

A Petition for the Opportunity to Submit the Outstanding Immigration Documents

May 7, 2021

Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration:

I learn that the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (CImm) has oversight of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, as well as monitoring federal policy related to multiculturalism, so I respectfully send this petition to you. I entreat you to urge IRCC to process permanent residence applications on a more human scale under the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In mid-April, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) announced an innovative pathway to permanent residence for 40,000 English-speaking international graduates of a Canadian institution who are actively contributing to Canada's economy. This temporary public policy is aimed at facilitating the granting of permanent

residence for foreign nationals in Canada, outside of Quebec, with a recent credential from a Canadian post-secondary institution.

This temporary public policy not only shows the Canadian people's long-standing values of caring, tolerance and understanding , but also represents Canada is a proudly multicultural nation. Compared with certain countries' escalating racism and xenophobia, Canada is far and away the greatest country in the world. And thus, I am tremendously proud of my years of Canadian educational experience.

However, IRCC only issued a very brief outline of this temporary public policy in mid-April. The fine detail of this public policy had not been issued until May 5, 2021. And the English-speaking international graduate stream reached its quota of 40,000 applicants in just over 24 hours. Therefore, the applicants had to prepare all the immigration documents and submit permanent residence applications in haste within very tight time constraints.

In addition to the very tight time constraints, the variant-driven third wave of the coronavirus pandemic and resulting lockdown orders are causing severe disruption to a wide range of public services, including but not limited to international and domestic postal services, interprovincial travel, criminal record check application, certified translation services, language testing, and office hours of governmental agencies, etc.

Given the above-mentioned force majeure factors, it is almost impossible for most of the eligible applicants to prepare all the immigration documents at one go on such short notice. In other words, the online application packages already submitted by most of the eligible applicants are incomplete to a greater or lesser degree.

According to the current IRCC policy, the applications with missing documents should not be immediately rejected. Where the applicant supplies an explanation that information or documents could not be obtained due to limitations or closures caused

by COVID-19, IRCC's policy allows a grace period of 90 days to submit the outstanding items.

However, rumour has it that IRCC will reject any incomplete applications out of hand after initial review, and will not allow the applicants to upload any outstanding immigration documents or make a request for reconsideration after the submission of online applications. I hope this is a false rumour.

Canada is best known for its liberal and people-oriented public policy, so I am appealing to the policy makers to deal with this problem with sympathy and understanding. Actually, many applicants, who have already submitted online applications but their application packages are incomplete, have done all the necessary paperwork for their permanent residence applications. But, as the variant-driven third wave of the coronavirus pandemic and resulting lockdown orders are seriously disrupting both international and domestic postal services, some of their immigration documents were still in the mail at the moment of submitting online applications. That's why a lot of eligible applicants had to submit the incomplete online application packages with the enclosed explanation letters, and pray that IRCC can afford the applicants the chance to upload their outstanding immigration documents later this month. Submitting a letter of explanation was only intended as a temporary expedient or stopgap in the face of the very short time limit for submitting applications and widespread public service disruption caused by repetitive COVID lockdown. I hope IRCC can sympathize with the applicants' dilemma, and understand this applicants' temporary expedient in a people-oriented and caring way.

Faced with such an unprecedented pandemic, the Government of Canada, including IRCC, has responded magnificently to the crisis, and introduced a series of caring, humane and far-sighted public policies with a strong sense of mission. These policies have significantly mitigated the impact of the pandemic and will foster Canada's economic growth over the next several decades. As a foreign national, I am impressed by the efficiency with which the Government of Canada handled the crisis.

Canada is known for its national values of tolerance and understanding. The global pandemic has not waned; instead, it is resurging. This is a very stressful time for all of us, so I entreat IRCC not to reject the incomplete applications out of hand after initial review, without allowing the eligible applicants to supplement their application packages. I humbly beg IRCC to give all the applicants the opportunity to upload outstanding documents within a certain time limit, in a spirit of tolerance and understanding. If the applicant still fails to seize this opportunity to submit their outstanding documents within a certain time limit, IRCC can rightly reject such incomplete applications.

This temporary public policy is aimed at facilitating the granting of permanent residence for 40,000 foreign nationals in Canada, outside of Quebec, with a recent credential from a Canadian post-secondary institution, and thus how to achieve implementation of this temporary public policy will decide the fates of 40,000 international graduates spread all over the country.

The Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (CIMM) has oversight of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, as well as monitoring federal policy related to multiculturalism, so I respectfully send this petition to you. I entreat you to urge IRCC to process permanent residence applications on a more human scale under the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

Andrew Wong