

Syrian Refugees Jobs Agenda

Kick-Starting Employer Action



January 2017

About the Roundtable

A Message from the Honourable Ratna Omidvar

Since November 2015, Canada's humanitarian response to the resettlement of the Syrian refugee crisis demonstrated the nation's commitment to compassion as we prepared to welcome more than 30,000 Syrian newcomers to Canada. Government, local communities, and individuals across the country were ready to help welcome and integrate our newest arrivals.

The response from the business community and key partners in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) was immensely positive; there was a strong and sincere desire to help, and respond in a meaningful way. We recognized that most of the immediate settlement concerns were being addressed, such as health and housing, but that navigating employment would be a complicated and difficult aspect of the integration process. We know that securing employment is an important indicator of successful integration that contributes to newcomers' sense of belonging. In the absence of social networks and links to the Canadian labour market, searching for employment opportunities would be a challenge for many newcomers and a missed opportunity for local employers. So we decided to act. We convened, and called ourselves the Syrian Refugee Jobs Agenda Roundtable.

Convening the Roundtable

The Roundtable convened in late 2015 as a committee of employers, employment and immigrant serving agencies, and government representatives with a goal to develop a strategy to increase Syrian refugees' access to employment opportunities that utilize the talent and skills they bring to the GTHA.

Employers Take Action

Roundtable members committed to work collaboratively and strategically to eliminate duplication and confusion in employment efforts. Engaging key members from the private, public and not-for-profit sectors was vital to ensuring representation across sectors and equipping service providers with the tools and resources needed to achieve the goal of employing the Syrian newcomers.

Over the course of its first year, the Roundtable evolved as an enabler, meeting regularly to gather, share and distribute relevant information. We worked closely together, challenging and pushing each other to find solutions, and measuring success by our ability to identify suitable employment opportunities.

This document is a snapshot of the key elements of the Roundtable, a guide to help you create similar initiatives that work for your city and community.



Ratna Omidvar

**Senator
Ratna Omidvar**
*Chairperson of the
Syrian Refugees Jobs
Agenda Roundtable*

CONTEXT

35,174

Syrian refugees have arrived in Canada since November 4, 2015*

33%

of Government Assisted and 52% of Privately Sponsored Syrian Refugees were 25-64 years old**

Almost 40%

of Privately Sponsored Syrian Refugees had completed some post-secondary education**

43%

of all arrivals to Canada had settled in Ontario, as of June 2016*

**Estimated
2,500**

were expected to arrive to Toronto before the end of 2016*

Sources:

*CIC and City of Toronto websites, as of November 20th 2016 and ** Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

Community Engagement: Partnership Model - Who's Involved?



Community Engagement: Partner Roles and Responsibilities

Government

Representatives from government organizations at all levels to lend legitimacy and advise on available programs that can support new initiatives from this Roundtable.

Chambers and Associations

Representation from key regional chambers of commerce, and industry associations that can speak to economic development and labour market needs on behalf of industry players who are facing talent shortages.

Private and Public Sector Employers

Employers with open positions and a willingness to hire immigrants and refugees. Organizations that have capacity to engage in diversity and global talent hiring initiatives that may require additional support for new employees to integrate into their organization effectively.

Community Organizations and Service Providers

Community organizations providing settlement services and supports for employment. These organizations are pivotal to preparing refugees and other immigrants to join the workforce. This includes résumé and interview preparation, job applications, connections to employers, workplace culture training, networking skills etc.

Educational institutions and education-related Organizations

Educational institutions that run language and trades programs, professional bridging programs and graduate certificates that help refugees and immigrants to demonstrate their qualifications and readiness for employment and professional licensing.

Education-related organizations that provide credential related services, such as credential evaluation, competency assessment, language testing, and others that help refugees and immigrants demonstrate their skills and abilities to join the workforce.

QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS

“ The Syrian Refugee Jobs Agenda Roundtable mobilized employers to determine precise, actionable pathways - such as hosting a job fair - to employment opportunities. The team held itself to account by focusing the conversation of each meeting on answering: ‘how will this action create employment?’”

- Gillian Smith,
Chief Marketing Officer,
Toronto Region Board of Trade

“ The Roundtable was a great response to a tremendous need: employers needed to be better connected with Syrian refugees and Syrian refugees needed to find suitable employment. By bringing employers, agencies and government to the same table, we were able to effectively respond to these needs in ways that were creative and practical. The second-year of this initiative looks bright.”

- Margaret Eaton,
Executive Director, Toronto Region
Immigrant Employment Council

“ The opportunity to convene leaders from across industry sectors, all levels of government and the non-profit community in this forum empowered us all to focus on the immediate employment needs of Syrian newcomers, and arrive at solutions that can be leveraged nationally to support all new Canadians in their pursuit of work.”

- Tonya Lagrasta,
Community, Inclusion & Diversity
KPMG in Canada

Roundtable Highlights: A Snapshot of Early Results

Job Fair:

A key goal of the *Syrian Refugees Jobs Agenda* was to provide an in-person event to connect refugees with employers, and provide employers the opportunity to meet with Syrian job seekers and learn about their talent and skills. Roundtable members emphasized the necessity for participating employers to have identified vacant positions, and have the desire to fill those vacancies with newcomer talent, specifically the new population of Syrian refugees. With this goal in mind, Roundtable member, ACCES Employment spearheaded the Job Fair initiative, and successfully recruited 24 employers to participate. The response from the community was incredible: over 250 job seekers registered for the event, over 300 resumes were collected by participating employers, and 26 job seekers were offered positions immediately following the event. The event is a significant marker for the positive impact committed employers can have on a community. As the Roundtable moves into Year Two, partners and allies intend on repeating the Job Fair and continue working towards job-matching opportunities for Syrian refugees.

Employer Guide to Hiring Newcomers:

The Roundtable members recognized the importance to prepare, and assist, employers with welcoming this new population to the workplace. Together, Roundtable members assembled an employer guide to provide a glimpse into the skills and educational background of Syrian refugees, as well as, practical tips and easy-to-use resources to help employers engage with Canada's newest arrivals through meaningful employment. This Guide is now available to all employers on [Hire Immigrants](#) (see appendix).

Syrian Refugee Fund Project Grant from United Way of Toronto and York Region:

The Roundtable sub-committee, Skills Profile Working Group, facilitated the development of a joint project between Magnet, ACCES Employment, TRIEC and the United Way of Toronto and York Region (UWTY). Together, the four partner organizations will leverage their expertise and business specialization to deliver a project that: creates an employment network hub for Syrian refugees; assists Syrian refugees in building their employment profile on Magnet's web-based platform; and develops online tools to support the integration of Syrian refugees into the Canadian workplace.

ALiGN - A fit based employment and skills training model for youth and Syrian refugees:

The Roundtable led to new partnership opportunities and collaboration on projects focused on hiring Syrian refugees. Magnet and Ontario Tourism Education Corporation (OTEC) are working together to create employment and training pathways that assist jobseekers lacking formal education and credentials. By employing the use of Psychometric testing that measure candidates' suitability for a role, the ALiGN platform will help applicants highlight their competencies to employers. ALiGN will employ this comprehensive assessment tool to identify and connect Syrian refugees with unrecognized skills to suitable and meaningful employment opportunities that fit their personal competencies.

Construction Trades Program:

In November 2016, ACCES Employment, in partnership with the Labourers' International Union of North America (LIUNA!) and the Refugee Career Jumpstart Project (RCJP) spearheaded an initiative to support Syrian jobseekers' entry in construction-related occupations. The Construction Trades Program provides sector-specific language training and pre-apprenticeship opportunities for Syrian newcomers, and connects them to jobs in the construction trades industry. Since its launch, the pilot has 68 participants enrolled in the program, with a growing wait-list.

Participating Organizations

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>ABC Life Literacy
 Accenture
 ACCES Employment
 BILD
 BNS
 Business Development Bank of Canada
 CIBC
 CIC
 City of Toronto
 CivicAction
 COSTI
 Counselling
 Futurpreneur
 George Brown College</p> | <p>Global Diversity Exchange,
 Ryerson University
 Impakt corp
 IRCC
 KPMG in Canada
 Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge
 LinkedIn
 LiUNA!
 Magnet, Ryerson University
 Maple Leaf Foods
 MCIIT, Ontario
 OTEC
 PwC
 RBC</p> | <p>Scotiabank
 Serco Canada Inc.
 Starwood Hotels and Resorts
 TD Canada Trust
 The Refugee Career Jumpstart Project
 Toronto Board of Trade
 TRIEC
 Unifor
 Unifor Local 112
 United Way
 World Education Services
 YMCA</p> |
|--|---|---|



Appendix

EMPLOYER GUIDE TO HIRING NEWCOMERS

Information & Resources



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada



RCJP
REFUGEE CAREER
JUMPSTART PROJECT



TRIEC
Toronto Region Immigrant
Employment Council



WORLD EDUCATION SERVICES

CONTENTS

Refugee Talent and the Role of Business	1
Syrian Refugee Profile <i>Provided by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)</i>	3
Syrian Refugee Profile: Greater Toronto Area <i>Provided by Refugee Career Jumpstart Project (RCJP)</i>	6
Syrian Higher Education System for Employers <i>Provided by World Education Services (WES)</i>	8
Hiring Support for Employers <i>Provided by ACCES Employment</i>	11
Hiring Newcomers: Practical Solutions <i>Provided by Hire Immigrants</i>	13
Key Resources for Hiring and Onboarding Newcomers <i>Provided by TRIEC</i>	15
Government of Canada Security Clearance Process <i>Provided by Hire Immigrants with KPMG and IRCC</i>	17

EMPLOYER GUIDE TO HIRING NEWCOMERS

Information & Resources

REFUGEE TALENT & THE ROLE OF BUSINESS

The strongest pathway to social and economic integration for refugees is meaningful work. It is also well established that refugees who are able to work, want to work.

Business has a stake in refugee employment in Canada. In human capital terms, refugee talent is attractive to business. While not all refugees have workplace ready skills, many do, or else have potential and represent a future talent pool. And yet, there remain problems in matching talent to opportunities.

Immigrants in Canada are chronically underemployed, at an [estimated](#) annual cost to the Canadian economy of \$20 billion. A further “[refugee gap](#)” means that when factors like education, skills and language are controlled, refugees underperform even more compared to other immigrants. Companies are critical in closing the gap and are uniquely positioned to do it. The private sector acts more rapidly in response to market opportunity like an influx of talent than governments can, as they are unencumbered by politics and bureaucracy ([Khalid Koser](#)).

Many Canadian firms are committed to engaging with newcomer talent - including refugee talent - as a moral and business imperative. The case is clear and growing, and summarized below. The remainder of this guide is focused on practical information, resources, and solutions to support employers invest in Syrian refugees, the latest large talent pool to Canada.

It is the vision of contributors to this guide that the innovation driven by Syrian refugee employment will continue and advance the ability of employers to recruit and retain talented newcomers of all backgrounds.

Why Hire Newcomer Talent?

There is a growing body of evidence linking the diversity that results from migration to gains in **innovation**, **productivity** and **market opportunity**.

- Companies with ethnically diverse employees out-innovate and out-perform others. One US study found they are 45% more likely than non-diverse firms to have expanded market share, and 70% more likely to capture a new market. Teams with a member who represents a target client are 158% more likely to understand the client and innovate accordingly ([Sylvia Ann Hewlett et al, Center for Talent Innovation](#)).
- There is an 80% improvement in business performance when levels of diversity and inclusion are high ([Deloitte](#)). Another analysis found ethnically diverse companies are 35% more likely to have financial returns above the industry median ([McKinsey & Company](#)).

- For every 1% rise in ethnic diversity among employees, there is a 9% rise in sales revenue ([Cedric Herring, University of Illinois at Chicago](#)).
- Diverse groups make better decisions. People working in homogenous groups have a default assumption for like-mindedness. They assume others look and think like they do, leading to blind spots in decision-making ([Evan Apfelbaum et al, MIT Sloan](#)).
- Immigrants are entrepreneurial and able to understand unmet needs in under-leveraged markets. They start businesses at a faster rate than born Canadians ([David Green et al, Statistics Canada](#)).
- Immigrants have access to international networks and resources in their home countries as well as knowledge of international markets. Non-US exporting businesses with an immigrant majority owner are among the fastest-growing Canadian SMEs. In 2011, 27% of SME exporters were immigrant owned compared with 22% of SMEs overall ([Sui Sui and Horatio Morgan, CBOC](#)).

Why Hire Syrian Refugee Talent?

Syrian men and women who arrive as refugees are like other newcomers in many ways. They're educated, experienced, and **represent a new talent pool** with connections to communities around the world. In addition to the reasons listed above for investing in newcomer talent, here are some other factors to consider for investing in Syrian talent:

- **Language and culture intelligence.** Roughly 90% of Syrians speak Arabic and just under 90% are Muslim. Syrian talent is an asset for the Canadian and especially GTA market: Arabic is in the top ten mother tongue languages of immigrants to Canada (over half of immigrants speak two language and one fifth speak three). Muslims are the fastest growing faith group among immigrants to Canada. Two-thirds of Canada's 1 million Muslims live in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, the largest being in Toronto. In Toronto, 46% of the population is foreign-born and 49% are visible minorities ([NHS 2011](#)).
- **Competition.** Canadian firms are identifying employment opportunities to bring high-skilled Syrians into the workforce. Globally, forward-thinking firms are innovating to improve the ability of their workplaces to attract and retain Syrian talent.
- **National project.** Immigration Minister John McCallum calls the Syrian refugee resettlement a "national project," and he is right that stakeholders across sectors are involved, many in unprecedented ways. The phenomenon of private sponsorship groups within companies is happening on a scale never before seen in Canada. Innovation in support of this national project is being watched closely within Canada and by international stakeholders. There is high potential for sharing, replicating and scaling good practice.
- **Talent pipeline.** Canada is resettling upwards of 35,000 Syrian refugees by the end of 2016. Children are the largest cohort - 60% of government-assisted refugees are aged 14 or younger - and will form the backbone of the Canadian economy in as short as 10 years. Better employment outcomes for parents position the next generation for even greater success.

SYRIAN REFUGEE PROFILE

Trends reflected in this report include both empirical and anecdotal findings, which includes approved and in-progress applications and observations from visa officers, primarily in Amman and some from Beirut. The focus is on Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs), with data on Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs) included for comparison purposes.

Executive Summary

The following key findings were observed in the Syrian refugees processed between November 2015 and January 2016:

- There is a significant difference between GARs and PSRs: GARs tend to have larger family sizes, including a high proportion of children, lower official language skills and lower education levels than PSRs.
- The vast majority of Government-assisted Refugees (GARs) have no English or French **language skills** - data indicate that about 70% of approved Syrian cases self reported as having no English or French language skills. Anecdotal reports from visa officers in Beirut and Amman suggest that the percentage is even higher.
- With regards to the health profile of Syrian refugees, Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) Quarantine Officers have reported that less than 2% of admissions needed to be further assessed upon arrival to Canada. Of those, only 10% were referred for medical treatment, the majority of whom were children showing flu and common cold symptoms.
- Reports from missions abroad suggest that the proportion of serious medical conditions among the refugee population is very low and Syrian refugees coming to Canada pose no real risk to the health of Canadians.
- Anecdotally, visa officers in Amman indicated that **work experience** was almost always limited to males. Common occupations included driver, construction worker or general labourer, cook, and farmer. Generally, such work is irregular and differs from the refugees' occupations in Syria.
- Many applicants have little or no knowledge of Canada, and no family contacts in Canada. As a result, cultural orientation sessions shortly after arriving in Canada will be of great value.

Language

The following data provides preliminary information on the language levels of Syrian refugees. Given that this data relies heavily on self reporting, the actual percentage of Syrians who arrive without English or French language skills is likely to be higher, consistent with what has been observed by visa officers in Amman and Beirut. IRCC has also provided data on language levels broken down by age range (provided in bullet points below).

TABLE 1: Syrian Refugee Self-Reported Knowledge of Official Language

	Government-assisted Refugees		Privately Sponsored Refugees	
	Approved Cases (6,975)	In Progress Cases (14,067)	Approved Cases (7,656)	In Progress Cases (4,712)
English	23%	11%	57%	57%
French	<1%	<1%	3%	3%
Both	<1%	<1%	1%	1%
Neither	67%	85%	37%	38%
Unspecified	9%	3%	2%	1%

Source: GCMS as of January 7, 2016.

* Government-assisted includes blended visa office-referred refugees

** Please note that the data are preliminary estimates, are subject to change and are different from other data provided on Syrian Refugees.

*** The data is for exploratory analysis purposes only and should not be used for official reporting.

**** The data may not match previous Syrian Refugee numbers that have been provided and should not be used to compare to official reports.

- **Children (0-14 years):** Between **71** and **88%** of GARs under the age of 14 self-report no English or French language skills (approved and in-progress cases respectively).
- **Young adults (15-24 years):** Between **61** and **77%** of GARs in this age range self-report no English or French language skills (approved and in-progress cases respectively). Table 2: Syrian Refugee Self-Reported Knowledge of Official Language
- **Adults (25 years and over):** Between **63** and **88%** of adult GARs self-report no English or French language skills (approved and in-progress cases respectively).

Visa officers in Beirut and Amman report that 90-95% of Syrian GARs understand neither English nor French. Around 5% have basic English (i.e. they understand a little, or can say some basic phrases); less than 1% of applicants speak English proficiently enough to find work in Canada; and less than 5% have any knowledge of French.

In Amman, children appear to have a better understanding of English than their parents, but most have, at best, only a basic grasp of the language.

Education

The data provided below consists of preliminary estimates of education levels of children and adults. However, IRCC's data is limited as the Department is unable to specify education level lower than secondary. In addition, age ranges need to be considered when reviewing this information as IRCC data on education is limited to the age groups provided and cannot be further broken down.

TABLE 2: Syrian Refugee Education Levels of Persons 15 Years and Over (approved GAR cases)

None	3%
Secondary or less	68%
Post Secondary (no degree)	2%
Bachelor's Degree	2%
Diploma/Certificate	2%
Diploma/Certificate (Trade)	1%
Post Graduate (no degree)	1%
Unspecified	21%

Source: GCMS as of January 7, 2016.

* Please note that the data are preliminary estimates, are subject to change and are different from other data provided on Syrian Refugees.

** The data is for exploratory analysis purposes only and should not be used for official reporting.

*** The data may not match previous Syrian Refugee numbers that have been provided and should not be used to compare to official reports.

Anecdotal reports from missions abroad suggests that the average level of schooling for adult Syrian GARs is **6-9 years**. Specifically, of the cases processed in Amman, roughly **90-95%** of adults have not completed secondary school, having completed only one to three years of high school and only a small percentage have some form of post-secondary education. The majority of young children have continued their schooling, though many of the older ones cannot complete high school due to limited family funds. While most school-age children within this caseload are enrolled in school, many appear to be a grade or two behind for their age.

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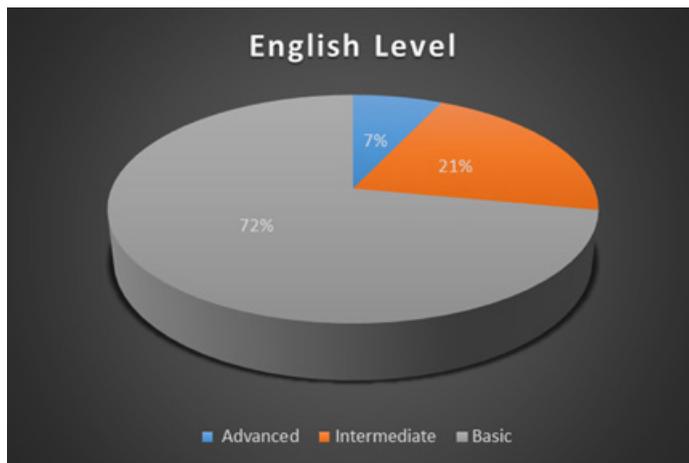
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and Citizenship Canada

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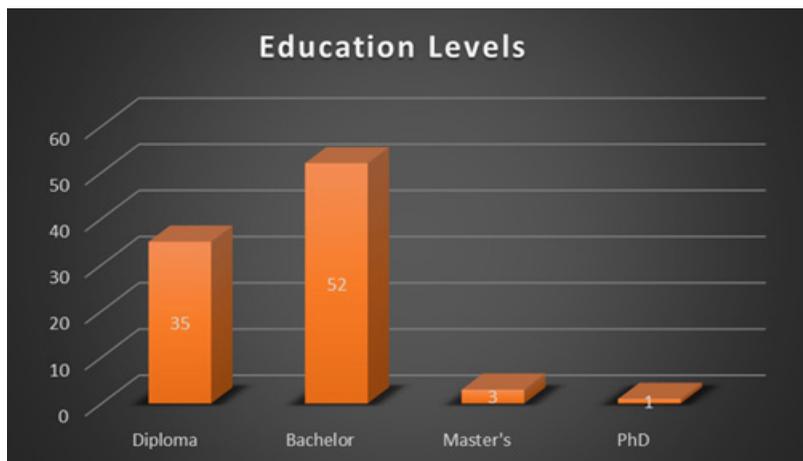
SYRIAN REFUGEE PROFILE – GREATER TORONTO AREA

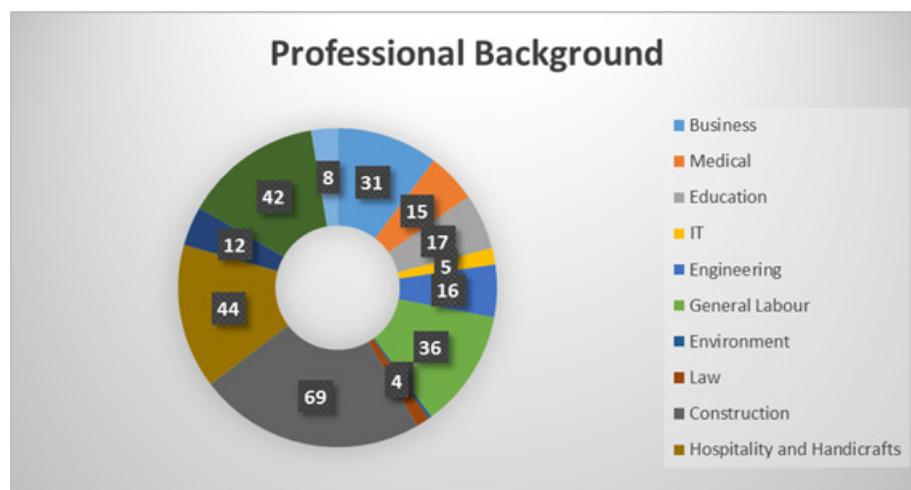
Syrian refugees in the GTA are a diverse group, with different levels of English proficiency, education levels, and work histories. The data below are collected from a sample group of 300 Syrians, mostly government-assisted refugees (GARs) who arrived in Canada in 2015-2016.

This sample group are Refugee Career Jumpstart Project (RCJP) clients who have signalled their desire to work. Many (92 per cent) reported willingness to work outside their field of experience in order to enter the job market, and almost all (98 per cent) reported willingness to work part-time.



* Self-reported and assessment-based





Some of the main challenges RCJP has observed working with Syrian refugee clients include:

- English proficiency
- Interview skills that fit Canadian customs
- Job market awareness and job searching tools
- Awareness of settlement and career programs and resources

There is significant potential among the Syrian newcomers, from the qualifications they bring, to their willingness to upskill and reinvent their careers in Canada. There are many opportunities that can be taken to address short-term challenges they face to entering the job market, such as on-the-job language training or mentoring to improve interviewing and other soft skills in addition to try working with newcomers in groups where each group share the same professional background. This early support is a critical investment to enable Syrian newcomers to realize their full potential.

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SYRIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR EMPLOYERS

This Guide is a quick reference for employers who are reviewing a candidate's educational qualifications.

Education System Structure

- Syria follows a 12-year system of basic and secondary education.
- Individuals must complete 12 years of education to qualify for the general secondary examination and admission to higher education.
- The institution to which individuals are admitted depends on the scores they receive on the general secondary examination.

Higher Education System

Syrian higher education is composed of four main types of academic credentials:

Intermediate Studies (Stage I)

Intermediate studies are offered at technical and/or "intermediate" institutes that offer specializations in a range of fields. The programs are typically two years in length, and students earn an associate degree (diploma or musaed mujaz) upon completion.

Undergraduate Degrees (Stage I)

Undergraduate degrees are four years in length with some variation. Most undergraduate programs start with an introductory year before students choose a specific field of study. Most programs follow a set curriculum with no electives. Students are awarded a bachelor's degree upon completion (al-Ijaaza in Arabic, and license in French.)

Master's Degree (Stage II)

Master's degree typically requires two years to complete plus a thesis. Master's degrees are either academic or professional in nature, and follow a bachelor's degree or higher diploma.

Doctoral Degree (Stage III)

Doctoral degree requires a minimum of three years of study after a completed master's degree. External panels evaluate doctoral dissertations, and each panel must include at least one overseas academic.

TABLE 3: Syrian Educational Credentials and North American Equivalents

Level	Degree	Institute Type	Program Length	Canadian Equivalent	U.S. Equivalent
Stage I	Associate degree (Diploma) ("musaed mujaz")	Technical or Intermediate Institute	2 years	Community college diploma	Associates degree
	Bachelor's degree ("al-ljaaza")	University	4-6 years	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree
Stage II	Higher diploma	University or Higher Institute	1-3 years	Post-graduate studies	Post-graduate studies
	Master's degree	University or Higher Institute	2 years	Master's degree	Master's degree
Stage III	Doctoral degree	University or Higher Institute	3 years	PhD	PhD

TABLE 4: Accredited Syrian Universities and Institutes

Public Universities	Private Universities	Higher Institutes
ALBaath University	Aljazeera University	Ministry of Higher Education
Aleppo University	A-shahbaa Private University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Institute of Business Administration HIBA National Institute of Public Administration INA
Al-Furat University	Andalus University for Medical Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Institute of Population Studies and Research HIDSr Higher Institute for Water Management HIWM
Damascus University	Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transport	
Hama University	Arab International University	
October University	Cordoba Private University	ALBaath University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Institute for Language Learning
Syrian Virtual University	Ebla Private University	
	Hawash Private University	Aleppo University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Scientific Heritage Institute Higher Institute of Languages
	International University for Science and Technology	
	Ittihad Private University	

TABLE 4: Accredited Syrian Universities and Institutes (continued)

Private Universities	Higher Institutes
Qassioun University for Science and Technology	Damascus University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Higher Institute for Research on Laser and its Applications ▪ Higher Institute for Seismic Research and Atudies ▪ Higher Institute for Management Development ▪ Higher Institute for Translation and Interpreting ▪ Higher Institute of Languages
Private Arab University of Science and Technology	
Private National University	
Qalmoun Private University	October University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Higher Institute of Marine Research ▪ Higher Institute for Environmental Research ▪ Higher Institute of Languages
Rasheed International University for Science and Technology	
Sham Institute for Higher Islamic Studies and Arabic and Islamic Studies and Research	
Sham Private University	
Syrian Private University	
Wadi International University	
Yarmouk Private University	

Additional Resources

- [World Education Services](#)
- [Syria's Ministry of Higher Education website](#)
- [Education System Syria, NUFFIC](#)
- [World Data on Education - 2010/11, UNESCO](#)
- [Higher Education in Syria, European Commission](#)
- [Country Education Profiles, Australian Government, Department of Education and Training](#)
- [Syria: Educational Profile](#)

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HIRING SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYERS

There are several financial incentives and programs to help employers recruit qualified candidates and offset training costs.

Employment Ontario

Employers can get support through Employment Ontario service providers to attract and retain employees, most of it available at no cost to the employer. There are also financial incentives to provide on-the-job training and work experience. Here are some examples:

- The [Canada-Ontario Job Grant](#) covers up to \$10,000 per person for short-term training to existing and new employees.
- [Youth Job Connection](#) offers financial incentives to hire and train a young person (15 to 29 years old). Youth take pre-employment workshops to help them get prepared to work.
- [Ontario Job Creation Partnerships](#) covers the cost of an employee for a new business project.
- There are several [Training and Apprenticeship](#) programs, including tax credits and employer bonuses.

For more information: Call the Employment Ontario Hotline at **1-800-387-5656** or contact a local [Employment Ontario service provider](#).

Additional Resources:

- [Wage Subsidies - Canada Business Network](#)
- [Hiring Incentives for Employers - Ontario Government](#)

Bridging Programs

Bridging Programs provide short-term, sector-specific training and orientation to internationally-trained professionals. Employers benefit because they can meet highly skilled and job-ready candidates, who are aware of the local labour market, licensing and/or certification required, and how to present themselves to Canadian employers.

There are also opportunities for employers to get involved in supporting internationally-trained professionals in these programs through mentoring, providing workplace experience, and participating on industry advisory committees.

Featured Bridging Program: Engineering Connections

Engineering Connections is designed to support internationally-trained engineers to succeed in the Canadian labour market. The program provides important insights into Canadian workplace culture, engineering codes and standards, the Canadian project management environment, and professional licensing in Ontario.

78% of program graduates are employed in the field within one year of completing the program.



For more information about Engineering Connections, please contact [ACCES Employment](#).

For a list of all Bridging Programs in Ontario, please visit [OntarioImmigration.ca](#).

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HIRING NEWCOMERS: PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

Language

Limited English and French language proficiency should not stop employers from hiring otherwise job-ready candidates with the technical skills they need. Many companies are finding other ways to offer employment while language skills develop, for example, by offering at-work language training and by training hiring managers to look beyond language proficiency.

On-site language training

- [Nomz](#) works with a community agency to hire employees who are refugees, and supports its employees to improve their English language skills in order to help advance to higher positions in the company.
- [Palliser Furniture](#) uses responsive recruitment practices to reflect its customer base in Winnipeg. By offering English language classes, literacy, math, and numeracy classes as part of the company's training program, Palliser hire new immigrants who may have lacked particular skills, but demonstrated the ability to learn and fit in with the company culture.

Proficiency Not Required

- [3M](#) trains its hiring managers with a simple language game to build sensitivity to candidates who speak English as a second language (ESL), ensuring that candidates are screened in first for their technical skills, and not missed because they lack language proficiency.

Experience & Skills

Hiring candidates with no prior experience or skills in a specific trade, field or area of work is not an uncommon practice by employers. Short-term work opportunities and apprenticeship programs allow employers to assess a candidates' suitability, competency, skills transferability and ability to learn.

Short-term paid work opportunities

- [Siemens](#), the German multinational technology engineering firm provides targeted internship opportunities for refugees, and all training positions are created with candidates in mind.

Documentation

Refugees may not be able to provide documentation of their credentials, work experience and educational background. Companies are finding other ways to recognize skills and experience.

Competency-based hiring

- [Almond Bar](#) restaurant skips the paper-based application process and works directly with settlement agencies to identify and hire refugees who have experience or are interested in hospitality work. Candidates are given job based training and skills development directly in the workplace.

Interviews via community partnerships

- [Cinnzeo Bakeries](#) looks for new hires by partnering with local immigrant settlement agencies, and participating in mock interviews to source newcomer talent. Partnering with local immigrant serving agencies leads to hiring from a pool of candidates who are skilled and ready to work.

Bridging programs

- Sourcing talent through [Bridging Programs](#) provides employers with access to job-ready candidates who have taken sector-specific training in Canada.

Understanding Company Culture

Apart from the technical skills required for the job, soft skills and cross-cultural understanding are important for on-boarding and fostering a positive work environment among peers.

Peer-focused approach

- Companies like [Siemens](#) and [RBC](#) look to their own staff to help welcome and include newcomer hires. Matching new employees with peers as mentors or “buddies” supports their integration into the workplace and helps develop important leadership skills of the mentors.
- [HR Council](#) provides ideas for managing diversity in the workplace and tips for fostering an inclusive workplace culture.
- [Immigrant Employment Council of BC](#) provides a toolkit for employers for onboarding Syrian refugees. Tips cover workplace accommodation, sensitive interviewing, and more.

Diverse Recruitment Strategies

Employers interested in hiring newcomers don’t know where to source this diverse and growing pool of candidates. Adopting new and non-traditional recruitment strategies has led to successful results for Canadian companies like [Cinnzeo Bakeries](#), [Nomz](#), [Palliser Furniture](#), and [Danby](#), which partnered with local settlement agencies to source newcomer talent.

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KEY RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS FOR HIRING AND ONBOARDING NEWCOMERS

The TRIEC Campus offers a toolkit that HR and training and development professionals, as well as managers and team members, can draw on to develop and enhance cross-cultural skills to build, lead and participate in culturally diverse workplaces. Use these tools to improve the business bottom line by learning on how to hire, retain, and manage culturally diverse teams more effectively.

To access the Campus resources, please register at www.trieccampus.ca.

Resources For Recruiting Newcomers

E-learning Modules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiring and Canadian Work Experience Inclusive Interviewing Unconscious Bias in Resume Screening Webinar: Introduction to Personal Branding
Printable Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Cross Cultural Comparison of Job Searching Practices (worksheet and debrief questions) A Cross Cultural Comparison of Networking (worksheet and debrief questions) Developing Cross Cultural Behaviour Based Interview Questions and Debrief
Videos and Guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding Talent: Full Video Finding Talent Scene 1: Essential vs. Non-essential skills Finding Talent Scene 2: Attracting Qualified Skilled Immigrant Job Candidates Finding Talent Scene 3: Accent and Odours- Considerations for Hiring Decisions Finding Talent Scenes 4/5: Telephone Screening Interview Finding Talent Scene 6: Screening Resumes of Skilled Immigrant Job Candidates Finding Talent Scene 7: Interviewing Skilled Immigrants Finding Talent Scene 8: Tell Me About Yourself Finding Talent Scene 9: Social Activities Finding Talent Scene 10: Call of Duty Finding Talent Scenes 11/12: Assertiveness Finding Talent Scenes 13/14: Past Accomplishments Finding Talent Scenes 15/16/17: Colloquialisms and Business Idioms Finding Talent Scenes 18/19: Interview Guides

Workshop Materials	Competency-Based Interviewing, Recruitment and Selection Inclusive Resume Screening, Recruitment and Selection Sourcing Talent, Recruitment and Selection The Value of a Culturally Diverse Workplace, Recruitment and Selection What is Culture? Recruitment and Selection
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Resources For Onboarding Newcomers

E-learning Modules	Culture and Workplace Interactions Inclusive Employee Onboarding
Printable Resources	Business Meetings in the Canadian Workplace Onboarding Action Plan Builder Orientation Buddy Information Sheet and Checklist Orientation Topics Checklist for New Employees
Videos and Guides	Bridging Cultural Differences in Diverse Teams, Scene 1: Building Rapport in the Workplace Integrating Talent, View all Videos Manager-Employee and Peer-to-Peer Relations; Integrating Talent, Scene 3 New Skilled Immigrant Employee Orientation; Integrating Talent, Scene 1 Religious Accommodation; Integrating Talent Teamwork; Integrating Talent, Scene 2
Workshop Materials	Achieving Success 1: Orientation

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TRIEC
Toronto Region Immigrant
Employment Council

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA SECURITY CLEARANCE PROCESS

“Each individual Syrian refugee that Canada welcomes will undergo a robust, multi-layered screening before departing for Canada, including the collection of biometrics.” –*Government of Canada*

Security Screening Process

Selection

- Canada works with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Jordan and Lebanon, and the government of Turkey, to prioritize vulnerable refugees who are a lower security risk, such as women at risk and complete families.

Identity checks

- Selected refugees undergo in-person immigration and security interviews by Canadian visa officers prior to selection for immigration to Canada.
- Biometric and biographic information (fingerprints and digital photos) is collected and verified by Canadian visa officers.
- Identity validation and document verification occurs throughout the immigration process by Canadian law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

Security checks

- Refugees undergo a series of security checks administered by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). Associations and memberships are scrutinized, as are social media posts. Immigration, law enforcement and security databases are checked.
- International databases are checked by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the RCMP.

Medical checks

- A full immigration medical exam is conducted during the immigration process, and screening for illness occurs again upon arrival.

Refugees must pass all security checks and medical screening before a permanent resident visa will be issued.

Identity confirmation

- Identity is confirmed by CBSA before departure.
- Identity is verified by CBSA upon arrival.

Security Screening Resources

- [Publicly available descriptions of the health and security screening that refugees undergo](#)
- [Phase 2: Selecting and processing Syrian refugees overseas](#)
- [Infographic produced by IRCC](#)
- [The role of CSIS in immigration screening](#)

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Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada



Hire Immigrants

Hire Immigrants: Investing in Immigrant Talent

Hire Immigrants profiles “what works” in immigrant employment worldwide. It is an international, single point of entry to increase employer awareness of the value of immigrant skills and immigration to their business. It provides employers with practical tips, tools and evidence to benefit from immigrant talent. By profiling good (replicable) practices, tracking evidence, analyzing market trends, and convening, **Hire Immigrants** is a global hub for useful practice, policies, research, debate and ideas on leveraging diverse talent and immigration for businesses and the economy.

www.hireimmigrants.org

Global Diversity Exchange: Diversity Drives Prosperity

The **Global Diversity Exchange (GDx)** is a think-and-do tank based at the Ted Rogers School of Management at Ryerson University. **GDx** identifies and amplifies the links between prosperity, diversity and migration and anchors these in policy, research and practice.

www.globaldiversityexchange.ca

Global Diversity Exchange
Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University
415 Yonge Street, Suite 701
Toronto ON M5B 2E7

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