

## Senate Human Rights Committee

Responses to Senator questions prepared by Dana Wagner, Managing Director, TalentLift

### Questions from Senator Omidvar regarding the IELTS exam fee and any recommendations

The only English language test currently accepted by Canada for those living outside Canada is the IELTS test provided by the British Council. The test has a fee which varies by country and testing centre. For example, the fees of recent British Council IELTS tests booked by EMPP candidates supported by TalentLift include:

- \$301.08 CAD in Lebanon
- \$264.84 CAD in Pakistan (Karachi)
- \$301.95 CAD in Pakistan (Islamabad)
- \$509.36 CAD in Saudi Arabia

If someone doesn't make the required scores on their first attempt, as many candidates supported by TalentLift do not, their second attempt would be booked at full cost. There are a handful of country exceptions where the British Council offers a 'one skill retake' option, allowing test takers to reattempt one of the four skills of listening, reading, writing, or speaking. But in the majority of countries, and if the candidate needs to improve their score in more than one skill, the second attempt is at full cost.

The two recommendations on language testing shared with the Committee would contribute to lowering the English language testing cost for those in refugee situations applying under the EMPP.

The first recommendation, to remove the minimum English/French level in higher-skilled jobs (TEER 30), potentially replaced with an affidavit from the employer that the candidate has the language needed to safely perform the job, would remove the testing requirement for applicants in this group.

The second recommendation, to accept an online test by a second provider like Duolingo, would reduce the cost to Duolingo's current rate of \$59 USD. Duolingo also offers an 'access program' with fee waivers that may be open to EMPP applicants.

### Question from Senator Omidvar on a five -year vision for the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP)

In TalentLift's five-year vision for the EMPP, the full mainstreaming of EMPP flexibility is in practice across Canada's economic immigration program, including permanent and temporary pathways.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Steps towards EMPP mainstreaming and other improvements to the economic stream that would benefit EMPP candidates and all applicants are outlined in a [policy brief](#) published by the Canada

The EMPP would be a permanent program consisting of two parts: One part framework that applies the accommodations that address displacement-related barriers across all economic immigration pathways, for example, the ability to apply with an expired passport to any skilled visa; and a second part that is a standalone visa pathway. The standalone visa pathway would be similar to the federal EMPP Job Offer Stream (Stream A), which has flexible criteria for both applicants and employers. While the EMPP framework would open up access to the full suite of economic immigration programs (i.e. Express Entry, LMIA-backed work permits, etc.), the EMPP pathway would be a dedicated tool for access and attraction.

A good analogy for this vision is how Canada facilitates and attracts Francophone applicants. Canada has many Francophone pathways designed to attract Francophone candidates, while access for Francophones is embedded across the economic stream. The EMPP would similarly embed broad access, by removing displacement-related barriers, and maintain a dedicated pathway for attracting this talent pool.

In this five-year vision, Canada becomes the world's top destination for displaced talent to relocate and thrive.

*TalentLift is happy to provide any further information the Committee might need. For inquiries, please contact:*

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