learning Curve for Participants

Initial adjustment period for participants new to the program.



Importance of Digital Literacy

Necessity for participants to have basic digital skills to navigate the online platform.



Limited Initial Employer Involvement

Early stages saw fewer employers actively participating in the program.

Key Learnings



Need for More Human Interaction

Increased support and guidance for participants to enhance their learning experience.



Expanded Eligibility Criteria

Broadening the scope to include more diverse participants benefits the program.



Enhanced Language Support and User Experience

Improving language support and overall user experience to better assist participants.

The Power of Collaboration in FAST's Success

Partnerships:

- Contributions from 60+ partner organizations across Canada.

Why It Matters:

- FAST's success depends on strong partnerships.
- Continuous Improvement: Collaboration has been key to refining and scaling FAST.
- Sector Learning: Leveraging insights from partners and the FSC community.

What's Next for FAST

Continuous Improvement:

Implementing lessons learned and refining the program.

Collaboration with Blueprint: Building a Theory of Change, conducting evaluations, and A/B testing.

Expansion of Occupation Streams: Covering more high-demand industries.

Broadened Geographic Reach: Ensuring program access across all provinces.

Extended Eligibility: Including international students and work permit holders.

Focus on Collaboration: Strengthening partnerships to enhance and scale the program.

Data-Driven Planning: Prioritizing data to inform continuous planning and improvement.

Commitment to Continuous Learning: Learning from others in the sector and the FSC community to drive program enhancements.

Success Stories

FAST has helped many newcomers successfully integrate into the Canadian workforce. Some examples include:

1. Jeremiah Kehinde - Landed in Moncton NB from Nigeria; now working as a Quality Assurance Supervisor in Biotech.
2. Dibyangana Bhattacharyya (Dana) - Moved to Windsor NS from Ireland via USA; credits FAST for validating her skills and helping her understand Canadian workplace culture.