



**New Mandatory Language Proficiency
Assessment Tests to be included in all
Immigrant Applications**

-June 29, 2010

On June 26th, the Canadian government instituted a major change to proof of language requirements for all Permanent Residence applications. Now, all new applicants for permanent residence under the Federal Skilled Worker (FSW) program or the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) are required to include the results of an English or French language test as part of their application. If no language test results are included with the immigrant application, it will not be processed and will be returned.

Previously, applicants for FSW and CEC programs had the option of proving language ability through a language test or a written submission letter. The written submission was intended for people whose first language was English or French. Generally those who had studied or worked in English or French could satisfy the language requirement with a written submission letter – this option is no longer available.

The Canadian government believes that instituting a consistent language test is the fairest way to evaluate an applicant's language skills. Language ability will be assessed by accredited language testing agencies, rather than the Visa officer and will ensure that all applications are evaluated against the same standards, no matter what their language of origin, nationality or ethnicity. It is expected that this change could expedite the processing of immigrant applications as Visa officers will not be required to evaluate language proficiency. Now, they will simply assign points based on the language test results received. Applicants will now know how their language proficiency will be evaluated prior to submitting their permanent residence application. Language tests and information are available through the International English Language Testing Service (www.ielts.com), the Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (www.celpiptest.ca) and the Test d'évaluation du français (www.fda.cciq.fr/tef).

In order to ensure timely processing of immigrant applications, we highly recommend that anyone in the process of submitting a permanent residence application, or even considering applying for permanent residence, book an appointment as soon as possible at one of the accredited testing agencies referenced above, as it may take several months to obtain a date for writing the language test.

For further information regarding this new policy, please contact Evelyn Ackah (403) 444-8109 or Catherine McAteer (403) 444-8110 at Spectrum HR Law LLP.