

Part 5 | Submitting an E-Application

I do want to comment specifically around the completeness of applications. As I mentioned there's probably about a fifth of applications being rejected right now for various reasons. With respect to Section 11.2 or ERPA, this sets out the framework supporting the Express entry system, and it also talks about an officer not issuing a visa to an applicant who doesn't meet the minimum entry criteria for their specific stream or they don't possess the qualifications for which their score was issued at the outset. So if you've got someone who enters a profile, sets out their education and then ultimately when it gets to the application stage they can't provide proof that they've completed their degree for example. Then their applications going to be rejected because they either misrepresented or the information wasn't available.

The comprehensive ranking score is locked at the time of the invitation to apply as well as at the time of the electronic application, and they will compare the scores in between and make sure that the information is consistent, and the person hasn't gone below. In addition to looking at the minimum entry criteria and the comprehensive ranking score, they will also look at Regulation 10 and make sure that the applicant has actually submitted all of the required documents for an application. So that includes the full online application (so what used to be our application forms now is actually the online application), the cost recovery fee, as well as all of the supporting documentation that's required for that particular program as well as that person's personal circumstances.

If there is something missing, it's a one touch approach right now - that application will be rejected. There is no room for error on this at all. So if you upload the wrong document to the box (for example the box for birth certificate or passport), if you're missing a passport that application's going to get rejected. So you have to be extremely careful that you're uploading and have a way of saving documents so that you're not mistakenly uploading the wrong document to the profile. For myself in terms of required documents I've gotten in the habit of actually including them with my submission letter. So it may be a second copy of some of them. But just to make sure that we're not getting anything bounced on Regulation 10. And the reason I say that is because I have actually seen, while completing an electronic application, my document checklist change three times. So even as I'm typing an application in, there was something wrong with the portal on that day, and that checklist kept changing. Part of it depends on how you're answering questions but in my case the questions were all answered, but as we were uploading documents that checklist was changing. And what happened was some of the fields disappeared. And so I have had cases where the passport field has disappeared. And so as a result what I've had to do is be overly cautious and so I touch my passports, my marriage certificate, my employment offer, my LMIA to my submission letter and upload that as one package to

the additional documents field, so that I know, with confidence, that it's all there in one attachment.

I've had individuals come back to me after they've submitted on their own, and come for help after, where they had uploaded, for example, a copy of a translation of a document, but forgot to attach the original. And in their minds they said, well they've got the translation so I didn't think I had to attach the foreign language copy. It got bounced. So when I say there's zero room for error, there is zero room for error here. What happens is when you go to submit the electronic application, you're given a personalized checklist for that individual. Go through that checklist. Ask yourself, "Does this make sense, is something missing." If you've indicated this person's married and it's not asking you for a marriage certificate, then there's something wrong with the portal that day. So you have to be extra vigilant and diligent in double checking that checklist and making sure that you're enclosing all of the required documents that would normally be requested for an application for permanent residence.

Luckily in the last couple months I think the portal has become more stable. But like I said I've seen cases where it's changing in front of me. So just be cautious and if something doesn't look right, upload the extra documents to your submission letter.

Q: So the question was do I take a copy of the checklist with the uploaded documents?

A: 100% I do. Before I actually hit submit on an application I have screenshotted every single one of the questions. I have a copy of the checklist with my documents uploaded so that it's got the document title, and then I keep that package with a copy of all the documents that were attached and we save that in our document management system as a full application. I mentioned earlier the fact that you can't print a full application, so what we've been doing is using the snipping tool which we have on most of our computers (which I just learned about!). It's very easy to cut and paste screenshots and save them, so what I do is I save them into a Word document and then I send that to the client before I hit submit, so that they can review every question to make sure that it's accurate. Then I hit submit. I actually have them sign and initial that document so that I know they've reviewed it. If something goes wrong you need to have that copy of that application to go back to Citizenship and Immigration to be able to say to them, "Look this is what I submitted, this is what the system was showing me at the time". If there was something wrong it's not because I didn't do my due diligence.

So what's included in the electronic application? So it's at this stage that you are going to be fortunate enough to have to enter in all the addresses and the travel history and the full employment history. Interestingly they've only left fields for thirty trips. For someone who is a frequent traveler, that is not enough. Be careful - when you're filling in these

questions in the field, if you go past the maximum number, it will likely either freeze your profile, or it will delete all your data and you'll have to start over again. So there are thirty fields, anything beyond that I'm including in a separate schedule and attaching that as one of my uploaded documents with my submission letter. So if you've got someone who travels monthly for work trips for example, they're going to far exceed that list of trips very quickly. I've got an Excel spreadsheet with a travel history schedule, an address history, and an employment history. I send that to my clients with my questionnaire (which you guys will also be provided), and I ask them to provide that to me in an Excel spreadsheet. And then anything that I can't fit into that online tool, I'm including in the spreadsheet. But we learn the hard way! A few times where we imported too many entries, and then it deleted or froze the profile and we had to start over. So just be careful about that.

You're going to have sixty days to compile and submit the supplication

Q: The comment was, with respect to employment verification, if you've entered multiple employment past employment at the profile stage, will generate multiple fields to upload documents within that person's individual checklist to verify that employment experience.

A: That's absolutely correct. So if you've got someone who's had five separate jobs, when you enter it at the profile stage it will trigger a field for each of those five jobs to upload the employment verification letter. Those letters are being reviewed and I have least at the outset there was a couple of applications that were rejected because the letters didn't include all the required information. If the officer can't assess past employment based on the information you provide, then that may result in a refusal because the individual's not going to get the points for that employment.

So you do have to be careful in reviewing those employment verification letters and make sure that it includes all the required information. If you can't get it because the employer doesn't exist anymore or there's no contacts or they refuse to put salary, use whatever documents are available. So if there's past tax documentation substantiating that job, if there's an employment contract, if there's performance reviews, if there is a promotion letter - anything that you can gather in terms of information related to that job. Make sure that you're providing that and uploading that together instead of the letter if you can't get it.

Q: The other comment was with respect to language results and that those aren't specifically being requested to upload.

A: That's true. I typically will include the language results as part of my submission letter, so I'll upload them separately. But you are entering that language information and the test results as well as the test date number into the system, so the presumption is that they should be leveraging that information and verifying that independently. But I have seen

some requests for copies of language testing following. So you may very well get that. If you're nervous that you've missed something, what you can do is (if you've got a pending application, not the profile stage but the application state) use the case specific inquiry tool to go in and upload documents. That is matching up with the files. So if you use that case status inquiry tool, enter your express entry number, indicate that there's an additional document - I've been doing that with police clearance certificates as well that haven't been received up front at the time of the application. Upload those additional documents to that case status inquiry tool and it is making it to the file. So go ahead and do that. There's no harm, and it will make it back to the files. You have the file number at the time you create the profile and at the time that you submit the application, so there's no downside to using that tool. And in fact Immigration is encouraging everyone to use that tool of the first point of contact with respect to any express entry files. The only downside is that they are taking about thirty days to respond back to those inquiries. But at least we know that those documents are making it to the file. Make sure that you do take screenshots if you're doing that as well just so that you have a record that it has been submitted.

Q: The question was can you use that case status inquiry tool to be able to upload documents at any point.

A: At the Express Entry profile stage, you're just manually entering information - there's no supporting documents at that stage, so it's unlikely (unless there was a marriage or something else that happened in between that you wanted to bring to their attention) that you would upload something between that time frame when you've created the profile and the Express Entry application. So I could see using that tool if there's a specific change and it's something that you can't modify in the profile, or if it's in between that invitation and the actual application. Otherwise primarily would use that tool for the application itself and any documents that you needed or information needed to provide subsequent.

In terms of additional documents that you're going to require at the application stage, you will need to provide the marriage certificate. For children's birth certificates, make sure that they are the long form birth certificates that list the parents' names. Some countries have a short form of birth certificate and they will reject an application if you have the wrong birth certificate. Make sure that you are looking at those documents. It's not every country but there are definitely a number of them that issue short form birth certificates. Some of them are referred to as the unabridged version as well.

Your employment verification and reference letters - you may ultimately for current roles, upload the same letter for both past verification and job offer. That's OK, as long as it includes all of the information that's required for both of those documents but you can upload the same employer letter if needed.

Copies of passports. Education credential. Police certificates. This is a little bit different when I say one touch - again police certificates are a little bit of a difficult area right now. The expectation is that you're providing police certificates and uploading copies of those at the time of the application. We all know that some countries take a lot longer than others and in particular I'm thinking of F.B.I. certificates from the US right now that are taking about four months.

It's conceivable that you would have an application and the timing as such you need to submit it, and you don't have your police certificate. Use that case status inquiry tool to upload copies of police certificates if you get them following. But also advise your clients that it is within the officer's discretion to refuse that application as being incomplete if the certificate's not there. If you don't have it, provide proof that you've requested it, or what efforts you've made to get the police certificate. Provide that in writing and if it's a country that Citizenship and Immigration has to request from directly, New Zealand would be an example, you don't have to worry about those ones that's OK. It's the ones where the expectation is that the applicant's applying, you need to provide proof of efforts. It's not guaranteed and you need to advise your client as such, but most of the applications I've had with F.B.I.s pending they have maintained that application and kept it in processing until we were able to get that certificate. But it's not guaranteed and it's not likely to be guaranteed for every country. Just be cautious about that because the officers will be looking to see whether this person applied the day after they got there ITA or did they apply the day before they submitted their electronic application.

Q: The question was around F.B.I. certificates and whether or not Citizenship and Immigration will accept a channeler certificate (so that's a certificate from a third party, authorized channeler that is able to access the F.B.I. database and print results from there). Whether that's acceptable or whether or not you actually need to obtain an F.B.I. clearance directly from the F.B.I.

A: My experience is that for permanent residence, they will not accept channeler certificates. Where I will use channeler certificates is more on the temporary side - so if I've got, for example, a DUI at the port of entry and I'm applying for a temporary resident permit, typically that is acceptable. But I would not use it for permanent residence. It's been made very clear they will not accept it.\

Q: So the question was around the assessments that are coming back from one of the agencies and that it's not coming back in clear language as equivalent to specific Canadian education. So as an example it's saying it's equivalent to three years of training as opposed to a specific degree or diploma.

A: I would go back to the agency and continue to do what you're doing and inquire with them. I would also raise it with case management if it's an ongoing issue with that particular agency and send an email to the case management branch at NHQ in Ottawa and alert them to the fact that this is happening, so that it's on their radar as well. But if they're coming back and saying that it's equivalent to on the job training, as an example, I don't think you will get the points for education and unfortunately that would be discounted. If they're not recognizing that as equivalent to Canadian education I think that's what they're ultimately coming back and saying although they're saying it in a vague way.

Q: Implied status and Express Entry.

A: I'm trying to conceive of where that might be an issue. So if the person meets the base criteria for one of the economic streams then that's acceptable. If they're in implied status they likely wouldn't get the points for example for arranged employment at that time. They have to be in valid status in order to get those points if they're trying to rely on an offer from within Canada. So I could see that potentially being an issue. Usually it's more of an issue for someone who doesn't have an option to extend their status further, and so ultimately they may qualify at the time they apply but they may not still be in country by the time it goes through.

So the application itself must be submitted online. And the intention is for you to upload your support documents at the time. So there isn't an option to actually mail in a permanent residence application anymore, unless you're going through one of the provincial nominee programs and it's non express entry. The only time that you would mail in additional documents, and again Citizenship and Immigration has clarified this isn't their preference, is if you're specifically requested to do so. For example at the end of the process, for landing, if you're asked to submit passports or photographs that would be something that you mail in to the actual processing center. But beyond that the intention is for you to upload documents.

Q: If the sixty days to apply passes, what happens? Does the candidate need to start again?

A: So if the sixty days goes by and you don't get your application in on time, that invitation will no longer be valid and, unlike declining an invitation, that person's profile becomes deactivated. The information will stay there for thirty days so they can go back in and update and reactivate a profile, but they will have lost the opportunity to use that invitation to apply, and their profile won't automatically be extended so they have to actually go back in and update their profile.

Q: So the question was if you're uploading documents and it's in a foreign language other than French or English do you need to include the translation?

A: Yes absolutely. The intention is to include both the translation as well as the original document. So a copy of the original document. Historically before we had the online system you would send in the original plus a translation, so you would do the same for this process. So you would just upload those documents together as a single PDF.