



Consumer Guide

Questions to ask a Canadian immigration consultant



Are you thinking of hiring a Canadian immigration consultant?

You have decided to take a step toward a better future.
You are planning to turn to a consultant for immigration advice.



Consumer Guide – Questions to ask a Canadian immigration consultant

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College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants

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What you need to know

Any immigration consultant who provides Canadian immigration or citizenship services, whether domestically or abroad, must be **licensed by the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants** (the College).

The **College is the authority mandated by the Government of Canada** to regulate the practice of immigration consultants and International Student Advisors. Its role, authority and powers are established in the *College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants Act* (Canada).

Immigration consultants are professionals who meet educational, professional and ethical standards set by the College in the **public interest**.

This guide provides you a list of some questions to ask your immigration consultant before accepting their services. The questions are intended as a guide only.



Public Register

Verify your immigration consultant is listed on the College online **public register** before signing any contract.



Insignias

Immigration consultants licensed by the College use a trade-marked insignia that serves as a guarantee that they are authorized to practise. This insignia may appear on your immigration consultant's practice letterhead, business cards, e-mail signature block, website, social media, and in presentations, publications or advertising.

Where an immigration consultant (RCIC) in good standing uses the RCIC insignia on a website, the name(s) of the immigration consultant(s) affiliated with the practice must be situated immediately next to the RCIC insignia(s). Also, the name(s) of the immigration consultant(s) must be identical to the name(s) displayed on our public register, and the webpage must include the wording "*Verify Status with the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants.*"

Your immigration consultant's insignia should look like one of those displayed here:



What work will you do?

Your immigration consultant will give you a service agreement or contract that lists:

- What services you will be paying for
- How much you will pay, and whether you will need to pay in advance
- If you need to pay a deposit and whether any part of the fee is refundable
- The cost of any other services provided or professionals that need to be hired (for example, lawyers or translators)

If anything in the service agreement is unclear, ask for more explanation in writing. You should understand every service you are paying for. There should not be any hidden fees or extra charges you must pay after signing your service agreement.



How experienced are you?

If you ask, your immigration consultant should tell you:

- How long they have been licensed
- What other immigration-related experience they might have
- What areas they specialize in
- What types of clients they have served

If they have experience with cases like yours, they also might be able to tell you:

- How long the process might take
- Issues you might encounter in the application process
- What outcomes you might expect from the process



Can you still help if I have been refused in the past?

To make sure you get the best service possible, let your immigration consultant know if you have ever had an immigration application that was refused, and tell them the reason or reasons for that refusal.

The immigration consultant may be able to give you new strategies for submitting your application. They should also be able to explain how your history of refusals may affect your chances of success.





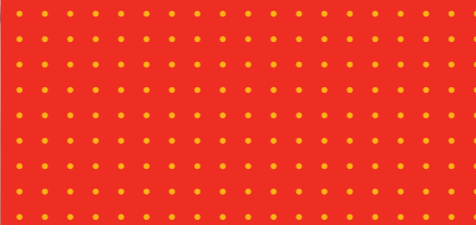
Can you also help me find a job?

While immigrating to Canada and finding a job are often connected, you may need different representatives for each process.

For example, you may need to work with both a Canadian immigration consultant and a licensed recruiter.

Beware of promises like "For a single fee, we will find you a job and get your immigration papers." No one should charge you a fee for finding you a job—not an employer, a recruiter, or an immigration consultant.

NOTE: Your future employer may need to submit a **Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA)** application. If so, your immigration consultant will submit the approved LMIA with your work permit application (depending on eligibility, some foreign nationals may be exempt from an LMIA or a work permit).



Who will help with my application?

Besides your immigration consultant, many other people might work on your file.

You should know the names of your primary contact and anyone else who will work on your file, including staff members, agents, and other immigration consultants or lawyers.

Ask your primary contact for a description of everyone's roles and responsibilities.



How do you set your fees?

An immigration consultant may base their fees on:

- Their years of experience
- The number of hours they will spend working on your file
- The complexity of your situation
- The number of other professionals that will need to work on your case.

Immigration consultants are free to set their fees. The College does not regulate how much they charge for their services. However, immigration consultants must set fair and reasonable fees for the specific services you hire them for.

International Student Advisors do not collect fees directly from students. They are paid employees of specific Designated Learning Institutions (DLIs).



Can I pay you by the hour?

Your immigration consultant may or may not offer a per-hour rate. If they do, they must outline the rate per hour in your service agreement. They should also give you an estimate of the number of hours they expect to work on your case including preparation, submission, monitoring and ongoing communication.





Do I have to pay in advance for all applications?

Your immigration consultant will give you a list of:

- Each application you will need to make
- The cost of each application
- The payments you will need to make at each stage.

You should not be required to pay in advance for an application that depends on the success of another application.

If you pay your immigration consultant on a monthly payment plan, be sure you are only paying for the service fees due at the time of payment.



Will you refund my money if I cancel my contract?

Details about whether you can get a refund will be in the service agreement you sign with your immigration consultant.

In general:

- If your application has been submitted and you are waiting for a decision, it may not be reasonable for you to expect a refund.
- If your application has not been submitted, it might be reasonable to ask for a partial refund for work that your immigration consultant has not done yet.

If you stop working with an immigration consultant, they must return your original documents. They must also give you all the information you need to continue with your application.

If you hire a new immigration consultant, sign another [IMM 5476 Use of a Representative Form](#). Then have your new representative request your documents and the details to access your immigration application.

Do you receive a commission from the employers or schools you work with?

Immigration consultants and International Student Advisors must abide by a [Code of Professional Conduct](#) that requires that they tell you:

- If they are receiving money or benefits from someone else to work on your immigration application
- If their business interests conflict with your interests

In other words, if they receive a commission from an employer or school in exchange for placing you in a job or an educational program, they must tell you before you hire them.



Tips for working with a Canadian immigration consultant

- Verify your immigration consultant's status on our [public register](#). Ensure that they are listed as an "active" Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC) or Regulated International Student Immigration Advisor (RISIA). If your immigration consultant has a status of "Revoked" or "Suspended", then they are not currently authorized to practise.
- Check disciplinary notices in our [Disciplinary Proceedings and Tribunal](#) section.
- Ask your immigration consultant for references.
- Read reviews about the immigration consultant.
- Compare the immigration consultant's fees with those of others.
- Directly contact the immigration consultant who will handle your application. Always use the contact information on our [public register](#).
- Contact any prospective employer or school if you have questions about a job or study program.



