

French language rules for Canadian Express Entry

Express Entry awards additional CRS points for strong French and runs category-based draws for French-speaking candidates who reach NCLC 7 in all four abilities.

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Express Entry is Canada's federal system for skilled worker permanent residence. It ranks candidates by Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) points and invites candidates in draws. Some draws are category-based. French-language proficiency is one category. This guide restates public IRCC pages on the date they were checked. It is not immigration advice. French4PR is not an immigration consultant, not a law firm and not affiliated with any government.

Additional points for French. Under the current rules (checked 2026-10-20), NCLC 7 or higher in all four French abilities earns 25 additional CRS points. If you also reach CLB 5 or higher in all four English abilities, the total is 50 additional points. These points count on top of the other CRS factors. The IRCC CRS criteria page is the authority.

The French-language category. The French-language proficiency category in category-based draws requires NCLC 7 in all four abilities: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Each round also has its own instructions. Invitation numbers and cut-off scores change with each round. No one can predict the next cut-off or promise an invitation.

Which tests count. IRCC accepts TEF Canada and TCF Canada for Express Entry. TEF Canada scores speaking and writing from 0 to 450, listening from 0 to 360 and reading from 0 to 300. For TEF Canada, use the Equivalence ancien score column of your attestation de résultats, not the Score / 699 column. TCF Canada scores speaking and writing from 0 to 20, and listening and reading from 0 to 699. The test result must be less than two years old, both when you create your profile and when you apply for permanent residence.

From score to NCLC. The IRCC equivalency table maps each score to an NCLC level. The cut-offs below come from that table as checked on 2026-10-21. On the TEF Canada table, NCLC 7 starts at 310 for speaking, 249 for listening, 207 for reading and 310 for writing. On the TCF Canada table, NCLC 7 starts at 10 for speaking, 458 for listening, 453 for reading and 10 for writing. The free converters on this site restate that table. Check it on canada.ca before you rely on it.

Your lowest ability counts. Express Entry reads each ability separately. The weakest of your four abilities decides whether you meet NCLC 7. A candidate with NCLC 6 in one ability does not meet the minimum for the bonus or the category. The converters show the level for each score and the lowest level of the four.

Quebec. Quebec runs its own immigration system. The federal French bonus and the federal French-language category do not apply to Quebec programs. TEFAQ and TCF Québec serve Quebec programs. Check the province's official pages if you plan to apply there.

Rules change. IRCC updates CRS criteria, category draws and equivalency tables. This site's

sources note says the IRCC pages are re-checked monthly. Always verify the current rules on canada.ca. For questions about your own case, ask a qualified professional, such as a regulated Canadian immigration consultant or a lawyer.

Frequently asked questions

Do the French points apply to Quebec programs?

No. The federal CRS bonus and the French-language category are for Express Entry, not for Quebec. Quebec runs its own immigration system. Check the province's official pages.

Can I take any French test for Express Entry?

IRCC accepts TEF Canada and TCF Canada for Express Entry. TEFAQ and TCF Québec serve Quebec programs. The results must be less than two years old.

Sources

[IRCC language test equivalency table](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/express-entry/documents/language-test.html) — <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/express-entry/documents/language-test.html>

[IRCC CRS criteria page](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/express-entry/check-score/crs-criteria.html) — <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/express-entry/check-score/crs-criteria.html>

[IRCC French-speaking skilled workers page](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/campaigns/francophone-immigration-outside-quebec/francophone-immigration-express-entry.html) — <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/campaigns/francophone-immigration-outside-quebec/francophone-immigration-express-entry.html>

[IRCC category-based selection page](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/express-entry/rounds-invitations/category-based-selection.html) — <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/express-entry/rounds-invitations/category-based-selection.html>

This guide is about Canada.