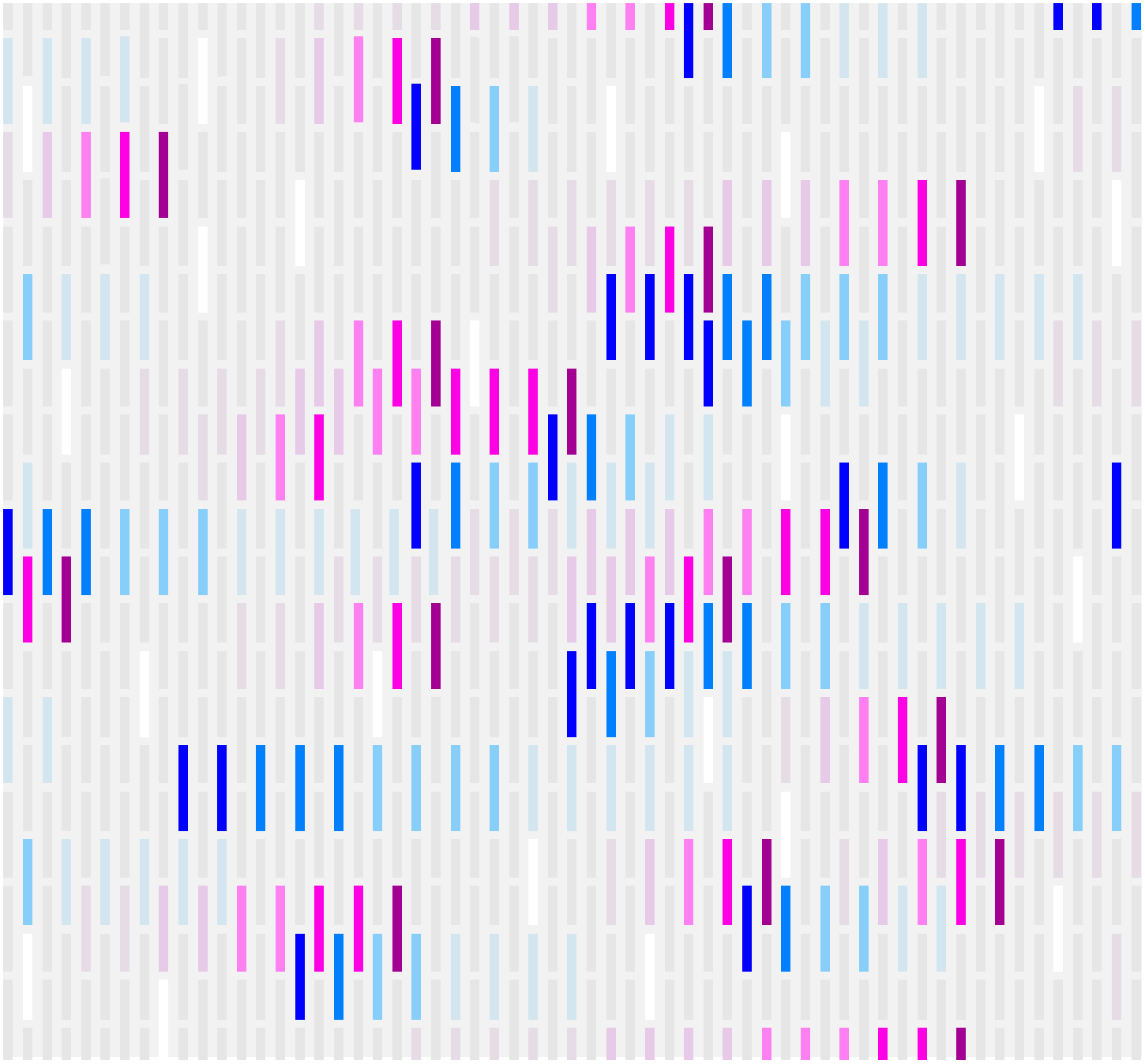

Facilitating Access to Skilled Talent (FAST)

Phase 3 Interim Report

April 2025

Blueprint

This report was produced as part of a project funded by the Future Skills Centre (FSC), with financial support from the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program.

FSC is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to preparing Canadians for employment success. We believe Canadians should feel confident about the skills they have to succeed in a changing workforce. As a pan-Canadian community, we are collaborating to rigorously identify, test, measure, and share innovative approaches to assessing and developing the skills Canadians need to thrive in the days and years ahead. The Future Skills Centre was founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint ADE, and The Conference Board of Canada

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Acknowledgements

About the Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC)

IEC-BC is a not-for-profit organization that provides British Columbia's employers with solutions, tools, and resources they need to attract, hire, and retain qualified immigrant talent. It believes that the successful integration of skilled newcomers into the BC labour force is critical to both their success and the province's long-term economic performance. It works with employers, government, and other partner stakeholders to ensure that BC employers can effectively integrate global talent.

About the Future Skills Centre

The Future Skills Centre (FSC) is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to driving innovation in skills development so that everyone in Canada can be prepared for the future of work. We partner with policymakers, researchers, practitioners, employers and labour, and post-secondary institutions to solve pressing labour market challenges and ensure that everyone can benefit from relevant lifelong learning opportunities. We are founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint, and The Conference Board of Canada, and are funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program.

About Blueprint

Blueprint was founded on the simple idea that evidence is a powerful tool for change. We work with policymakers and practitioners to create and use evidence to solve complex policy and program challenges. Our vision is a social policy ecosystem where evidence is used to improve lives, build better systems and policies and drive social change.

Our team brings together a multidisciplinary group of professionals with diverse capabilities in policy research, data analysis, design, evaluation, implementation and knowledge mobilization.

As a consortium partner of the Future Skills Centre, Blueprint works with partners and stakeholders to collaboratively generate and use evidence to help solve pressing future skills challenges.

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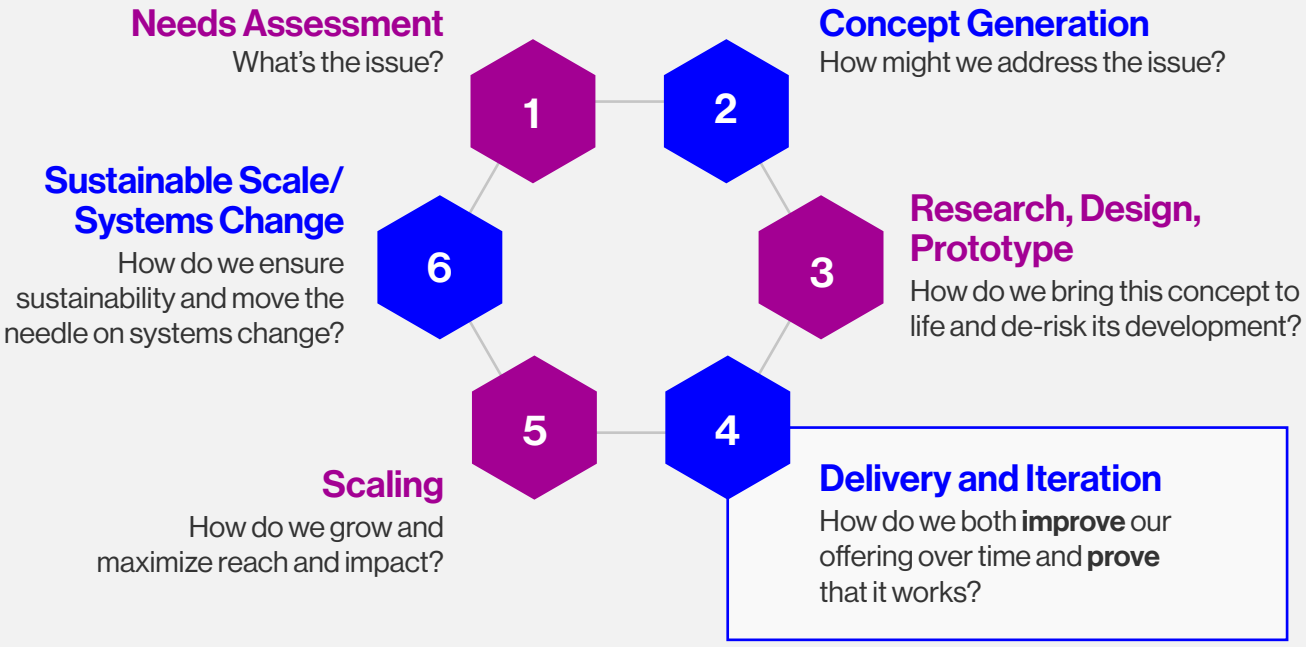
Preface

Canada's labour market is evolving rapidly, requiring responsive and evidence-based skills development programs. While many innovative programs emerge, scaling them beyond the pilot stage remains challenging. To address this, the Future Skills Centre (FSC) and Blueprint launched the **Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio** and partnered with 10 organizations to support their scaling efforts. Blueprint works closely with each grantee to generate continuous evidence, moving beyond the traditional 'one study at a time' approach to enhance program improvement and scalability.

Aligned with the six-stage innovation cycle (see **Figure 1**), we focus on advancing interventions from the delivery phase (Stage 4) to the scaling phase (Stage 5), ultimately supporting sustainable systems change at Stage 6. For more about our evidence generation approach and model, see our *Scaling Design Report*.

Figure 1 | The six-stage innovation cycle



About this report

This report shares findings from our evaluation of **Facilitating Access to Skilled Talent (FAST)**, an online skills assessment and development platform led by the Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC) that builds newcomers' occupational knowledge and competencies before and after arrival in Canada.

Blueprint's *Final Report* for Phase 2 of FSC funding analyzed data collected from September 2021 to March 2024. It offered a longitudinal analysis of program uptake, participant experiences, and employment outcomes as well as feedback from Service Delivery Partners (SDPs), industry partners, and participants.

This is an *Interim Report* for Phase 3 of FSC funding, based on data collected from April to November 2024. It explores uptake, experience, and outcomes of three new program variations proposed in our last report. These are:

i. a shorter, time-bound (eight-week) version of FAST versus the standard one-year model using A/B testing;
ii. a cohort-based approach, where a small group of participants shared a start date, peer-learning opportunities, and group sessions led by an IEC-BC facilitator; and
iii. a standalone workplace culture module, designed as a light-touch introduction to FAST for international students and temporary workers.

The report contains six sections:

1. Introduction (pp. 9–13) describes FAST's structure, training modules, theory of change, scaling timeline and key iterations, and partnerships.

2. Learning agenda and methodology (pp. 14–18) shares our approach to evidence generation and our learning agenda, data sources, and limitations.

3–5. Findings (pp. 19–30) presents key findings on program uptake, completion, experiences, and early outcomes on FAST's three new variations: the time-bound version (section 3.), the cohort-based model (section 4.), and the standalone workplace culture module (section 5.).

6. What's next? (p. 31) summarizes the next steps for reporting.

A subsequent Phase 3 *Final Report* will incorporate data collected until summer 2025.

Executive summary

This report shares findings from our evaluation of Facilitating Access to Skilled Talent (FAST). FAST is an online, self-paced skills assessment platform designed to help newcomers accelerate their job search and better understand their target occupations and industries. Led by the Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC), FAST provides occupation-specific assessments in six streams—Accounting & Finance, Biotechnology & Life Sciences, Culinary Arts, IT & Data Services, Seniors Care, and Skilled Trades. In each stream, a set of modules provide workplace cultural training, technical competency assessments, referrals for skills credentials, and job search and career navigation supports.

IEC-BC partners with employers, community organizations, and service delivery partners (SDPs) who refer their clients to FAST, help develop module content, and provide professional services (e.g., industry designations, credential services, etc.). Newcomers are eligible to participate in FAST if they are approved to immigrate to Canada and have two-to-five years of work experience in one of the six streams. Applicants can enrol *before* or *after* their arrival in Canada. Participants can engage with whichever FAST elements they find useful, take as long as they wish, and are encouraged to use other complementary career services.

This work is part of Blueprint's contribution to the **Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio**. FAST is now in Phase 3 of Future Skills Centre (FSC) funding. For Phase 1, Blueprint conducted an early-stage evaluation; for Phase 2, we released an *Interim Report* (April 2023) and *Final Report* (October 2024), covering a period from September 2021 to March 2024. Our reports offered a longitudinal analysis of program uptake, participant experiences, and employment outcomes (including job placement and earnings) along with interviews with industry partners, SDPs, and participants.

This is an *Interim Report* for Phase 3 of FSC funding, based on data collected from April to November 2024. Here, we explore uptake, experience, and outcomes of three new program variations that were identified in previous phases as options as part of a continuous improvement journey to strengthen the design and delivery of FAST. These are: i) a shorter, time-bound (eight-week) version of FAST compared to the standard one-year model, using A/B testing; ii) a cohort-based approach, where a group of participants shared a start date, peer-learning opportunities, and group sessions led by an IEC-BC facilitator, again compared to the standard FAST model; and iii) a standalone workplace culture module, designed as a light-touch introduction to FAST for international students and temporary workers.

Our findings are based on administrative data, an eight-week follow-up survey of participants, and participant focus groups. Early findings are presented below:

Testing a time-limited version. Participants were randomly assigned into Group A (who received the standard FAST) and Group B (who received a time-limited version). Key participant characteristics were evenly distributed between groups with one exception: more participants in the time-limited version had a certificate or diploma below the bachelor's level.

- After accounting for education differences, time-limited participants were more likely to complete FAST than those in the standard version.

- Participants in both versions reported similar levels of satisfaction with FAST, likelihood to recommend it, and perceptions of utility. The only exception was for BC residents: a higher proportion found BC Job Connect useful in the standard version than in the time-limited version.
- We observed no differences in employment or earnings between participants in either version.

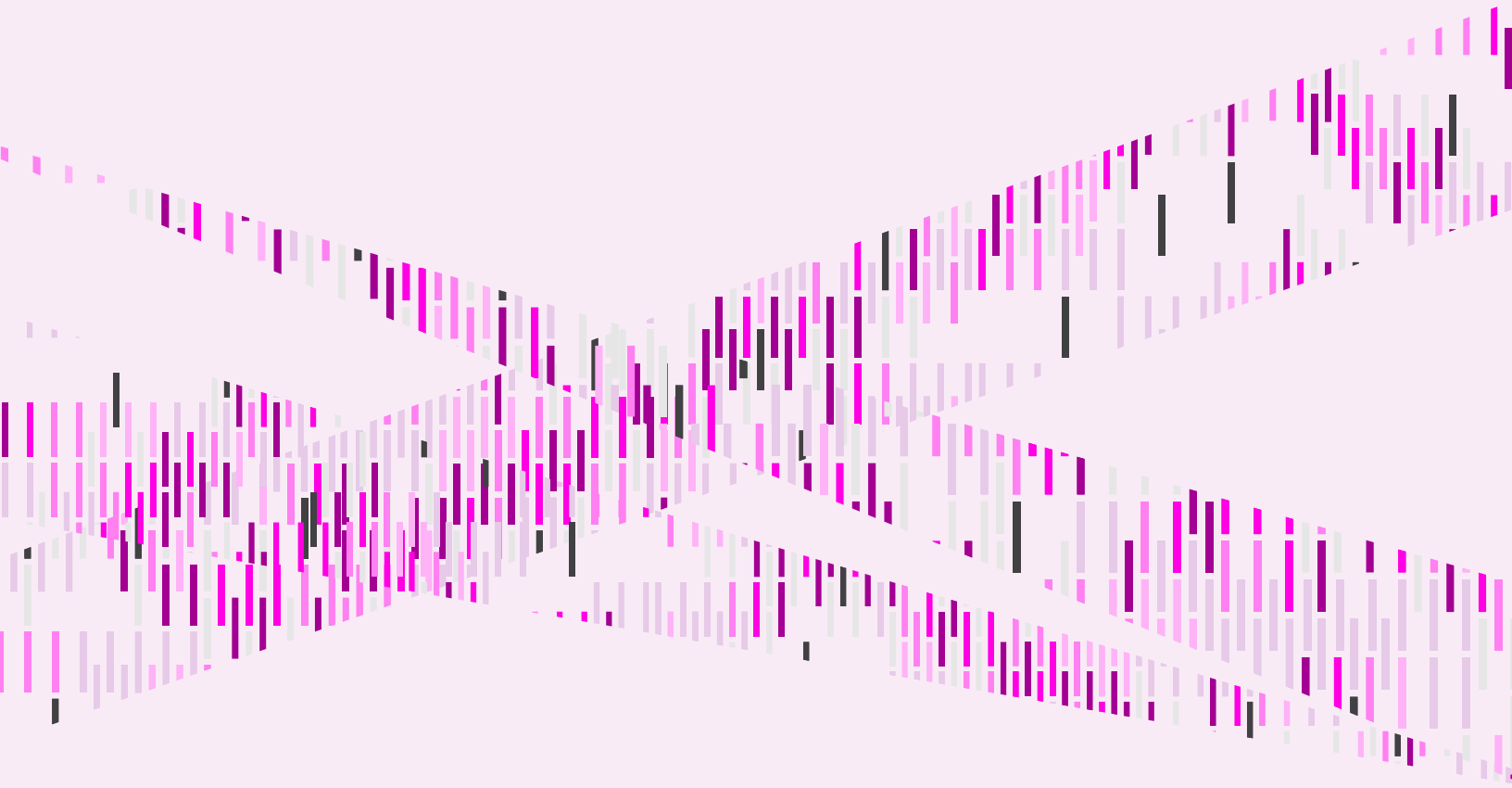
Testing a cohort-based model. Participants in the cohorts had higher education levels and lower levels of household income. There were more women and fewer racialized participants in the cohort-based model. Most were from Manitoba and Saskatchewan, whereas the open enrolment model had participants from multiple provinces. Differences in participant characteristics were driven by the cohort model's recruitment approach. Cohorts were recruited from a subset of FAST's referral partner immigrant service organizations rather than the open enrolment of the standard FAST model.

- Participants in the cohort-based model had nearly double the completion rate of those in the open-enrolment model.
- Cohort-based participants reported higher satisfaction; a higher likelihood of recommending FAST; and greater utility than those in the open-enrolment model. Cohort-based participants found skills gap training and webinars more useful. They also described how FAST helped them develop industry-specific skills and workplace culture knowledge and how it validated their existing skills and helped refresh technical knowledge.
- Employment rates and salaries were similar between cohort-based and open-enrolment participants.
- Cohort-based participants had biweekly check-ins led by an IEC-BC facilitator who kept them engaged and provided opportunities for networking. Focus group respondents emphasized the value of engaging with others in their cohort, exchanging resources, job postings, and industry insights, and forming lasting connections. They noted how the module helped them better understand Canadian workplace norms and expectations.
- Focus group respondents expressed a desire to learn about other newcomer organizations, their sectors, and sector-specific job postings to maximize alignment with peers in similar regions, industries, and/or streams. They shared similar suggestions for improvement as those noted in the Phase 2 *Final Report*, including: employer and mentorship connections in local communities; flexibility in accessing FAST and its resources, allowing extra time; and clearer language in the modules for those learning English.

Testing the Prepare for Work in Canada standalone module. The Prepare for Work in Canada module enrolled 195 participants. Demographics were similar to those in the open enrolment model: the average age was 35 and almost all were already in Canada upon enrolment.

- The module matched the completion rate of the open enrolment model.
- IEC-BC's end-of-module survey showed that 87% of respondents reported an overall satisfaction score of 5/5 and 81% reported an overall utility score of 5/5. Our sample of international students and temporary workers shared that the content was valuable in increasing their knowledge of Canadian workplace culture. Participants felt greater career readiness and preparation for the Canadian workplace after completion.

Blueprint's *Final Report* will include updated participant and outcomes data from the eight-week and follow-up surveys for all participants who enrolled in FAST by summer 2025. It will include additional insights into variances in program uptake and participant outcomes within key program iterations. It will include insights into post-secondary education (PSE) referral partners' experiences with referring FAST to students, their perceptions of FAST, and employer perceptions of the program.



1. Introduction

Canada's immigration policies are designed to ensure we have the workers we need to fill labour market gaps and support a strong economy.[1] To realize this goal, Canada needs an employment and training ecosystem that helps newcomers leverage their skills and fully integrate into the labour market.[2] However, newcomers often face barriers to accessing employment aligned with their education, skills, and experience[3]—and at similar levels of seniority to the roles they held in their home countries.[4] Through a lack of recognition of foreign credentials, limited familiarity with Canadian workplace norms, and a lack of Canadian work experience, many newcomers remain un- or under-employed. [5]

To address these challenges, the Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC) designed Facilitating Access to Skilled Talent (FAST). This online, self-paced skills assessment helps newcomers accelerate their job search and better understand their target occupations and industries, necessary competencies, and qualifications and norms. FAST provides comprehensive, occupation-specific assessments in six streams, chosen based on feedback from employers on key labour market gaps: Accounting & Finance, Biotechnology & Life Sciences, Culinary Arts, IT & Data Services, Seniors Care, and Skilled Trades.[6] As shown in **Table 1** on the following page, a series of modules supports each stream with variations based on employer needs.

1 Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. (2022). *New immigration plan to fill labour market shortages and grow Canada's economy.* Government of Canada. https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/02/new-immigration-plan-to-fill-labour-market-shortages-and-grow-canadas-economy.html

2 Tobin, S. (2023). *State of skills: Leveraging the skills of newcomers.* Future Skills Centre. https://fsc-ccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/State-of-Skills_-Leveraging-the-Skills-of-Newcomers_final.pdf

3 Mo, G.-Y., & MacKenzie, P. (2022, March 31). Using the talents of newcomers to Canada. *Policy Options.* https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/using-the-talents-of-newcomers-to-canada/

4 Ng, E., & Gagnon, S. (2020). *Employment gaps and underemployment for racialized groups and immigrants in Canada: Current findings and future directions.* Future Skills Centre. https://fsc-ccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/EmploymentGaps-Immigrants-PPF-JAN2020-EN.pdf

5 Cukier, W., Mo, G.-Y., Karajovic, S., Wilson, B., Walker, J.-A., & Lee, K. (2023). *Racialized Canadians and newcomers: Foundational & transferable skills.* Ted Rogers School of Management (Diversity Institute). https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/diversity/research/racialized-canadians-and-newcomers-foundational-and-transferrable-skills-9-23.pdf

6 Importantly, FAST is not a training or reskilling program; it is a competency assessment program that can help skilled professionals in one of the six streams compare their past experiences with Canadian standards.

Table 1 | FAST training components

Workplace cultural training	Technical competency assessments	Referrals for skills credentials	Job search and career navigation supports
The module "Prepare for Work in Canada" orients newcomers to Canadian culture and workplace customs and includes essential skills competency assessments.	Helps participants develop and test their occupation-specific skills, strengths, and gaps with industry partners, including ICTC, BioTalent, and the BC Care Providers Association.	Refers those who complete all FAST modules to industry partners for credentialing services, such as IT professional designations and Microsoft certifications. Biotechnology & Life Sciences grads receive a BioTalent 'Bio Ready' certification and Seniors Care grads receive a BCCPA assessment.[7]	Provides all participants with links to adjacent IEC-BC services—BC JobConnect and MentorConnect—where they can apply to job postings, connect with professionals in their fields, and be notified of job events led by IEC-BC via email.[8]
Available for Accounting & Finance, IT & Data Services, and Biotechnology & Life Sciences.	*Available for Accounting & Finance, Culinary Arts, and Skilled Trades.*	*Available for Biotechnology & Life Sciences and Seniors Care.*	*Available for participants in all streams.*

IEC-BC designed FAST to be accessible to as many newcomers as possible. Most participants are referred to the program by IEC-BC, case workers, or settlement workers from service delivery partners (SDPs). Participants can enrol *after* their arrival in Canada or before, but all participants must be approved to immigrate to Canada; the program accepts refugees and skilled immigrants with valid work permits. Participants must also have two to five years of work experience in one of the six streams. IEC-BC recommends that participants have a level 6 in Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) but does not require CLB certificates and views language proficiency as an asset. SDPs often refer clients to FAST even if they do not meet CLB requirements.

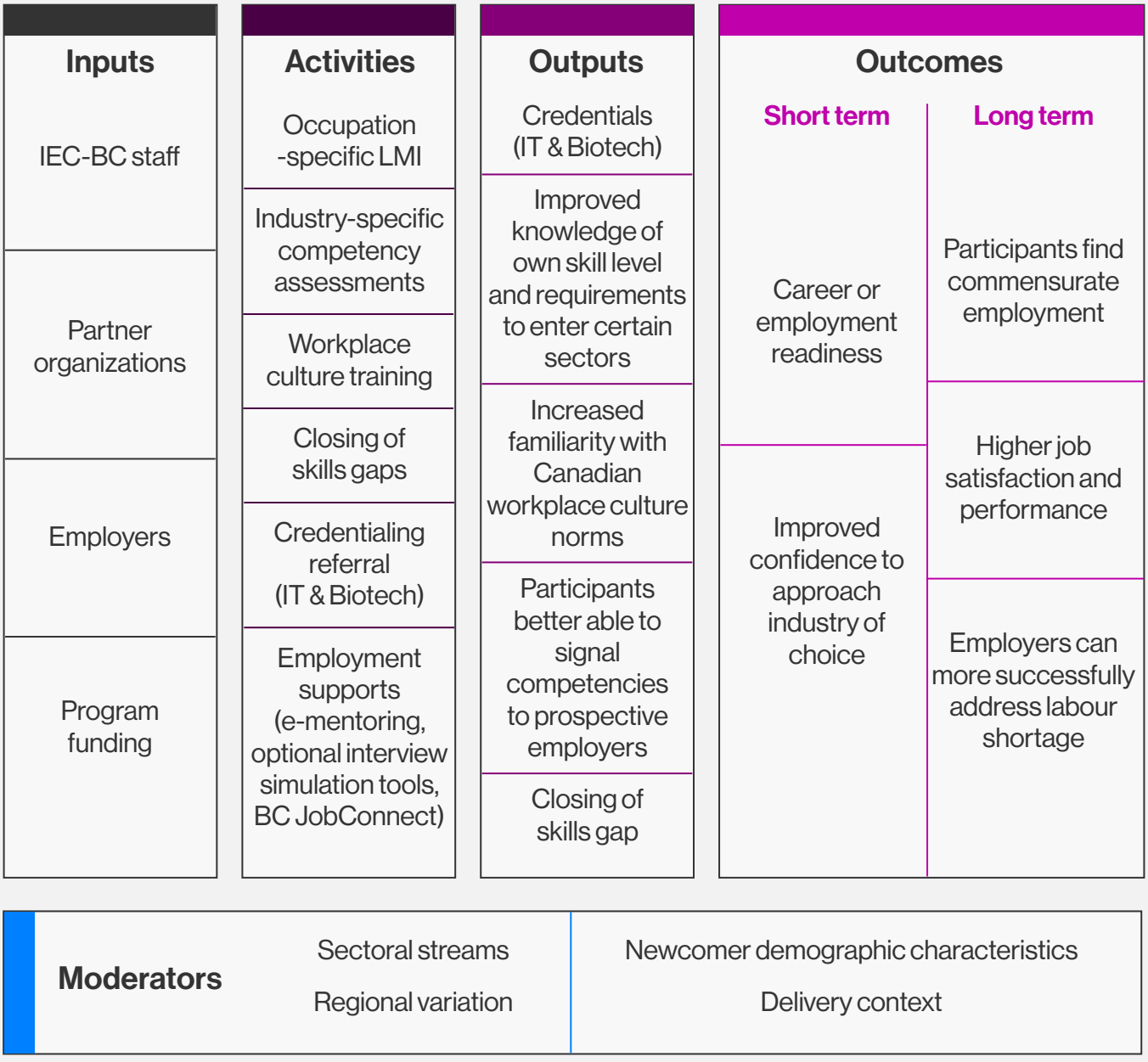
FAST is self-paced and flexible; participants can engage with elements they find most useful and take as long as they wish. IEC-BC assumes participants will be taking part in other complementary employment services at the same time.

7 Participants were also referred to the Skills Passport for Newcomers in Tech (SPRINT) program, an initiative that provided free additional resources and supported over 800 immigrant clients until March 2023.

8 This is regardless of their geographic location—participants arriving in other provinces are referred to similar service providers in their region. However, while adjacent services are accessible to all participants, job postings, mentors, and events are based in BC only, which means they mainly benefit participants who live in the province. These features are not officially part of Blueprint's FAST evaluation, but frequently mentioned in interviews with participants and SDPs.

Figure 2 illustrates the logic model. In the short term, FAST aims to increase employment readiness and improve confidence; longer-term, it aims for participants to find employment aligned with their interests and skills and help employers address labour market shortages.

Figure 2 | FAST program logic model



1.2. FAST partnerships

IEC-BC delivers FAST in collaboration with industry partners and community and immigrant SDPs. Industry partners co-create occupation-specific content. FAST completers are also referred to industry partners for credentialing services where relevant. SDPs assess newcomers' suitability and eligibility for FAST and refer them to the program. See **Appendix A** for an overview of roles and responsibilities of partners.

1.3. FAST's scaling journey

Phase 1. In spring 2019, FAST joined the **Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio**, receiving an FSC grant to add the Accounting & Finance and Culinary Arts streams and expand from BC to Manitoba, Ontario, and Nova Scotia. In the same year, Blueprint evaluated FAST to understand participant and SDP experiences. We found that newcomers valued the program, particularly in how it helped them better understand Canadian workplace culture. We recommended providing more targeted sectoral content and continuing to invest in sustainable partnerships with SDPs.

Phase 2. In 2021, IEC-BC received a second FSC grant to move FAST from pilot to iteration—from generating early evidence of promise to data that would help strengthen implementation. IEC-BC partnered with the BC Care Providers Association to add a Seniors Care stream. Blueprint released an *Interim Report* (April 2023) and *Final Report* (September 2024) based on data gathered from September 2021 to March 2024. We provided a longitudinal analysis of program uptake, participant experiences, and early employment outcomes along with a nine-month follow-up survey and interviews with industry partners and SDPs.

Phase 3. In April 2024, IEC-BC received an FSC grant to move into 'Phase 3' of the project. In this phase, we explore three new variations, planned in response to feedback from participants and partners. These variations are:

- **A/B testing a shorter program.** IEC-BC was interested in piloting a time-bound model of FAST, in which some participants had limited access over an eight-week period to encourage higher engagement as opposed to untimed, unlimited access. We used A/B testing to compare this shorter version to the one-year model to determine whether duration of access impacted engagement rates.
- **Case study evaluation of a cohort-based approach.** IEC-BC sought to better understand the benefits of a more structured, cohort-based version of FAST. IEC-BC approached referral partners to introduce this approach and grouped 15 participants with a shared start date, a similar eight-week duration as described above, peer-learning opportunities, and group sessions led by an IEC-BC facilitator. Content in the streams remained the same.
- **Case study evaluation of a standalone workplace culture module.** Drawing from the existing FAST curriculum—specifically, the 'Prepare for Work in Canada' training—IEC-BC created a light-touch, standalone version of the

module designed specifically for international students and temporary workers. The content remained identical to that offered within the full FAST program but was delivered independently to better suit the needs and circumstances of this new audience. IEC-BC collaborated with post-secondary institutions to refer interested participants. This case study explores how the module functioned both as a tailored resource for job-seeking newcomers outside FAST's traditional eligibility and as a potential on-ramp to fuller program engagement.

Table 2 summarizes FAST's scaling timeline and how Blueprint will continue to support through evidence generation and reporting.

Table 2 | FAST training components

2015	**Phase 1: Nov. 2019–March 2021**	**Phase 2: Sept. 2021–March 2024**	**Phase 3: Apr. 2024–fall 2025**
	1st FSC Scaling Grant	**2nd FSC Scaling Grant**	**3rd FSC Scaling Grant**
IEC-BC launches FAST in BC.	IEC-BC receives an FSC grant to expand FAST to two new sectors (Accounting & Finance and Culinary Arts) and three jurisdictions: Manitoba, Ontario, and Nova Scotia. • *Blueprint conducts its early-stage evaluation.*	IEC-BC receives an FSC grant to continue expansion to the Seniors Care stream. FAST offers the Seniors Care stream in BC; IEC-BC partners with NBCC to expand FAST to New Brunswick. • *Blueprint assists with continued evaluation and scaling design.* • *Blueprint releases its Phase 2* Interim Report*, covering Sept. 2021 to June 2022, in April 2023.* • *Blueprint releases its Phase 2* Final Report*, covering Sept. 2021 to March 2024, in September 2024.*	IEC-BC receives a third FSC grant to implement and evaluate new program iterations (e.g., time-bound, cohort-based approaches) and to expand offerings to new target populations (international students, temporary workers). • *Blueprint assists with continued evaluation and capacity building.* • *Blueprint releases Phase 3* Interim Report*, covering April to Nov. 2024, in April 2025.* • *Our Phase 3* Final Report *is forthcoming in late 2025.*

2. Learning agenda and methodology

2.1. Blueprint's common outcomes framework

Our measurement approach includes both indicators that are specific to the FAST model and common indicators drawn from our common outcomes framework (see **Box 1**).

Box 1 | Common outcomes framework

Our measurement approach includes indicators that are specific to an intervention as well as a set of common indicators that are measured for every intervention in the Portfolio.

These common indicators are drawn from Blueprint's common outcomes framework, which was developed in consultation with our partners and was informed by review of employment-related outcomes frameworks and measurement approaches both within Canada and internationally. They include:

- Intermediate outcomes that reflect 'in-program' participant experiences and gains (e.g., program satisfaction and skills development).
- Long-term outcomes, such as employment and educational attainment.

Using a consistent approach to measuring outcomes is part of our commitment to understanding how each intervention in the Portfolio is reaching people across Canada and allows us to measure long-term outcomes using Statistics Canada's Social Data Linking Environment.

For more information, see **Appendix B**.

2.2. Learning agenda

We explored the value-add of three variations of FAST: i) a time-limited model (eight-week completion timeline); ii) a cohort-based model (peer-to-peer learning groups); and iii) a standalone workplace culture module: Prepare for Work in Canada. For each variation, we examined **reach** (who participated and how it compared to the standard model), **completion rates**, participant **satisfaction** and **experience**, and employment **outcomes**.

- **Reach.** Who participated in each variation? How did participation compare to the standard FAST model?
- **Completion.** Were participants more likely to complete FAST in each variation?
- **Satisfaction and experience.** Did participants find each variation more useful or engaging than the standard model? What strengths and opportunities did they identify?
- **Outcomes.** Were participants in each variation more likely to be employed at exit? Did they earn more than those in the standard model?

For the Prepare for Work in Canada module, we explored reach, completion, and satisfaction and experience but did not compare to the standard model and did not review outcomes.

2.3. Data sources and sample sizes

Blueprint gathered a combination of administrative data, survey data, and interview data, including 60–90-minute Zoom meetings with focus group members. **Table 3** describes the data sources, sample sizes, and response rates.

Table 3 | Data sources and sample sizes

Data source	Participants enrolled and consenting to research	Dates	Description
Administrative data	**723** • Group A: Standard FAST (no variation): 286 • Group B (time-bound): 211 • Cohort-based version: 31 • Prepare for Work in Canada Standalone Module: 195	June–Nov. 2024	Collected by IEC-BC at program registration for participants consenting to the research; includes socio-demographic characteristics, stream, arrival status, enrolment and completion data, and end-of-module survey data.
Eight-week survey	**32%** (140/442)	June–Nov. 2024	Administered eight weeks after registration to capture satisfaction and additional socio-demographic characteristics. Participants in the Prepare for Work in Canada standalone module (n=195) **did not** receive this survey due to the module's brevity.
Cohort-based focus groups	**25%** (8/32)	Aug.–Nov. 2024	Two focus groups were conducted with participants from our two cohorts (with one focus group per cohort). Cohorts were open to participants in all streams, but recruited those in Biotech & Life Sciences, Accounting & Finance, and IT & Data Services only. All participants in the cohorts were invited.
Prepare for Work in Canada standalone module focus groups	**15%** (6/42)	Aug.–Nov. 2024	Two focus groups were conducted with Prepare for Work in Canada standalone participants, who were sampled based on completion rates, referral partner SPOs (with the aim of two to three invited per referral partner), country of origin, (with the aim of two invited per country of origin, including pre-arrivals), and by gender.

Note. In the cells describing, 'Participants enrolled and consenting to research' at the eight-week mark, the denominator indicates the number of participants who received the survey; the numerator indicates the proportion of participants who completed the survey.

2.4. A note on A/B Testing

To understand how program design influences participant engagement, we used A/B testing—a method that compares two versions of a program to evaluate which is more effective. We tested whether limiting access to FAST over an eight-week period would lead to higher engagement compared to the standard, year-long, self-paced version.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two groups:

- **Group A** received access to the standard FAST model (12 months, self-paced); and
- **Group B** received access to a time-limited version (eight weeks).

Random assignment helps ensure both groups are similar in terms of background characteristics, which strengthens our ability to attribute any observed differences in outcomes—such as engagement rates—to the program variation itself, rather than to external factors like education level or motivation.

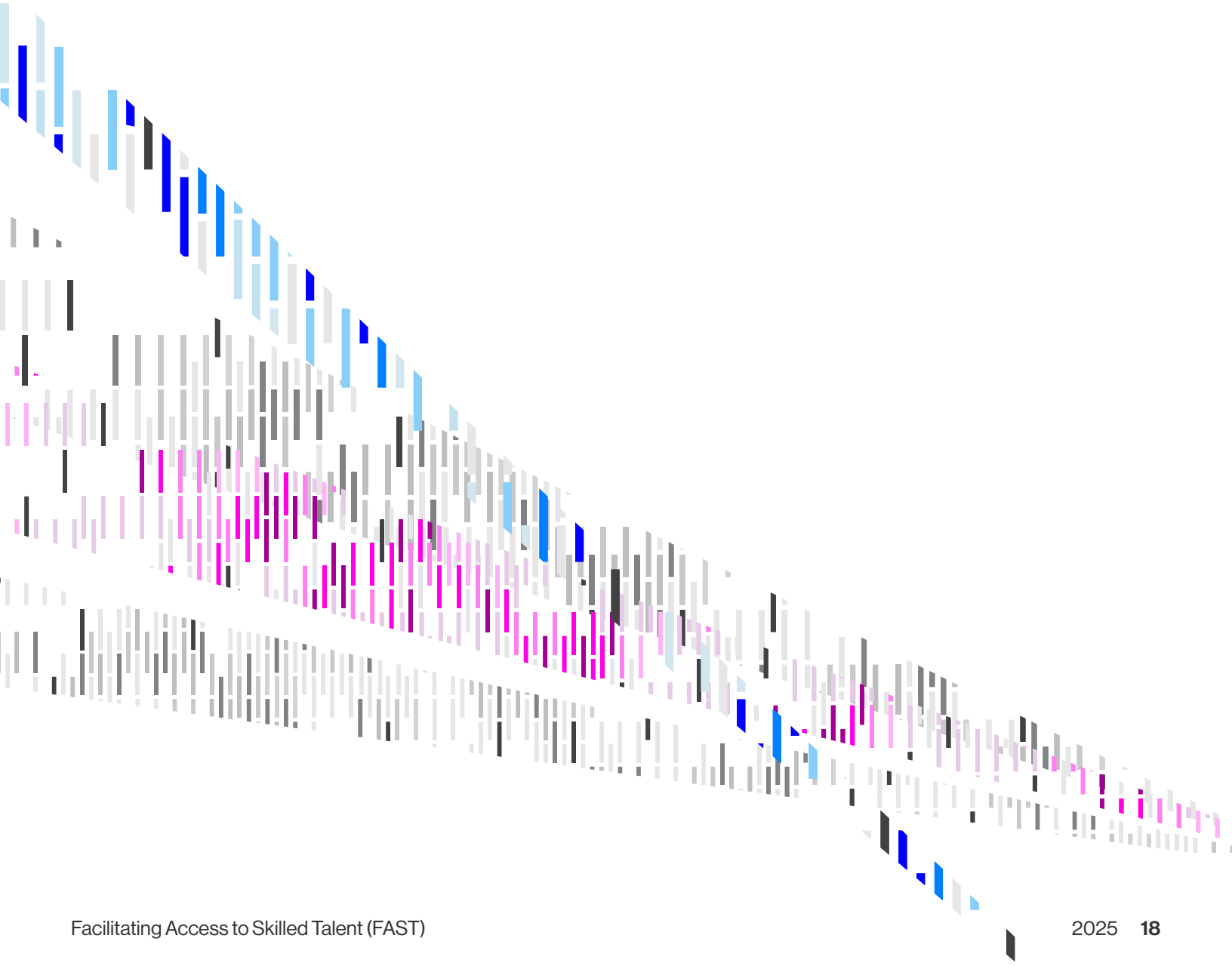
The two groups were comparable across key characteristics, with one exception discussed in section **3**: Group B (with time-limited access) had a higher proportion of participants with a certificate or diploma below the bachelor's level.

2.5. Data limitations

The findings are framed within the context of certain limitations:

- **Timing of exit survey responses may affect interpretation of results.** All participants in the A/B test groups and cohort-based version received an exit survey eight weeks after enrolling in FAST, regardless of their program variation. However, because FAST is self-paced for some participants, not all completed the program by the time they received the survey. This was especially relevant for participants in the standard one-year model (e.g., Group A in our A/B test), who may have still been progressing at the eight-week mark. In contrast, participants in the time-limited and cohort-based versions (e.g., Group B) had their access end at eight weeks—meaning they would have completed (or stopped) by the time of the survey. As a result, survey responses across groups may reflect different stages of the user journey, which could influence feedback on satisfaction and perceived utility.
- **Gaps in baseline data.** To streamline registration and facilitate accessibility for participants, key socio-demographic details, as well as some outcomes we would want to track at baseline (e.g., employment status and education enrolment at intake), were collected after eight weeks rather than at enrolment. As a result of these efforts to maximize ease of registration, we were unable to track changes in variables from before to after program participation.
- **Low response rates for follow-up surveys.** Our eight-week survey, aligned with the expected completion point for FAST, had a 32% response rate. While this is not unexpected given the variations we see in program completion rates, this response rate may limit the overall representativeness of findings for the entire FAST population.

- **Small sample size for Culinary Arts and no data from Skilled Trades.** Fewer than five participants in the Culinary Arts stream completed the survey. Their data are included in the overall results but not reported separately. The Skilled Trades stream was excluded from research due to temporary access restrictions for content and technical weblink updates. IEC-BC plans to assess the existing stream with sector councils and in consultation with Employment and Social Development Canada, training institutes, and provincial licensing bodies.



3. Testing a time-limited variation of FAST

This section provides early insights into experiences and outcomes from A/B testing conducted with the open enrolment model (standard vs. time-limited iterations).

3.1. Program uptake: A/B versions

Most key characteristics—such as demographics and program uptake—were evenly distributed between the standard and time-limited versions. This balance suggests that the randomization process is working as intended, with only one notable difference between groups: more participants in the time-limited version had a certificate or diploma below a bachelor's degree (**28%**) compared to the standard version (**12%**) (see **Table C2** in **Appendix C**). For all other characteristics, any differences were small (less than **5%**) and likely due to chance.

Since education may be related to the different outcomes we are comparing via A/B testing, for each outcome, we compare both the absolute differences in the outcome between the A and B groups and consider the difference when controlling for education using a multiple regression model. This regression model ensures that the difference in education rates is controlled for and does not bias our estimates of the effectiveness of each version.

For most comparisons, we present a) the absolute differences between A and B groups, and b) the p-value of the estimate associated with being in the time-limited group, indicating our statistical confidence in the difference. Sample sizes in both our A/B tests and test of the cohort-based model are relatively low, which means most differences do not pass traditional tests of statistical significance. However, we include p-values as a general indicator of statistical confidence in differences that we may aim to explore further with larger sample sizes (see **Box 2** for additional detail).

Box 2 | Interpreting p-values

In both our A/B tests of a time-limited version and our tests of a cohort-based and standard version of FAST, p-values represent the probability of observing differences this large if there were no relationship between the program variation and the outcome. For example, a p-value of 0.28 for the time-limited version's effect on completion would mean that, even if the variation had no real impact, a difference of this size would still occur 28% of the time due to chance.

Because our sample sizes are small, p-values are higher than usual standards for even large differences. We use p-values as directional indicators rather than strict tests of statistical significance. Higher p-values (e.g., above 0.5) suggest the observed difference is likely due to chance, while lower p-values (e.g., under 0.3) suggest the difference may reflect a real effect, though not conclusively.

3.2. Program completion: A/B versions

Participants in the time-limited version of FAST completed at a rate of **19%** compared to **10%** for participants in the standard version.

After controlling for education differences, **Table 4** shows that we estimate that participants in the time-limited version completed FAST at a rate **nine percentage points** higher than those in the standard version (p=0.28). While we observe that participants with a bachelor's degree or higher are **eight percentage points** more likely to complete FAST, this difference may be due to random variation (p=0.47). Estimates in the table represent the percentage point difference in completion rates associated with participating in the time-limited version and of having a bachelor's degree or higher.

Due to the small sample size, we are relatively uncertain about this effect. However, these early results do suggest that the time-limited format may be worth exploring as a way to encourage completion of FAST programming.

Table 4 | Effect of a time-limited feature (A/B testing) on program completion

	Estimate	p-value
Intercept	0.19	0.08
A/B: Time-limited (reference: Standard)	0.09	0.28
Highest level of education: Bachelor's and above (reference: below bachelor's)	0.08	0.47

Source. Administrative data and participant eight-week survey (n=126)

3.3. Program experience: A/B versions

Satisfaction with FAST, likelihood to recommend it, and perceptions of its utility across multiple dimensions do not appear to vary meaningfully between versions.

As shown in **Table 5**, on the following page, differences in rates of satisfaction, likelihood to recommend, and most utility indicators range between **1%** and **7%**, with p-values from multiple regression ranging from p=0.40 to p=0.99. While it appears that a higher proportion of participants in the standard version felt FAST was useful in improving their industry-specific technical competencies (**72%** for standard compared to **64%** for time-limited), regression analysis indicates that this result is likely due to random variation and differences in education levels between groups (p=0.99).

There is one exception to this pattern. For BC respondents, a higher proportion found BC Job Connect useful in the standard version (**58%**) than in the time-limited version (**43%**, p=0.08). As noted in the Introduction, participants receive links to adjacent IEC-BC services—BC JobConnect and MentorConnect—where they can apply to job postings, connect with professionals in their fields, and be notified of job events led by IEC-BC via email.

Table 5 | A/B test comparison of satisfaction, likelihood to recommend, and perceived utility

Participant characteristics			A/B testing: Open enrolment		p-value (multiple regression)
			A/B: Standard	A/B: Time-limited	
Satisfaction and likelihood to recommend					
Overall satisfaction		Very or somewhat satisfied	**54%** (39/72)	**49%** (26/53)	0.53
Likelihood to recommend		Definitely or probably recommend, or have already recommended	**77%** (56/73)	**70%** (37/53)	0.43
Perceptions of utility					
How useful was FAST for improving your industry-specific technical competencies?		Very or somewhat useful	**72%** (53/73)	**64%** (33/52)	0.99
How useful was FAST for improving your workplace culture knowledge?		Very or somewhat useful	**76%** (55/73)	**75%** (39/52)	0.73
How useful were each of the components of FAST for your job search?	Technical competency assessments	Very or somewhat useful	**66%** (34/52)	**66%** (34/52)	0.85
	Skills gap training	Very or somewhat useful	**64%** (46/72)	**58%** (30/52)	0.55
	Workplace culture training	Very or somewhat useful	**72%** (52/72)	**75%** (39/52)	0.68
	E-mentoring	Very or somewhat useful	**57%** (41/72)	**52%** (27/52)	0.68
	BC Job Connect (BC respondents only)	Very or somewhat useful	**58%** (24/41)	**43%** (13/30)	0.08
	Webinars	Very or somewhat useful	**53%** (39/73)	**52%** (27/52)	0.40

Source. Eight-week survey

3.4. Employment outcomes: A/B versions

We observe no differences in employment or earnings between participants who engaged in the time-limited version of FAST and the standard version. As shown in **Table 6,** employment outcomes are similar between participants in both versions. At the eight-week point, **51**% of time-limited respondents were employed compared to **48%** of those in the standard version. Similarly, participants in the time-limited version reported average weekly earnings of **$696.40**; those in the standard version reported **$717.84**.

Table 6 | A/B testing: Employment rates and average weekly earnings

Outcomes at eight-week stage (N=140)	**A/B testing: Open enrolment**		**p-value** (multiple regression)
	A/B: Standard	**A/B: Time-limited**	
Employment rates	**48%** (35/73)	**51%** (27/53)	0.82
Average weekly earnings	**$717.84** (n=31)	**$696.40** (n=25)	0.77

Source. Eight-week survey

4. Testing a cohort-based delivery of FAST

We studied two FAST 'cohorts.' Each grouped approximately **15** participants with an IEC-BC facilitator, who coordinated sessions to provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning. The cohort-based model used the eight-week time-limited version. Insights from cohort participants are compared with all participants in the 'open enrolment model' (i.e., both Group A and Group B from the A/B test).

4.1. Program uptake across models

See **Appendix C** for a breakdown of demographic characteristics. Note that the small sample size of the cohort-based model (N=31) should be considered when interpreting results. Key features were as follows:

- Women made up a larger proportion of the cohort-based model (**79%**) than the open-enrolment model (**53%**).
- Cohort-based participants had higher education levels—**79%** had a degree above the bachelor's level compared to **44%** in the open enrolment model.
- There were fewer racialized participants in the cohort-based (**57%**) compared to the open enrolment model (**86%**).
- Most cohort-based participants were from Manitoba (**50%**) and Saskatchewan (**43%**), whereas the open enrolment model had participants from multiple provinces. This is expected, as IEC-BC built cohorts by grouping referrals from specific partners.
- More cohort-based participants had a household income under $20,000 (**67%**) compared to **40%** in the open enrolment model.

These differences between groups may influence outcomes in ways that are unrelated to whether participants received the cohort-based model.

As with the A/B testing in the previous section, for each outcome, we consider a multiple regression model that controls for certain factors when estimating the differences associated with the cohort model. The regression controls for: gender, education, whether participants were racialized, their level of household income, and whether they participated from Manitoba or Saskatchewan. We present the p-value associated with our estimate of the relationship between participation in the cohort-based model and the outcome alongside outcome differences as an illustration of our statistical confidence in the difference.

Due to our low sample size (N=31), p-values from regression analysis in this section do not meet standard benchmarks for high statistical confidence, even in cases where we observe large differences between groups. Per our approach outlined in **Box 2**, these p-values instead provide direction on which differences we have relatively higher confidence in and should focus on exploring further as more data become available.

4.2. Program completion across models

According to administrative data, participants in the cohort-based model had a higher completion rate (**32%**) than those in the open-enrolment model (**14%**, p=0.23). Although the cohort-based sample is small, this observed difference is large and should be further investigated once more data on the cohort-based model are available.

4.3. Participant experience across models

As shown in **Table 7** on the following page, cohort-based participants reported higher satisfaction (**71%**) than those in the open-enrolment model (**52%**). Moreover, **86%** of cohort-based participants had already recommended FAST or would likely recommend it compared to **74%** of open enrolment participants.

However, regression results indicate that we cannot rule out whether these differences result from sociodemographic differences between each group (p=0.69 for satisfaction and p=0.56 for likelihood to recommend). This result is based on a small sample size; further investigation with larger samples may clarify if participants are more satisfied with the cohort-based model.

Participants in the cohort-based model found FAST more useful than those in the open-enrolment model in several areas:

- **79%** of cohort-based participants felt FAST improved their technical skills compared to **69%** of open enrolment participants (p=0.32).
- **All** (**100%**) of the cohort-based participants said FAST helped them understand Canadian workplace culture—a noteworthy difference from **75%** in the open enrolment model (p=0.2).
- Cohort-based participants also found key program components—like skills gap training and webinars—more useful for their job search.

Table 7 | Perceptions of utility: Cohort vs. open enrolment models

Participant characteristics			Model version		p-value (multiple regression)
			Cohort-based	Open enrolment	
Satisfaction and likelihood to recommend					
Overall satisfaction		Very or somewhat satisfied	**72%** (10/14)	**52%** (65/125)	0.69
Likelihood to recommend		Definitely or probably recommend, or have already recommended	**84%** (12/14)	**74%** (93/126)	0.56
Perceptions of utility					
How useful was FAST for improving your industry-specific technical competencies?		Very or somewhat useful	**79%** (11/14)	**69%** (86/125)	0.32
How useful was FAST for improving your workplace culture knowledge?		Very or somewhat useful	**100%** (14/14)	**75%** (94/125)	0.20
How useful were each of the components of FAST for your job search?	Technical competency assessments	Very or somewhat useful	**79%** (11/14)	**65%** (81/125)	0.59
	Skills gap training	Very or somewhat useful	**64%** (9/14)	**61%** (76/124)	0.22
	Workplace culture training	Very or somewhat useful	**92%** (12/13)	**73%** (91/124)	0.34
	E-mentoring	Very or somewhat useful	**50%** (6/12)	**55%** (68/124)	0.49
	BC Job Connect (BC respondents only)	Very or somewhat useful	**N/A** (0/0)	**52%** (37/71)	N/A
	Webinars	Very or somewhat useful	**83%** (10/12)	**52%** (66/125)	0.21

Source. Eight-week survey

4.4. Employment outcomes across models

As shown in **Table 8**, employment rates were similar between cohort-based and open enrolment participants: **50%** of participants in the cohort-based sample were employed eight weeks after enrolment compared to **49%** in the open-enrolment model (p=0.74). Cohort-based participants reported slightly lower weekly earnings (**$655.94**) compared to open enrolment participants (**$708.27**), but sample sizes are too low to determine whether this is a meaningful difference.

Table 8 | Employment rates and average weekly earnings for both program models

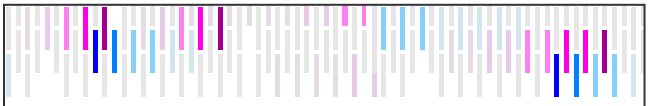
Outcomes at eight-week stage (N=140)	**Model version**		**p-value** (multiple regression)
	Cohort-based	**Open enrolment**	
Employment rates	**50%** (7/14)	**49%** (62/126)	0.74
Average weekly earnings	**$655.94** (n=6)	**$708.27** (n=56)	N/A*

Source. Eight-week survey

* No p-value presented for earnings due to sample size for cohort model being too low to carry out regression.

4.5. Cohort-based participant experiences

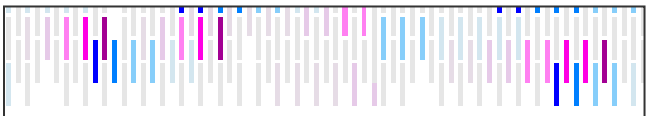
In focus groups, cohort-based participants reported how the program validated their existing skills. Others said it helped them refresh technical knowledge or learn new skills.



"There were some ... modules where we refresh our memory and ... there were some pre- and post-evaluation, which is good."

Focus group respondent

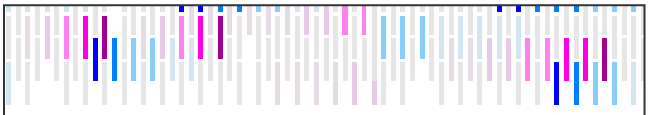
Structured support for social interactions and networking opportunities may have played a role in raising perceptions of utility. Focus group participants emphasized the value of engaging with others in their cohort, exchanging resources, job postings, and industry insights, and forming connections that could extend into future collaborations.



"We can have [a] little discussion during the check-in, at the [start] and midway, and then [at] the end. We got the email exchange and then we can have the connection … We can share some specific job posting[s] or organization name[s] who helped."

Focus group respondent

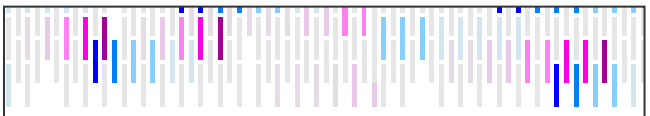
As in the Phase 2 *Final Report*, focus group participants said the "Prepare for Work in Canada" module helped them better understand Canadian workplace norms and expectations. They also appreciated learning about Indigenous history, which gave them a clearer sense of what to expect when living and working in Canada. These findings reinforce the module's role in helping newcomers feel more confident and prepared for Canadian workplaces.



"The [workplace culture module] is quite useful and helpful. That is critical because I think it's more fundamental than the technical bit."

Focus group respondent

Cohort-based participants desired more intentional cohort creation to maximize alignment with peers in similar regions, industries, and/or streams. Participants expressed a desire for opportunities to learn about other newcomer organizations and share learnings about the sector and sector-specific job postings.



"[It] would be good if we can [meet] the same kind of [people sharing] the same kind of interest or same kind of qualification or same kind of job requirement … if we can make some connection with them and they can meet more during this course."

Focus group respondent

Cohort-based participants also shared similar suggestions for improving FAST as those reported in the Phase 2 *Final Report*, summarized below:

- Stronger employer and mentorship connections, with a focus on local opportunities (e.g., matching participants in Winnipeg with employers or mentors in Manitoba).
- Greater flexibility in accessing FAST and its resources, allowing extra time if needed.
- Clearer and more accessible language in the modules, especially for participants with lower English proficiency.

5. Testing the Prepare for Work in Canada standalone module

FAST's "Prepare for Work in Canada" cultural training module was piloted as a light-touch introduction to FAST and a standalone module for adjacent target populations: international students and temporary workers. This section explores early insights and highlights participant experience. Since the module does not contain the same range of components as the standard FAST model, most indicators do not directly compare it to the standard model.

5.1. Module reach

The module enrolled **195** participants.

Participants did not complete eight-week or three-month follow-up surveys due to the brevity and light-touch nature of the module (often only two to four hours in length). IEC-BC gathered administrative data (including socio-demographic data), completion data, and data on satisfaction data via a survey administered at the end of the module.

Participant demographics were similar to the open enrolment model: the average age was 35 and almost all participants were already in Canada upon enrolment. This aligns with our expectations—the module is designed for international students and temporary workers. A full breakdown of the sample's demographics can be found in **Appendix C**.

5.2. Module completion

According to administrative data, the Prepare for Work in Canada module had a **15%** (**29/195**) completion rate, closely matching the **14%** (**69/497**) completion rate of the open enrolment model.

5.3. Participant satisfaction with the module

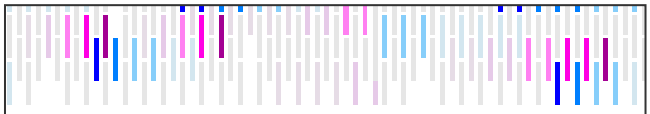
Participants in the standalone module completed the same "Prepare for Work in Canada" content as those in FAST, which has been a highly rated component of the program. It is thus unsurprising to hear they also reported satisfaction with it. IEC-BC's end-of-module survey measured participants' overall satisfaction and utility using a 5-point numerical rating scale. As shown in **Table 9**, **87%** of respondents reported an overall satisfaction score of **5/5** and **81**% reported an overall utility score of **5/5**.

Table 9 | Participant satisfaction and perceptions of utility with the module

End-of-module survey	Rating	% and no. of responses
Overall satisfaction	5	**87%** (27/31)
	4	**13%** (4/31)
	3	**0%** (0/31)
	2	**0%** (0/31)
	1	**0%** (0/31)
Overall utility	5	**81%** (25/31)
	4	**19%** (6/31)
	3	**0%** (0/31)
	2	**0%** (0/31)
	1	**0%** (0/31)

Source. IEC-BC administrative data (end-of-module survey)

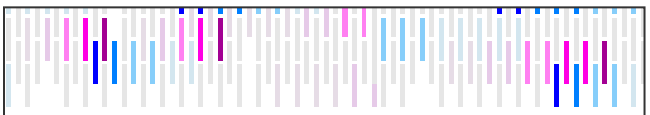
Our focus group allowed room for additional qualitative insights. Our sample of international students and temporary workers shared that the content was valuable in increasing their knowledge of Canadian workplace culture.



"I work in different countries ... and there is a different culture and different atmosphere here at work in Canada, especially. So, I learned a lot from this program."

Focus group respondent

Through our focus group, we learned that participants felt more prepared for the Canadian workplace after completion. They found learning about Canadian workplace culture and Indigenous history useful and helped improve their career readiness.



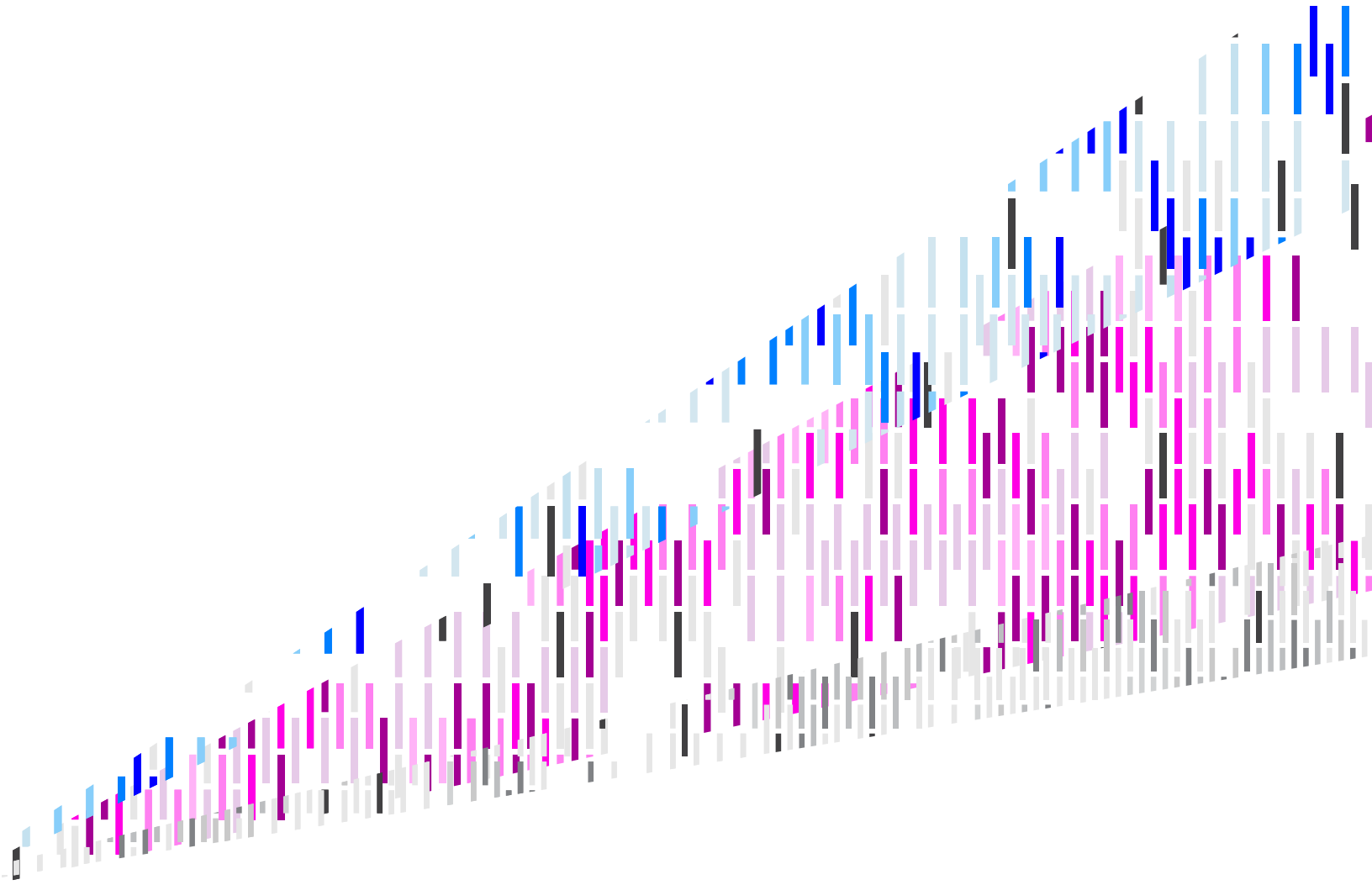
"I think it is beneficial in some way that I get to understand a little bit more about Canadian workplace culture and also Indigenous history, which broadened my general understanding of what it's like to work in Canada. So, then I can adjust my expectations a little bit."

Focus group respondent

6. What's next?

Blueprint's *Final Report* will include results from the full sample of participants, including updated participant and outcomes data from the eight-week and follow-up surveys for all participants who enrolled in FAST by summer 2025.

The *Final Report* will include additional insights into program uptake, participant experience, and program outcomes. This will include any observations into any variances in program uptake and participant outcomes within key program iterations. The *Final Report* will include insights into PSE referral partners' experience with referring FAST to students and PSE referral partners' and employers' perceptions of the value of FAST.



Appendix A

Partners

This section outlines the roles of IEC-BC and partners, including employers and community and immigrant SDPs who refer their clients. Partners have helped develop FAST module content and provide ongoing professional services (e.g., industry designations, credential services) to users.

Lead. Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC). IEC-BC is a not-for-profit organization that provides BC employers with solutions, tools, and resources they need to attract, hire, and retain qualified immigrant talent. It believes that the successful integration of skilled newcomers into the BC labour force is critical to both their success and the province's long-term economic performance. It works with employers, government, and other partner stakeholders to ensure that BC employers can effectively integrate global talent.

Industry partners *co-create occupation-specific content. FAST completers are also referred to industry partners for credentialing services where relevant.*

- BC Care Providers Association (BCCPA). Established in 1977, BCCPA is the leading voice for BC's continuing care sector. Its growing membership base includes over 450 long-term care, assisted living, and commercial members from across BC. Through its operating arm EngAge BC, the organization represents independent living and private-pay home health operators. BCCPA and EngAge BC members support more than 19,000 seniors annually in long-term care and assisted living settings and 6,500 independent living residents. Additionally, its members deliver almost 2.5 million hours of home care and home support services each year. All members are required to abide by the Association's Code of Ethics.
- The British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT). Since 1964, BCIT has taught and trained experts, professionals, and innovators who shape our economy—across BC and around the world. BCIT offers practical career credentials designed for the workplace, from diplomas and certificates to bachelor's and master's degrees. Their schools cover subjects as diverse as applied and natural sciences, business and media, computing and IT, engineering, health sciences, and trades.
- BioTalent Canada. BioTalent Canada supports the people behind life-changing science. Trusted as the go-to source for labour market intelligence, BioTalent Canada guides bio-economy stakeholders with evidence-based data and industry-driven standards. BioTalent Canada is focused on igniting the industry's brainpower, bridging the gap between job-ready talent and employers, and ensuring the long-term agility, resiliency, and sustainability of one of Canada's most vital sectors.
- The Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC). The ICTC is a neutral, not-for-profit national centre of expertise with the mission of strengthening Canada's digital advantage in the global economy. At the time of this writing, across 36 different initiatives, ICTC has provided opportunities to 118,186 people for upskilling, reskilling, and on-the-job training in the digital economy.
- New Brunswick Community College (NBCC). NBCC is a community college located throughout various locations in New Brunswick, including Moncton, Miramichi, Fredericton, Saint John, St. Andrews, and Woodstock. Students learn in a dynamic environment through hands-on training, state-of-the-art

equipment, and real-world experiences. With more than 90 programs, NBCC provides a wide range of learning opportunities that prepare students to step into the workplace with expertise and confidence.

- World Education Services (WES). WES is a non-profit social enterprise that supports the educational, economic, and social inclusion of immigrants, refugees, and international students in the US and Canada. For 50 years, WES has set the standard for international academic credential evaluation, supporting millions of people as they seek to achieve their academic and professional goals. Through decades of experience as a leader in global education, WES has expanded its mission to pursue and scale social impact.

Service Delivery Partners (SDPs) *assess newcomers' suitability and eligibility for FAST and refer them to the program. There are over 20 SDPs; here we list the SDPs with the highest number of referrals.*

- ACCES Employment. ACCES Employment is a community-based workforce development organization that assists jobseekers from diverse backgrounds who are facing barriers to employment to integrate into the Canadian job market. It achieves this by providing employment services, linking employers to skilled people, and building strong networks in collaboration with community partners.
- Immigration Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS). ISANS is the leading immigrant settlement service agency in Atlantic Canada, serving 15,000+ clients annually in 100+ communities across Nova Scotia, through many kinds of services—language, settlement, community integration, and employment—both in-person and online. Its staff brings varied languages, diverse experiences, and unique perspectives to inform client-centred programming.
- Regina Immigrant Women Centre Inc. (RIWC). RIWC provides opportunities, programs, and services for immigrant and refugee women and their families to facilitate and support their smooth integration into local communities. It aspires to empower, support, and champion opportunities for immigrant and refugee women and their families through a nationally recognized suite of community centred and integrated services.

Appendix B

Table B1 | Common outcomes framework

	Outcome	Indicators
Socio-demographics	Sex and gender	Sex at birth
		Self-identified gender
	Age	Age
	Location	Province
		Region and municipality
	Marital status	Marital status
	Children and dependents	Children Dependents Household size
	Household income	Household income
	Education	Highest credential obtained
		Location of highest credential attainment
	Indigenous identity	Self-identified Indigenous identity
	Francophone status and languages spoken	First language spoken
		Official languages
		Language spoken at home
		Other languages spoken (at home)
	Citizenship status	Place of birth
		Year of arrival
		Citizenship status
	Racial identity	Self-identification as member of racialized group
	Disability	Self-identified disability
Employment status and history	Employment	Employment status
		Nature of employment (permanent, temporary, full/part-time)
	Earnings	Hours worked/week
		Wages
		Annual earnings
	Industry and occupation of employment	NAICS code of job
		NOC code of job
	Work history	Time since last employed
		NOC code of job
		NAICS code of job
	Income source	Income sources

	Outcome	Indicators
Intermediate outcomes	Program completion	Successful completion of planned activities
	Participant satisfaction	Satisfaction with program
		Perceived utility of program
		Likelihood to recommend
Customized intermediate outcomes	Skills gains	Measured gains in specific skills
	Program-specific credential attainment	Attainment of program-specific credentials
Long-term outcomes	Employment and retention	Employment status
		Nature of employment (permanent, temporary, full/part-time)
		Retention
	Earnings	Hours worked/week
		Wages
		Annual earnings
	Benefits	Presence of benefits including: paid leave, health and dental coverage, pension plan
	Industry and occupation of employment	NAICS code of job
		NOC code of job
	Job satisfaction	Satisfaction with job
		Perceived opportunity for career advancement
		Perceived job security
	Enrolment in further education	Enrolment in further education
		Type of training
		Field of study
	Credential attainment	Attainment of high school or PSE credentials
		Field of study credentials

Appendix C

Table C1 | Participant characteristics from the eight-week survey across streams

Participant characteristics	Total (N=140)	IT & Data Services (N=54)	Biotech & Life Sciences (N=35)	Accounting & Finance (N=37)	Seniors Care (N=11)
Gender					
Woman	**56%** (78/140)	**44%** (24/54)	**66%** (23/35)	**57%** (21/37)	**73%** (8/11)
Man	**43%** (60/140)	**54%** (29/54)	**31%** (11/35)	**43%** (16/37)	**27%** (3/11)
Another gender category	**0%** (0/140)	**0%** (0/54)	**0%** (0/35)	**0%** (0/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Prefer not to answer	**1%** (2/140)	**2%** (1/54)	**3%** (1/35)	**0%** (0/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Province					
Ontario	**12%** (17/139)	**9%** (5/54)	**26%** (9/34)	**8%** (3/37)	**0%** (0/11)
British Columbia	**53%** (73/139)	**56%** (30/54)	**38%** (13/34)	**49%** (18/37)	**100%** (11/11)
Nova Scotia	**3%** (4/139)	**0%** (0/54)	**6%** (2/34)	**5%** (2/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Saskatchewan	**17%** (24/139)	**17%** (9/54)	**15%** (5/34)	**24%** (9/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Alberta	**5%** (7/139)	**7%** (4/54)	**3%** (1/34)	**5%** (2/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Manitoba	**6%** (8/139)	**6%** (3/54)	**9%** (3/34)	**5%** (2/37)	**0%** (0/11)
New Brunswick	**1%** (1/139)	**2%** (1/54)	**0%**(0/34)	**0%** (0/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Quebec	**0%** (0/139)	**0%** (0/54)	**0%** (0/34)	**0%** (0/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Newfoundland	**0%** (0/139)	**0%** (0/54)	**0%** (0/34)	**0%** (0/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Northwest Territories	**0%** (0/139)	**0%** (0/54)	**0%** (0/34)	**0%** (0/37)	**0%** (0/11)
I do not live in Canada	**4%** (5/139)	**4%** (2/54)	**3%** (1/34)	**3%** (1/37)	**0%**% (0/11)
Immigration status					
Canadian citizen (by naturalization)	**3%** (4/140)	**2%** (1/54)	**6%** (2/35)	**3%** (1/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Canadian citizen (by birth)	**1%** (2/140)	**0%** (0/54)	**3%** (1/35)	**0%** (0/37)	**9%** (1/11)
Permanent resident/Landed immigrant	**54%** (76/140)	**59%** (32/54)	**60%** (21/35)	**54%** (20/37)	**18%** (2/11)
Refugee claimant	**4%** (5/140)	**4%** (2/54)	**3%** (1/35)	**3%** (1/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Temporary Resident	**37%** (52/140)	**35%** (19/54)	**29%** (10/35)	**38%** (14/37)	**73%** (8/11)
Other	**1%** (1/140)	**0%** (0/54)	**0%** (0/35)	**3%** (1/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Years in Canada (for those who have landed)					
5 years or less	**95%** (123/130)	**98%** (50/51)	**91%** (29/32)	**94%** (32/34)	**91%** (10/11)
More than 5 years	**5%** (7/130)	**2%** (1/51)	**9%** (3/32)	**6%** (2/34)	**9%** (1/11)

Participant characteristics	Total (N=140)	IT & Data Services (N=54)	Biotech & Life Sciences (N=35)	Accounting & Finance (N=37)	Seniors Care (N=11)
Indigenous status (select all that apply)					
No	**98%** (137/140)	**100%** (54/54)	**97%** (34/35)	**97%** (36/37)	**91%** (10/11)
Yes, First Nations	**1%** (1/140)	**0%**% (0/54)	**0%** (0/35)	**0%** (0/37)	**9%** (1/11)
Yes, Inuit	**0%** (0/140)	**0%** (0/54)	**0%** (0/35)	**0%** (0/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Yes, Métis	**0%** (0/140)	**0%** (0/54)	**0%** (0/35)	**0%** (0/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Another Indigenous identity	**1%** (2/140)	**0%** (0/54)	**3%** (1/35)	**3%** (1/37)	**0%** (0/11)
BIPOC status					
BIPOC	**83%** (116/140)	**80%** (43/54)	**83%** (29/35)	**84%** (31/37)	**91%** (10/11)
White/non-BIPOC	**10%** (14/140)	**15%** (8/54)	**6%** (2/35)	**8%** (3/37)	**9%** (1/11)
Another race category	**2%** (3/140)	**4%** (2/54)	**3%** (1/35)	**0%** (0/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Prefer not to answer	**5%** (7/140)	**2%** (1/54)	**9%** (3/35)	**8%** (3/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Disability					
Yes	**5%** (7/140)	**6%** (3/54)	**3%** (1/35)	**5%** (2/37)	**9%** (1/11)
No	**95%** (133/140)	**94%** (51/54)	**97%** (34/35)	**95%** (35/37)	**91%** (10/11)
Highest level of education					
No certificate, diploma or degree	**0%** (0/140)	**0%** (0/54)	**0%** (0/35)	**0%** (0/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Certificate or diploma below bachelor's level	**18%** (25/140)	**19%** (10/54)	**14%** (5/35)	**19%** (7/37)	**18%** (2/11)
University Bachelor's degree (e.g. B.A., B.A. (Hons.), B.SC., B.Ed., LL.B.)	**34%** (48/140)	**33%** (18/54)	**26%** (9/35)	**38%** (14/37)	**45%** (5/11)
University certificate, diploma or degree above bachelor level	**48%** (67/140)	**48%** (26/54)	**60%** (21/35)	**43%** (16/37)	**36%** (4/11)
Education completed outside Canada					
	87% (123/141)	**87%** (122/140)	**89%** (31/35)	**92%** (34/37)	**82%** (9/11)
First language spoken					
English	**54%** (75/139)	**57%** (30/53)	**54%** (19/35)	**54%** (20/37)	**36%** (4/11)
French	**3%** (4/139)	**4%** (2/53)	**3%** (1/35)	**3%** (1/37)	**0%** (0/11)
Other	**43%** (60/139)	**40%** (21/53)	**43%** (15/35)	**43%** (16/37)	**64%** (7/11)

Participant characteristics	Total (N=140)	IT & Data Services (N=54)	Biotech & Life Sciences (N=35)	Accounting & Finance (N=37)	Seniors Care (N=11)
Including yourself, how many people live in your household on a regular basis?					
1	**10%** (14/138)	**6%** (3/54)	**14**% (5/35)	**14%** (5/35)	**0%** (0/11)
2	**29%** (40/138)	**31%** (17/54)	**29%** (10/35)	**26%** (9/35)	**36%** (4/11)
3	**27%** (37/138)	**26%** (14/54)	**26%** (9/35)	**29%** (10/35)	**27%** (3/11)
4	**20%** (27/138)	**22%** (12/54)	**20%** (7/35)	**11%** (4/35)	**27%** (3/11)
5	**10%** (14/138)	**13%** (7/54)	**9%** (3/35)	**9%** (3/35)	**9%** (1/11)
More than 5	**4%** (6/138)	**2%** (1/54)	**3%** (1/35)	**11%** (4/35)	**0%** (0/11)
Primarily responsible for the care and upbringing of any member of your household aged 17 or under					
	89% (63/71)	**90%** (63/70)	**100%** (14/14)	**90%** (18/20)	**80%** (4/5)
Can you speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation?					
English only	**88%** (57/65)	**88%** (21/24)	**88%** (14/16)	**88%** (15/17)	**86%** (6/7)
French only	**0%** (0/65)	**0%** (0/24)	**0%**(0/16)	**0%** (0/17)	**0%** (0/7)
Both English and French	**9%** (6/65)	**8%** (2/24)	**12%** (2/16)	**12%** (2/17)	**0%** (0/7)
Neither English nor French	**3%** (2/65)	**4%** (1/24)	**0%**(0/16)	**0%** (0/17)	**14%** (1/7)
Total Household Income					
Under $20,000	**42%** (49/117)	**49%** (23/47)	**26%** (7/27)	**47%** (14/30)	**45%** (5/11)
$20,000–$40,000	**17%** (20/117)	**17%** (8/47)	**19%** (5/27)	**10%** (3/30)	**27%** (3/11)
$40,000–$60,000	**17%** (20/117)	**4%** (2/47)	**33%** (9/27)	**20%** (6/30)	**18%** (2/11)
$60,000–$80,000	**10%** (12/117)	**9%** (4/47)	**7%** (2/27)	**20%** (6/30)	**0%** (0/11)
$80,000–$100,000	**9%** (10/117)	**11%** (5/47)	**11%** (3/27)	**3%** (1/30)	9% (1/11)
Over $100,000	**5%** (6/117)	**11%** (5/47)	**4%** (1/27)	**0%** (0/30)	**0%** (0/11)
I would describe my current employment as:					
My desired role	**10%** (7/69)	**18%** (5/28)	**0%** (0/12)	**10%** (2/21)	**0%**(0/7)
A steppingstone (in my desired field, helping me progress towards my desired role)	**33%** (23/69)	**32%** (9/28)	**58%** (7/12)	**29%** (6/21)	**14%** (1/7)
Transitional or temporary (not related to my desired field or role)	**57%** (39/69)	**50%** (14/28)	**42%** (5/12)	**62%** (13/21)	**86%** (6/7)

Table C2 | Participant characteristics from the participant 8-week survey across key iterations

Participant characteristics	Cohort-based	Open enrolment	A/B testing: Open enrolment	
			Accounting & Finance (N=37)	**Seniors Care** (N=11)
Gender				
Woman	**79%** (11/14)	**53%** (67/126)	**56%** (41/73)	**49%** (26/53)
Man	**21%** (3/14)	**45%** (57/126)	**44%** (32/73)	**47%** (25/53)
Another gender category	**0%** (0/14)	**0%** (0/126)	**0%** (0/73)	**0%** (0/53)
Prefer not to answer	**0%** (0/14)	**2%** (2/126)	**0%** (0/73)	**4%** (2/53)
Province				
Ontario	**0%** (0/14)	**14%** (17/125)	**14%** (10/73)	**13%** (7/52)
British Columbia	**7%** (1/14)	**58%** (72/125)	**56%** (41/73)	**60%** (31/52)
Nova Scotia	**0%** (0/14)	**3%** (4/125)	**4%** (3/73)	**2%** (1/52)
Saskatchewan	**43%** (6/14)	**14%** (18/125)	**16%** (12/73)	**12%** (6/52)
Alberta	**0%** (0/14)	**6%** (7/125)	**4%** (3/73)	**8%** (4/52)
Manitoba	**50%** (7/14)	**1%** (1/125)	**1%** (1/73)	**0%**(0/52)
New Brunswick	**0%** (0/14)	**1%** (1/125)	**1%** (1/73)	**0%** (0/52)
Quebec	**0%** (0/14)	**0%** (0/125)	**0%** (0/73)	**0%** (0/52)
Newfoundland	**0%** (0/14)	**0%** (0/125)	**0%** (0/73)	**0%** (0/52)
Northwest Territories	**0%** (0/14)	**0%** (0/125)	**0%** (0/73)	**0%** (0/52)
I do not live in Canada	**0%** (0/14)	**4%** (5/125)	**3%** (2/73)	**6%** (3/52)
Immigration status				
Canadian citizen (by naturalization)	**0%** (0/14)	**3%** (4/126)	**3%** (2/73)	**4%** (2/53)
Canadian citizen (by birth)	**0%** (0/14)	**2%** (2/126)	**3%** (2/73)	**0%**(0/53)
Permanent resident/Landed immigrant	**71%** (10/14)	**52%** (66/126)	**58%** (42/73)	**45%** (24/53)
Refugee claimant	**0%** (0/14)	**4%** (5/126)	**4%** (3/73)	**4%** (2/53)
Temporary resident	**29%** (4/14)	**38%** (48/126)	**33%** (24/73)	**45%** (24/53)
Other	**0%** (0/14)	**1%** (1/126)	**0%** (0/73)	**2%** (1/53)
Years in Canada (for those who have landed)				
5 years or less	**100%** (14/14)	**94%** (109/116)	**93%** (65/70)	**96%** (44/46)
More than 5 years	**0%** (0/14)	**6%** (7/116)	**7%** (5/70)	4% (2/46)

Participant characteristics	Cohort-based	Open enrolment	A/B testing: Open enrolment	
			Accounting & Finance (N=37)	Seniors Care (N=11)
Indigenous Status (select all that apply)				
No	**100%** (14/14)	**98%** (123/126)	**97%** (71/73)	**98%** (52/53)
Yes, First Nations	**0%** (0/14)	**1%** (1/126)	**1%** (1/73)	**0%** (0/53)
Yes, Inuit	**0%** (0/14)	**0%** (0/126)	**0%** (0/73)	**0%** (0/53)
Yes, Métis	**0%**% (0/14)	**0%** (0/126)	**0%** (0/73)	**0%** (0/53)
Another Indigenous identity	**0%**(0/14)	**2%** (2/126)	**1%** (1/73)	**2%** (1/53)
BIPOC status				
BIPOC	**57%** (8/14)	**86%** (108/126)	**82%** (60/73)	**91%** (48/53)
White/non-BIPOC	**36%** (5/14)	**7%** (9/126)	**7%** (5/73)	**8%** (4/53)
Another race category	**0%** (0/14)	**2%** (3/126)	**4%** (3/73)	**0%** (0/53)
Prefer not to answer	**7%** (1/14)	**5%** (6/126)	**7%** (5/73)	**2%** (1/53)
Disability				
Yes	**7%** (1/14)	**5%** (6/126)	**4%** (3/73)	**6%** (3/53)
No	**93%** (13/14)	**95%** (120/126)	**96%** (70/73)	**94%** (50/53)
Highest level of education				
No certificate, diploma, or degree	**0%** (0/14)	**0%** (0/126)	**0%** (0/73)	**0%** (0/53)
Certificate or diploma below bachelor's level	**7%** (1/14)	**19%** (24/126)	**12%** (9/73)	**28%** (15/53)
University bachelor's degree (e.g. B.A., B.A. (Hons.), B.SC., B.Ed., LL.B.)	**14%** (2/14)	37% (46/126)	**41%** (30/73)	**30%** (16/53)
University certificate, diploma or degree above bachelor level	**79%** (11/14)	**44%** (56/126)	**47%** (34/73)	**42%** (22/53)
Education completed outside Canada				
	100% (14/14)	**86%** (108/126)		
First language spoken				
English	**57%** (8/14)	**54%** (67/125)	**50%** (36/72)	**58%** (31/53)
French	**0%** (0/14)	**3%** (4/125)	**3%** (2/72)	**4%** (2/53)
Other	**43%** (6/14)	**43%** (54/125)	**47%** (34/72)	**38%** (20/53)

Participant characteristics	Cohort-based	Open enrolment	A/B testing: Open enrolment	
			Accounting & Finance (N=37)	Seniors Care (N=11)
Including yourself, how many people live in your household on a regular basis?				
1	**0%** (0/14)	**11%** (14/124)	**11%** (8/72)	**12%** (6/52)
2	**14%** (2/14)	**31%** (38/124)	**32%** (23/72)	**29%** (15/52)
3	**21%** (3/14)	**27%** (34/124)	**26%** (19/72)	**29%** (15/52)
4	**43%** (6/14)	**17%** (21/124)	**17%** (12/72)	**17%** (9/52)
5	**21%** (3/14)	**9%** (11/124)	**10%** (7/72)	**8%** (4/52)
More than 5	**0%** (0/14)	**5%** (6/124)	**4%** (3/72)	**6%** (3/52)
Primarily responsible for the care and upbringing of any member of your household aged 17 or under				
	91% (10/11)	**90%** (53/59)		
Can you speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation?				
English only	**100%** (6/6)	**86%** (51/59)	**89%** (33/37)	**82%** (18/22)
French only	**0%** (0/6)	**0%** (0/59)	**0%** (0/37)	**0%** (0/22)
Both English and French	**0%** (0/6)	**10%** (6/59)	**5%** (2/37)	**18%** (4/22)
Neither English nor French	**0%** (0/6)	**3%** (2/59)	**5%** (2/37)	**0%** (0/22)
Total household Income				
Under $20,000	**67%** (6/9)	**40%** (43/108)	**36%** (24/66)	**45%** (19/42)
$20,000–$40,000	**0%** (0/9)	**19%** (20/108)	**17%** (11/66)	**21%** (9/42)
$40,000–$60,000	**0%** (0/9)	**19%** (20/108)	**21%** (14/66)	**14%** (6/42)
$60,000–$80,000	**22%** (2/9)	**9%** (10/108)	**9%** (6/66)	**10%** (4/42)
$80,000–$100,000	**0%** (0/9)	**9%** (10/108)	**11%** (7/66)	**7%** (3/42)
Over $100,000	**11%** (1/9)	**5%** (5/108)	**6%** (4/66)	**2%** (1/42)

Table C3 | Participant characteristics across from administrative data across key iterations

Participant characteristics	Cohort -based (N=31)	Open enrolment (N=497)	A/B testing: Open enrolment		PFWIC standalone (N=195)
			A/B: Standard (N=286)	A/B: Time-limited (N=211)	
Age (average = 36)					
18–24	**3%** (1/30)	**8%** (40/495)	**7%** (20/285)	**10%** (20/210)	**3%** (6/192)
25–29	**7%** (2/30)	**13%** (63/495)	**11%** (30/285)	**16%** (33/210)	**19%** (36/192)
30–39	**53%** (16/30)	**46%** (228/495)	**49%** (139/285)	**42%** (89/210)	**51%** (97/192)
40–49	**20%** (6/30)	**26%** (131/495)	**27%** (76/285)	**26%** (55/210)	**23%** (44/192)
50+	**17%** (5/30)	**7%** (33/495)	**7%** (20/285)	**6%** (13/210)	**5%** (9/192)
Average	39	36	37	36	35
Arrival status					
Pre-Arrival	**0%** (0/31)	**9%** (45/497)	**8%** (22/286)	**11%** (23/211)	**7%** (13/195)
Post-Arrival	**100%** (31/31)	**91%** (452/497)	**92%** (264/286)	**89%** (188/211)	**93%** (182/195)
Stream (excluding PFWIC standalone)					
Biotech & Life Sciences	**13%** (4/31)	**19%** (94/497)	**19%** (54/286)	**19%** (40/211)	na
IT & Data Services	**45%** (14/31)	**40%** (200/497)	**40%** (113/286)	**41%** (87/211)	na
Accounting & Finance	**39%** (12/31)	**26**% (131/497)	**28%** (81/286)	**24%** (50/211)	na
Culinary Arts	**3%** (1/31)	**2%** (10/497)	**2%** (6/286)	**2%** (4/211)	na
Seniors Care	**0%** (0/31)	**12%** (62/497)	**11%** (32/286)	**14%** (30/211)	na
PFWIC Standalone module	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**100%** (195/195)
Referral source					
Service Delivery Partners (SDPs)	**97%** (30/31)	**40%** (200/496)	**38%** (109/285)	**43%** (91/211)	**88%** (172/195)
Other (social media, IRCC, professional network, etc.)	**3%** (1/31)	**56%** (280/496)	**59%** (167/285)	**54%** (113/211)	**5%** (9/195)
School/College/University	**0%** (0/31)	**3%**(16/496)	**3%** (9/285)	**3%** (7/211)	**7%** (14/195)
Home country (excluding Canada)					
India	**16%** (5/31)	**23%** (112/497)	**26%** (73/286)	**18%** (39/211)	**20%** (39/195)
Nigeria	**13%** (4/31)	10% (52/497)	**9%** (25/286)	**13%** (27/211)	**7%** (14/195)
Iran	**0%** (0/31)	**6%** (31/497)	**7%** (19/286)	**6%** (12/211)	**10%** (19/195)
China	**3%** (1/31)	**6%** (29/497)	**6%** (16/286)	**6%** (13/211)	**6%** (12/195)
Ukraine	**29%** (9/31)	**5%** (25/497)	**6%** (17/286)	**4%** (8/211)	**3%** (5/195)

Source. Administrative data

Appendix D

Table D1 | Effects of program completion on program satisfaction

Variable	Overall satisfaction (n=137)		Likelihood to recommend (n=137)	
	Estimate	p-value	Estimate	p-value
Intercept	2.89	<0.001	3.45	<0.001
Program completed	0.30	0.14	0.66	<0.01
Version: Time-limited (reference: Standard)	-0.12	0.56	-0.16	0.41
Version: Cohort-based (reference: Standard)	0.27	0.42	-0.02	0.94
Stream: Biotech (reference: Seniors Care)	0.69	0.08	0.73	0.05
Stream: Accounting (reference: Seniors Care)	0.65	0.09	0.67	0.07
Stream: IT (reference: Seniors Care)	0.78	0.04	0.90	0.01

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