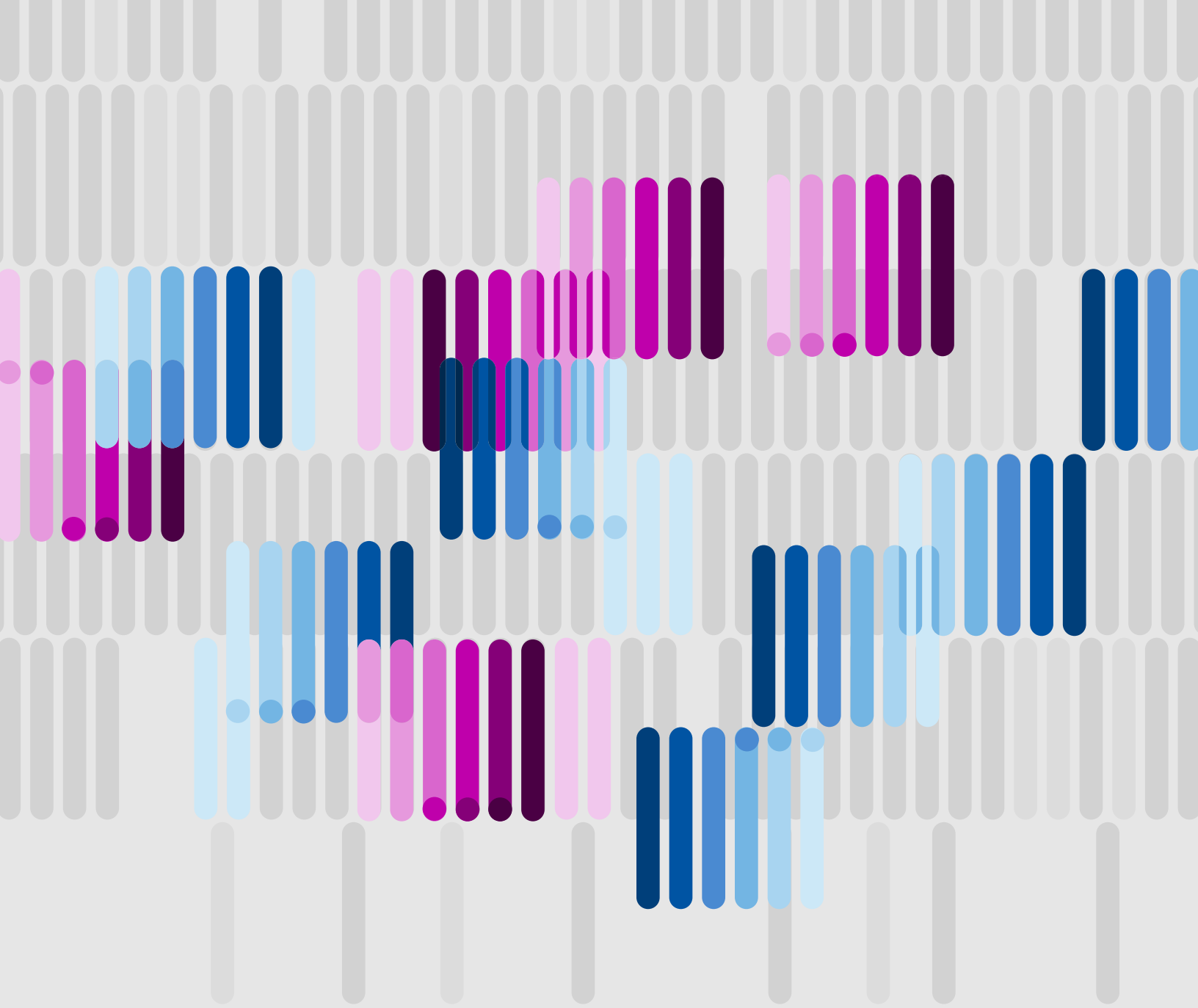


Facilitating Access to Skilled Talent (FAST)

Phase 3: Interim Report 2

October 2026

Future Skills Centre | Centre des Compétences futures

Blueprint

Acknowledgements

About the Future Skills Centre

The Future Skills Centre 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 groups, 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 Signal49 Research, and are funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program.

About Blueprint

Blueprint helps leaders use data and evidence to tackle complex public policy challenges across Canada.

We partner with government, community, philanthropic, and industry leaders to strengthen public systems and deliver better outcomes. We bring together policy analysts, evaluators, economists, data scientists, and implementation experts—people who know how to turn insight into action. Our work is grounded in deep subject-matter expertise, rigorous methods, and a real-world understanding of how systems operate and evolve. More than just an advisor, we're also partners in change. We provide key support at every stage of the policy and program lifecycle: from early strategy and design to implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

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

Facilitating Access to Skilled Talent (FAST): Phase 3: Interim Report 2 is funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program.

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The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

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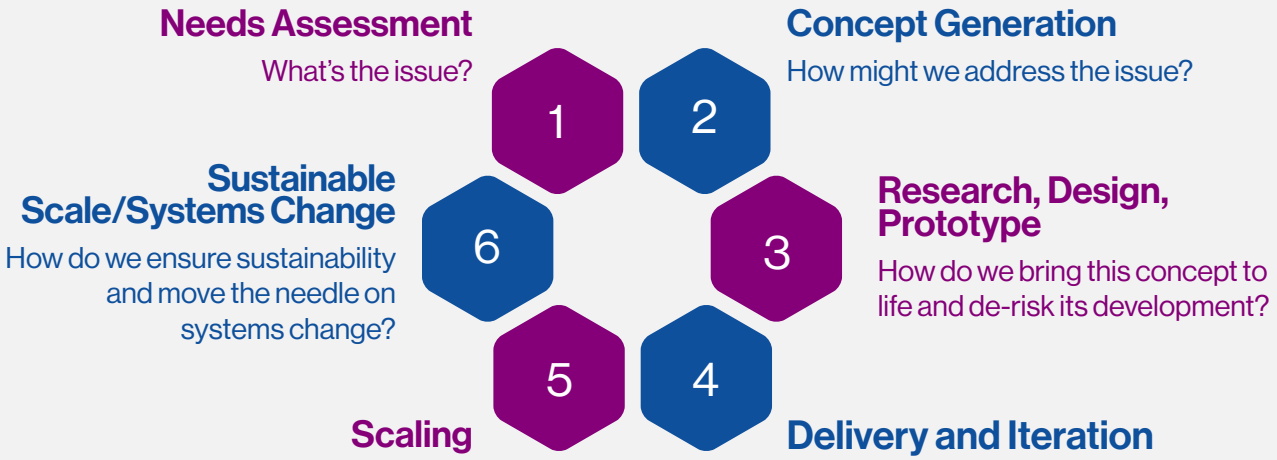
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Preface

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 11 organizations to support their scaling efforts. Blueprint works closely with each grantee to generate ongoing evidence, moving beyond the traditional 'one study at a time' approach to support continuous 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





1. Introduction

Launched in 2015, Facilitating Access to Skilled Talent (FAST) is an online, occupational bridging program developed by the Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC). IEC-BC is a nonprofit that works with employers, governments, and other partners to help BC employers attract, hire, and retain skilled immigrant talent.

FAST is designed to help skilled newcomers translate their international education and experience into employment that makes appropriate use of their skills and help employers access immigrant talent. It provides flexible, self-paced, occupation-specific assessments and resources across six sector streams. Across each stream, participants learn about Canadian workplace culture and assess how their competencies align with occupational requirements. Participants identify potential skills gaps, access referrals to relevant credentials, and receive job-search and career-navigation resources.

1.1. About this report

This report is part of Blueprint's Scaling Up Skills Development portfolio, an initiative funded by the Future Skills Centre (FSC). It presents findings from data gathered from April 2024 to September 2026. It follows up on our *Phase 3 Interim Report* (April 2025), which presented early findings on participant reach, experiences, and outcomes for two structured delivery approaches of FAST: a time-limited version and a cohort-based model. It also presented findings from a standalone workplace-culture module developed for international students and temporary workers.

This second *Interim Report* updates those findings, drawing on responses to eight-week and three-month follow-up surveys from participants who enrolled in FAST by summer 2025. It also presents findings on longer-term employment and earnings outcomes for participants who received FAST between 2019 and 2021 by linking their program records to Statistics Canada's Longitudinal Immigration Database. Our analysis examines whom FAST reached and compares participants' employment and earnings with those of similar immigrants who received employment services funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). It also examines outcomes for participants who received FAST alone and those who received FAST and IRCC-funded employment services.

This report has the following sections:

- **Context (pp. 7–8)** describes the labour market needs and opportunities shaping FAST.
- **About FAST (pp. 9–19)** explains FAST's purpose, evolution, design, partnerships, intended outcomes, and scaling journey.
- **Methodology (pp. 20–29)** outlines Blueprint's evidence generation approach, learning agenda, data sources, analytical methods, and limitations.
- **Findings: Phase 3 (pp. 30–37)** presents findings on program reach, participant experiences, and early employment and earnings outcomes for the time-limited version of FAST and the cohort-based model, tested between 2024 and 2026.
- **Findings: Linked administrative data analysis (pp. 38–43)** presents findings on the characteristics and longer-term employment and earnings outcomes of FAST participants from 2019 to 2021 compared with immigrants who accessed IRCC employment services.
- **Discussion and conclusions (pp. 44–48)** summarizes our findings, identifies conclusions, and considers their implications for FAST's future delivery and scaling.



"FAST is designed to help skilled newcomers translate their international education and experience into employment that makes appropriate use of their skills."

2. Context:
Connecting skilled newcomers to the Canadian labour market



IEC-BC designed FAST in response to three related labour market trends:

1. immigration helps Canada meet its labour market needs and supports economic growth;
2. however, many skilled newcomers face barriers to finding employment that reflects their education, skills, and experience; and
3. newcomers need accessible, occupation-specific support to help them translate their international experience into the Canadian labour market.

Immigration is a key part of Canada's labour market strategy.

Canada's immigration policies are intended in part to help meet labour market needs and support economic growth. The federal government plans to admit 380,000 permanent residents annually from 2026 to 2028, with economic immigration accounting for approximately 63% to 64% of admissions.[i] Economic immigration programs increasingly prioritize people with the education, skills, and work experience needed in high-demand occupations.

Immigration will continue to be an important source of workers as Canada's population ages and retirements create new job openings. Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) projects approximately 8.1 million job openings between 2024 and 2033, including 4.3 million resulting from retirements. Occupations at risk of shortages are concentrated in healthcare, natural and applied sciences, construction, transportation, and skilled trades. Specific occupations facing shortage risks include home-support workers, cybersecurity specialists, cooks, and numerous skilled trades.[ii]

Many skilled newcomers face barriers to finding employment using their skills and experience.

Many newcomers arrive with substantial education and relevant work experience. In 2024, 82.2% of recent working-age immigrants had a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree when they arrived in Canada. Among those with post-secondary education (PSE), 84.2% had at least one year of work experience related to their education before arriving.[iii]

However, these qualifications and experiences do not consistently translate into comparable employment. In the third quarter of 2024, the employment rate among recent working-age immigrants was 75.5% versus 85.4% among people

of the same age born in Canada. Recent immigrant employees earned an average of $29.97 per hour—23.7% less than the $39.29 earned by Canadian-born employees.[iv] Newcomers who find work may also be employed in jobs that do not fully use their qualifications. In 2024 and 2025, 32.6% of recent immigrants aged 25 to 54 with PSE reported being overqualified for their jobs versus 19.1% of Canadian-born workers.[v]

These differences reflect several interconnected barriers. Recent immigrants report difficulties related to a lack of Canadian work experience and references, limited professional networks, and employers not recognizing international qualifications or experience. They may also need to learn unfamiliar occupational requirements, credentialing processes, job-search practices, and workplace expectations. Among recent immigrants who had trouble finding their first job, 42.2% identified a lack of Canadian experience or references as a barrier, 38.3% identified a lack of labour market connections, and 31.9% reported that qualifications obtained outside Canada were not accepted. [vi]

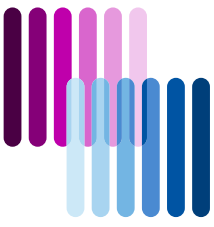
Canada's immigration strategy depends on newcomers being able to find work that reflects their education, skills, and previous experience. When internationally trained workers cannot find commensurate employment, their earnings and opportunities for career progression are limited and their skills and experience are underused in the Canadian economy.

Skilled newcomers may need occupation-specific bridging support alongside broader settlement and employment services.

Settlement and employment services provide immigrants with important support for preparing for and finding work, including career planning, job-search assistance, networking, mentorship, work placements, and navigating credential recognition. However, some skilled newcomers also need more tailored support to enter a particular occupation or find work that reflects their previous education and experience.

Occupation-specific bridging support can help newcomers understand how their international qualifications and experience align with Canadian occupational requirements. It can help them navigate credentialling and certification processes, assess their existing competencies and potential gaps, and become familiar with workplace culture and employer expectations. These supports address a different part of the employment pathway than general job-search assistance. They can be provided alongside broader settlement and employment services.

In the next section, we describe how FAST was designed to respond to these needs.



"Canada's immigration strategy depends on newcomers being able to find work that reflects their education, skills, and previous experience."



3. About FAST

This section describes FAST's purpose, evolution, model, intended outcomes, and participant journey. It reviews its development from initial launch in BC through its expansion into new sectors and regions. It summarizes evidence generated during earlier evaluations and the testing of new delivery approaches during its third phase of FSC-funded delivery. It also explains whom FAST serves, how participants move through the program, and how IEC-BC works with industry and service delivery partners to support participants.

3.1. Program purpose, evolution, and scaling

FAST was designed to help skilled newcomers understand how their international education and experience relate to Canadian occupational requirements and workplace expectations. It is not a training or reskilling program. Instead, it helps participants assess their existing competencies, identify gaps, and access information that can support their entry into the Canadian labour market.

Since launching FAST, IEC-BC expanded the program into new sectors, regions, and populations. It developed new partnerships and resources, tailored content to different industries and labour markets, and tested different delivery methods.

IEC-BC has consistently used evidence to learn from and improve FAST. It has drawn on feedback from participants and partners, employers, and evaluation findings to understand what was working, where participants needed more support, and what to test next. IEC-BC has acted on this evidence by strengthening sector-specific content and partnerships and introducing new delivery approaches.

Three phases of FSC funding have supported this ongoing cycle of testing, learning, adaptation, and the continued development of FAST's evidence base.

3.1.1. Initial development and launch

IEC-BC launched FAST in BC in 2015. The program was designed for skilled immigrants preparing to work in Canada, including newcomers who had not yet arrived. It responded to a common challenge facing internationally trained professionals: understanding how their previous education, skills, and experience aligned with occupational requirements in Canada.

FAST initially offered three sector streams: IT & Data Services, Biotechnology & Life Sciences, and Skilled Trades. FAST was delivered online and designed to be flexible and self-paced. It combined information about Canadian workplace culture with occupation-specific assessments and resources. These helped participants understand expectations in their target occupation, assess their existing competencies against Canadian requirements, identify gaps, and determine next steps.

IEC-BC worked with industry partners to ensure that FAST's occupation-specific content reflected Canadian workplace and sector requirements. It also worked with immigrant-serving organizations to connect eligible newcomers to the program. This combination of online delivery, industry-informed content, and referral partnerships made up the core model that IEC-BC would expand and refine over time.

3.1.2. First FSC-funded expansion and early evidence

In 2019, IEC-BC received its first grant from FSC. Funding supported the addition of two sector streams, Accounting & Finance and Culinary Arts, bringing the number of streams to five. It also supported FAST's expansion beyond BC into Manitoba, Ontario, and Nova Scotia.

Blueprint evaluated this first phase of FAST expansion between November 2019 and March 2021. Our evaluation examined how participants and service delivery partners experienced the program and identified opportunities to strengthen its design and delivery. Findings were presented in an *Evaluation Report* (February 2022).

The evaluation found that participants valued FAST, particularly its support for understanding Canadian workplace culture. It also recommended that IEC-BC provide more targeted, sector-specific content and continue to invest in sustainable partnerships with organizations that referred and supported participants. IEC-BC carried these priorities into the next phase by developing a new sector stream with an industry partner and working with regional partners to further expand and tailor the program.

3.1.3. Expansion through the Scaling Up Skills Development portfolio

In 2021, IEC-BC received a second FSC grant to continue expanding and evaluating FAST through the Scaling Up Skills Development portfolio. This phase ran from September 2021 to March 2024. It shifted the focus from testing the early model to strengthening its implementation and developing a better understanding of participant experiences and outcomes over time.

Reflecting the earlier emphasis on sector-specific content and stronger partnerships, IEC-BC worked with BC Care Providers—an organization familiar with the sector's occupations, regulations, credentials, and employer needs—to develop a Seniors Care stream, bringing the total number of streams to six. IEC-BC also partnered with New Brunswick Community College to expand FAST into New Brunswick and tailor it to the province's labour market and settlement contexts.

Blueprint then examined program reach, participant experiences, and early employment outcomes. We conducted a nine-month follow-up survey and interviews with industry and service delivery partners. Findings were presented in a *Phase 2 Interim Report* (April 2023) and a *Phase 2 Final Report* (September 2024).

Those reports highlighted several program strengths. Participants valued its free, flexible, and self-paced design, and consistently identified the workplace-culture content as one of its most useful components. At the same time, findings identified opportunities to encourage greater engagement and rates of completion. Participants wanted clearer guidance on how to move through the program, more contact with IEC-BC staff, and opportunities to connect with peers, mentors, and employers. Participants and partners also emphasized that occupation-specific content and employment connections needed to reflect local industries and labour markets. IEC-BC used these findings to shape the next phase of FAST.

3.1.4. Testing more structured delivery and reaching new populations

Phase 3 illustrates IEC-BC's continuous improvement. In April 2024, IEC-BC received a third FSC grant, using findings from the previous phase to identify and test adaptations. In response to opportunities to encourage greater engagement and completion, provide more interaction and guidance, and make valued program content available to a broader population, IEC-BC introduced three variations for Blueprint to evaluate:

- **A time-limited model.** Participants were randomly assigned to receive either eight weeks of access to FAST or the standard one year of access. Our evaluation examined whether a shorter, more clearly defined timeline increased participant engagement and completion.
- **A cohort-based model.** IEC-BC introduced a more structured version of FAST. The model brought together cohorts of approximately 15 participants who completed the eight-week, time-limited version with shared start and end dates. An IEC-BC facilitator coordinated group sessions and opportunities for participants to interact. The FAST content remained the same.
- **A standalone workplace-culture module.** IEC-BC offered the existing 'Prepare for Work in Canada' module separately from the full FAST program. This version was designed for international students and temporary workers—groups not part of FAST's traditional target population. IEC-BC worked with post-secondary institutions to refer participants and explored whether the module could serve as a tailored resource and an introduction to the broader FAST program.

Alongside these variations, IEC-BC continued working with employers and regional partners to strengthen the relevance of FAST's content and employment connections.

Blueprint's *Phase 3 Interim Report* (April 2025) presented early findings on all three variations. This *Interim Report* updates findings on the time-limited and cohort-based models. Findings from the standalone workplace-culture module are not included in this report; its evaluation was completed in the previous *Interim Report*.

Table 1 shows key milestones in the evolution and scaling of FAST.

Table 1 | The evolution of FAST

Year(s) and phases	Key milestones
2015–2019	• IEC-BC launches FAST in BC with three streams: IT & Data Services, Biotechnology & Life Sciences, and Skilled Trades.
Phase 1: Nov. 2019–March 2021	• IEC-BC receives its first FSC grant. • IEC-BC adds the Accounting & Finance and Culinary Arts streams. • FAST expands into Manitoba, Ontario, and Nova Scotia.
Phase 2: Sept. 2021–March 2024	• IEC-BC receives its second FSC grant. • IEC-BC works with BC Care Providers Association to add a Seniors Care stream. • IEC-BC partners with New Brunswick Community College to expand and tailor FAST to New Brunswick.
Phase 3: Apr. 2024–Sept. 2026	• IEC-BC receives its third FSC grant. • IEC-BC introduces three program variations for testing: an eight-week time-limited model, an eight-week cohort-based model, and a standalone workplace-culture module for international students and temporary workers.



"FAST responded to a common challenge facing internationally trained professionals: understanding how their previous education, skills, and experience aligned with occupational requirements in Canada."

3.2. Program design

This section describes FAST's target population and eligibility criteria, enrolment process, sector streams, components, partnerships, participant journey, and intended outcomes. It focuses on the standard, time-limited, and cohort-based models. The standalone workplace-culture module is described in **section 3.1.4**.

3.2.1. Target population and eligibility

FAST is designed for skilled immigrants preparing to work in Canada in one of its six sector streams. Participants can enrol before or after arriving in Canada. To be eligible, applicants must have been approved to immigrate to Canada and possess between two and five years of work experience related to one of FAST's streams.

IEC-BC recommends that participants have a Canadian Language Benchmark of at least 6 but does not require them to provide a language certificate. IEC-BC and its partners may consider language ability alongside applicants' work experience, digital skills, motivation, and readiness to pursue employment in their chosen sector.

3.2.2. Recruitment and admissions

Recruitment. Participants learn about FAST through IEC-BC, case workers, settlement workers, and other service delivery partners. Referral partners help identify newcomers who may benefit from FAST, assess their suitability and eligibility, explain the program, and refer them to IEC-BC. Participants may also learn about FAST through social media, IRCC, and their professional networks.

Registration and enrolment. Interested participants register online and enrol in the sector stream that aligns with their work experience and intended occupation in Canada. FAST's standard delivery model operates through open enrolment, allowing participants to begin without waiting for a scheduled cohort.

Recruitment and enrolment differed across the three delivery models examined in this report:

- **Standard and time-limited models.** Participants entered FAST through the same open-enrolment process. Participants were randomly assigned after enrolment to receive either eight weeks or one year of access. The two groups followed the same eligibility and recruitment processes.
- **Cohort-based model.** Participants were recruited through selected immigrant-serving referral partners rather than through open enrolment. IEC-BC grouped referrals into cohorts with shared start and end dates. Participants followed the same eligibility criteria as other FAST participants.

Cost. FAST is free for participants.

3.2.3. Program components and sector streams

FAST offers six sector streams developed in response to employer-identified labour market needs: Accounting & Finance, Biotechnology & Life Sciences, Culinary Arts, IT & Data Services, Seniors Care, and Skilled Trades.

Each stream contains a different combination of workplace-culture content, essential and technical competency assessments, and referrals to credentials and employment supports. Industry partners help IEC-BC develop and maintain the occupation-specific content. **Table 2** summarizes the main components and the streams in which they are available.

Table 2 | FAST program components

Component	Description	Available sector streams
Workplace culture and essential skills	Introduces participants to Canadian culture and workplace practices. Includes essential skills competency assessments.	• Accounting & Finance • IT & Data Services • Biotechnology & Life Sciences
Technical competency assessments	Assesses participants' occupation-specific skills, strengths, and gaps using content developed with industry partners, including the Information and Communications Technology Council, BioTalent Canada, and the BC Care Providers Association.	• Accounting & Finance • Biotechnology & Life Sciences • Culinary Arts • Skilled Trades
Referrals for skills credentials	Refers those who complete all FAST modules to industry partners for credentialing services, such as IT professional designations and Microsoft certifications, BioTalent Canada's BioReady certification, and assessments offered through the BC Care Providers Association.	• IT & Data Services • Biotechnology & Life Sciences • Seniors Care
Connections to job search and career navigation supports	Provides participants with links to adjacent IEC-BC services, such as BC JobConnect and MentorConnect.[1] Through these services, participants can apply for job opportunities, connect with professionals in their fields, and receive information about IEC-BC employment events via email.	All sector streams

1 Participants outside BC are referred to similar service providers in their region. Although adjacent IEC-BC services are available to all FAST participants, the job postings, mentors, and events offered through these services are based in BC and therefore primarily benefit participants living in the province. These services are not formally part of Blueprint's FAST evaluation, but participants and service delivery partners frequently discussed them in interviews.

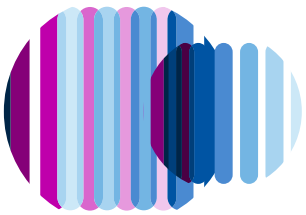
FAST is designed to be flexible. Participants complete online content at their own pace, focusing on the modules and resources most relevant to their needs.

The three delivery models examined in this report offered the same sector-specific FAST content but differed in their timelines and level of structure, as noted in **section 3.1.4**. In the standard model, participants received one year of access and completed at their own pace; in the time-limited model, participants received eight weeks of access only; and in the cohort-based model, participants received eight weeks of access in small groups with shared start and end dates, attending sessions led by IEC-BC facilitators and with chances to interact with other participants.

Industry and employer engagement. Industry and employer input helps IEC-BC keep FAST aligned with Canadian workplace expectations and labour market needs. Employer feedback informs the selection of FAST's sector streams. Industry partners help develop occupation-specific content and competency assessments and provide credentialing or assessment services in selected streams. IEC-BC's employer relationships also help connect participants with job postings, employment events, and professionals working in their fields.

Service delivery partnerships. Community and immigrant-serving service delivery partners help identify newcomers who may benefit from FAST, assess their suitability and eligibility, explain the program, and refer them to IEC-BC. These partnerships help FAST reach newcomers before and after their arrival in Canada and connect them with local services. Selected service delivery partners also help IEC-BC recruit participants for the cohort-based model.

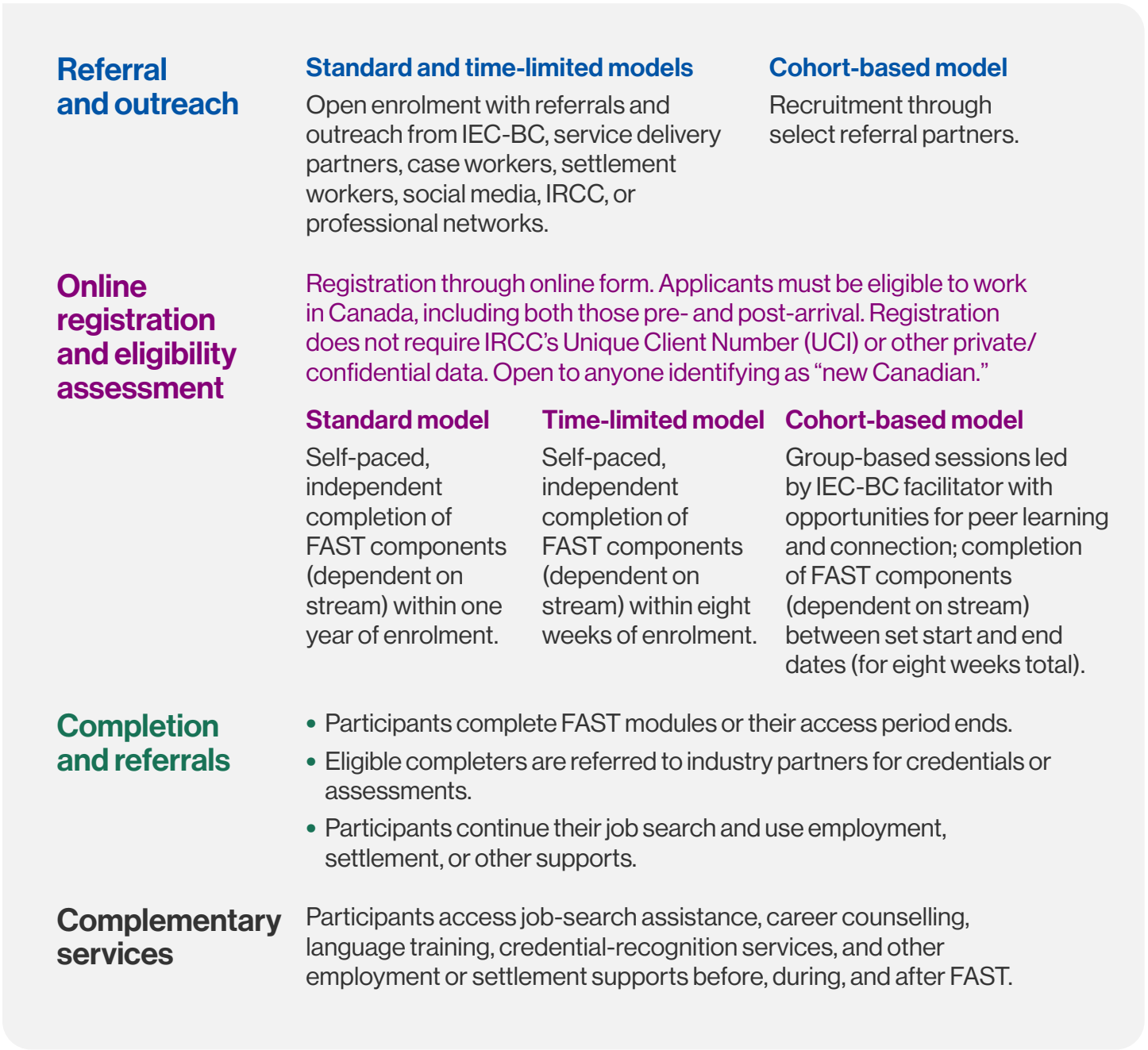
"Participants valued its free, flexible, and self-paced design, and consistently identified the workplace-culture content as one of its most useful components."



Complementary services. FAST is intended to complement other newcomer employment and settlement services. IEC-BC assumes that many participants will take part in job-search assistance, career counselling, language training, credential-recognition services, and/or other supports at the same time. Participants also receive links to adjacent IEC-BC services, including BC JobConnect and MentorConnect, or may be referred to comparable services in their region.

Figure 2 illustrates the participant journey.

Figure 2 | FAST participant journey



3.2.4. Delivery approach

IEC-BC leads FAST and coordinates its delivery across sector streams, regions, and partner organizations. It manages the online platform, enrolment and communications, content, and relationships with referral, industry, and employer partners. IEC-BC also facilitates the cohort-based model and connects participants with relevant credentials and employment services.

The standard and time-limited models are delivered primarily through the online platform, with participants working independently. The cohort-based model adds online, facilitated group sessions and opportunities for participants to connect with their peers.

Table 3 summarizes IEC-BC and partner roles. Organizations involved and the division of responsibilities may vary by sector stream and region. **Appendix A** provides additional information.

Table 3 | FAST delivery roles and partners

Organization or partner	Roles
IEC-BC	• Leads the program and oversees content and delivery • Manages the online platform, enrolment, and participant communications • Coordinates partner relationships and connects participants with credentials, employers, and complementary services • Facilitates the cohort-based model
Industry partners	• Contribute sector expertise and help develop and review occupation-specific content and competency assessments • Provide credentialing or assessment services for participants in selected streams
Employers and employer networks	• Identify changing labour market and skill needs and provide feedback on the relevance of FAST's content • Share job opportunities, participate in employment events, and/or connect with qualified newcomers
Community and immigrant-serving service delivery partners	• Promote FAST • Assess prospective participants' suitability and eligibility and refer them to IEC-BC • Connect participants with locally available settlement, employment, and other supports • Selected partners also support recruitment for the cohort-based model
Regional and educational partners	• Help IEC-BC adapt and promote FAST in specific jurisdictions • Connect the program with regional organizations and employers • Ensure content reflects local labour market and regulatory contexts

3.2.5. Intended outcomes and theory of change

FAST supports the following outcomes for participants and employers:

- **Intended participant outcomes** include greater knowledge of Canadian workplace culture and occupational requirements, clearer understanding of their existing competencies and skills gaps, increased confidence and employment readiness, industry-relevant credential acquisition, transitions into employment (and particularly, work commensurate with their skills and experience), increased earnings, and better job quality, including greater job satisfaction and workplace success.
- **Intended employer outcomes** include greater access to qualified immigrant talent, an improved ability to understand and recognize newcomers' competencies, and a better ability to recruit skilled workers to address labour market shortages in FAST's six sectors.

Figure 3 (on the next page) presents our theory of change. It outlines FAST's inputs, activities, outputs, and pathways to intended participant and employer outcomes. It identifies factors that may help produce these outcomes (mediators) and influence when and for whom they occur (moderators). Some factors, such as labour market conditions and occupational regulations, are beyond the program's control. Others can be influenced through design, partner selection, employer engagement, and delivery.

Figure 3 | FAST theory of change

Inputs

- Program model, online platform, and six sector streams
- IEC-BC staff and facilitators
- Program funding
- Industry partners and credentialing organizations
- Employers and employer networks
- Community and immigrant-serving service delivery partners
- Regional and educational partners
- Complementary employment and settlement services

Activities

- Occupation-specific labour market information
- Essential and technical competency assessments
- Workplace culture training
- Referrals to credentialling and assessments
- Employment supports

Outputs

- Participant enrolment
- Module completion
- Essential and technical competency assessments
- Referrals to credentialling partners
- Credentials and industry assessments
- Employment, peer, and complementary supports

Short-term outcomes

- Improved knowledge of participants' own competencies and the requirements for entering their intended sector
- Increased familiarity with Canadian workplace culture and expectations
- Skills gaps identified and addressed
- Improved ability to communicate competencies to employers
- Increased confidence and employment readiness
- Stronger connections to employers and employment supports

Longer-term ecosystem outcomes

Participants

- Employment commensurate with participants' skills, experience, and career interests
- Increased earnings
- Better job quality and satisfaction

Employers

- Employers gain greater access to qualified immigrant talent
- Improved ability to address labour market shortages

Mediating and moderating factors

- Participant characteristics, engagement, and readiness
- Delivery model and quality
- Sector and credential requirements
- Regional labour market conditions
- Employer engagement and recognition of international experience
- Availability and quality of complementary services
- Strength of partner relationships
- Continued funding



4. Methodology

4.1. Blueprint's evidence generation approach

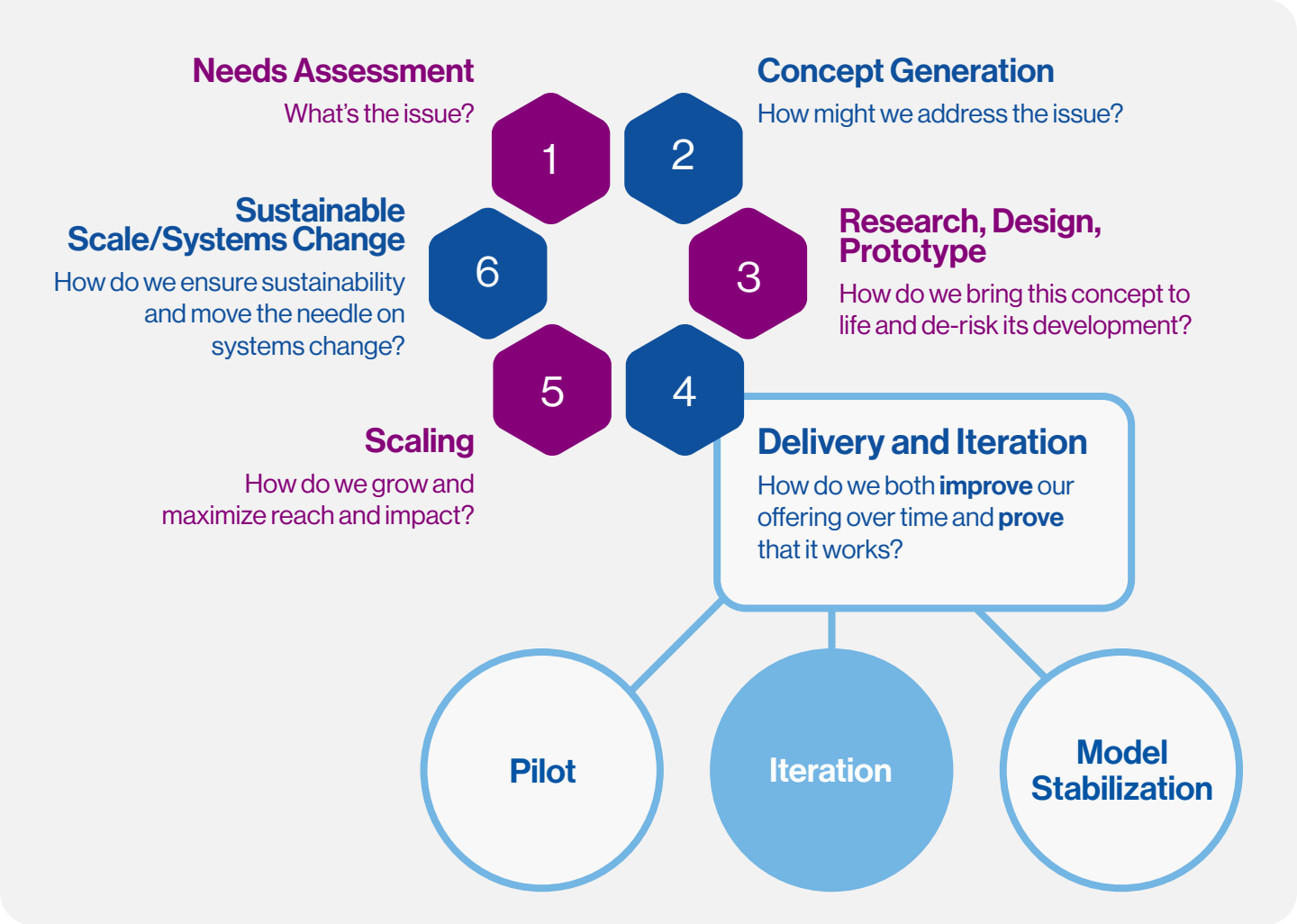
FAST is in **Stage 4: Delivery and Iteration** of Blueprint's six-stage innovation cycle, introduced in the **Preface** on p. 4. Within Stage 4, FAST is in **Stage 4b: Iteration**, as shown in **Figure 4** (on the next page).

Since its launch in 2015, FAST has expanded into new sectors, regions, and populations. Evidence generated during earlier phases identified promising outcomes and opportunities to improve participant engagement, provide more structured support, strengthen sector-specific content, and deepen connections with partners and employers.

Within Stage 4b, programs are established and being delivered, but important elements are still being tested and refined. During Phase 3 of FSC funding, IEC-BC introduced time-limited and cohort-based models in response to findings from earlier evaluations. Evidence about their reach, participant experiences and completion, and early labour market outcomes is intended to inform decisions about which delivery approaches should be retained, adapted, or tested further.

This report also examines longer-term employment and earnings outcomes for FAST participants from 2019 to 2021 using linked administrative data. Together, these analyses provide evidence to support continued improvement and help IEC-BC move toward **Stage 4c: Model Stabilization**.

Figure 4 | The six-stage innovation cycle and Stage 4: Delivery and Iteration sub-phases.



4.2. Learning agenda

For each project in the Scaling Up Skills Development portfolio, Blueprint examines program reach, participant experiences, and effectiveness (or outcomes). Specifically, we address the following questions for FAST's two delivery variations:

Reach

- Who participated in each variation?
- How did participation compare to the standard FAST model?

Participant experiences

- Were participants more likely to complete[2] each variation compared to those in the standard FAST model?
- Did participants find the variations more useful or engaging compared to participants in the standard FAST model?

Outcomes

- Were participants more likely to be employed at exit and/or three months after exit compared to those in the standard FAST model?
- Did participants earn more compared to those in the standard FAST model?

This evaluation also explores whether FAST is associated with improved outcomes compared to, or combined with, other employment services funded by IRCC. Specifically, we address the following questions for FAST participants from 2019 to 2021:

Reach

- Who participated in FAST compared to individuals accessing other employment services through IRCC?

Outcomes

- Were FAST participants more likely to be employed in the year after they participated in FAST compared to individuals accessing other employment services through IRCC?
- Did FAST participants earn more over the year following participation compared to individuals accessing other employment services through IRCC?
- Did employment and earnings outcomes differ among individuals who participated in FAST versus a) IRCC-funded employment services; and b) those who participated in both?

Blueprint's measurement approach includes outcomes specific to FAST as well as outcomes drawn from our Common Outcomes Framework, detailed in **Appendix B**. The Common Outcomes Framework provides a consistent set of outcome measures applied to all Scaling Up Skills Development projects, enabling cross-project and portfolio-level comparisons.

2 Completion means completing the full set of modules included in a participant's FAST stream.

4.3. Evaluation design

We used three approaches to answer our evaluation questions:

- a randomized A/B test of the time-limited model;
- a non-randomized comparison of the cohort-based and open-enrolment models; and
- a linked administrative data analysis of longer-term employment and earnings outcomes.

These designs allow us to draw different conclusions about what may have contributed to differences in outcomes.

4.3.1. The randomized A/B test of the time-limited model

We used an A/B test to assess whether limiting access to FAST to eight weeks affected participant reach, completion, experiences, and early labour market outcomes relative to the standard one-year model. A/B testing compares two versions of a program; participants were assigned to one of two groups:

- **The standard model:** Participants received up to 12 months of access and completed FAST independently, at their own pace.
- **The time-limited model:** Participants received eight weeks of access to the same FAST content.

Because assignment was random, the two groups should be similar in observed characteristics, such as age and education, and unobserved characteristics, such as motivation. Provided that random assignment was implemented as intended—and outcomes are observed comparably for both groups—we can more confidently attribute differences in outcomes to the length of program access.

We examined participant characteristics in the analytic sample to assess whether the time-limited and standard groups remained comparable. As shown in **Table 5** (on the next page), the groups were broadly comparable across measured characteristics, suggesting that random assignment produced comparable groups. We also considered survey response patterns when interpreting the results, since delivery-model information and some outcomes were only available for survey respondents. **Section 4.4.** describes the analytic sample, data availability, and response rates.

4.3.2. The non-randomized comparison of cohort-based and open-enrolment models

We compared participants in the cohort-based model with participants who completed FAST through its open-enrolment models. The two groups were:

- **Cohort-based participants**, who completed FAST over eight weeks in small groups with shared start and end dates, attending sessions led by an IEC-BC facilitator with opportunities to learn from and connect with other participants.
- **Open enrolment participants**, who completed either the standard or time-limited model *without* facilitated sessions or a peer cohort. Standard-model participants received up to 12 months of access and time-limited participants received eight weeks of access.

Participants were not randomly assigned to the cohort-based or open-enrolment version. Recruitment also differed. Cohort participants were referred through selected service delivery partners while open-enrolment participants entered through FAST's ongoing, open registration process.

Differences in outcomes could therefore reflect the delivery model, differences in recruitment or participant characteristics, and other factors.

As shown in **Table 5**, cohort-based and open-enrolment participants were broadly comparable across observable, available characteristics.[3] This reduces the likelihood that the measured differences between participants explain differences in their outcomes. However, the data may not capture important differences in motivation, readiness, access to complementary services, or other factors. The analysis therefore provides exploratory evidence about the reach, participant experiences, and outcomes of the two approaches. It does not establish that the cohort-based model caused any observed differences.

Table 5 | Key socio-demographic characteristics of FAST participants by delivery approach

Participant characteristics	Time-limited A/B test		Cohort-based comparison		All (N=790)*
	Time-limited model (N=275)	Standard model (N=274)	Cohort -based (N=77)	Open enrolment (N=713)*	
Age (% of participants under 25)	11.3%	9.9%	6.5%	10.5%	10.3%
Gender (% of women)	60.8%	54.0%	59.7%	57.9%	58.1%
Education (% with PSE)	96.8%	97.5%	97.4%	96.9%	97.0%
Language (% with English as first language)	53.8%	50.0%	41.0%	52.0%	50.4%
Household income (% with income under $20k)	43.5%	37.3%	37.9%	38.6%	38.5%

Source. FAST administrative data and exit survey

*Sample sizes include both A/B test groups plus other open-enrolment (non-cohort-based) FAST participants outside of the A/B test window.

4.3.3. Linked administrative data analysis

We used linked administrative data to examine longer-term employment and earnings outcomes for FAST participants who started the program between 2019 and 2021. FAST program records were linked to Statistics Canada's Longitudinal Immigration Database. Data from these years were used because of the time required for tax data to become available.

We examined three groups:

- **FAST only:** Participants who accessed FAST but did not access IRCC-funded employment services during the period from three months before FAST began to three months after it ended.
- **FAST and IRCC-funded employment services:** Participants who accessed FAST and IRCC-funded employment services during the same period.

3 Slightly more participants in the time-limited model had a household income under $20,000 versus the standard model (43.5% versus 37.3%). However, we found no statistically significant differences in individual characteristics. An overall test of the variance between the groups also found no significant difference.

- **IRCC-funded employment services only:** Participants who accessed IRCC-funded employment services but did not participate in FAST.

Participants were not randomly assigned to these groups and may have differed before receiving services. We used propensity score weighting to ensure the IRCC-funded employment-services-only group more closely resembled each FAST group, based on characteristics measured before services, such as immigration category and previous earnings. We then used regression analysis to account for remaining observable differences between the groups.

We compared employment and earnings in the next tax year for each FAST group versus outcomes for the IRCC-funded employment services-only group. This allowed us to explore whether outcomes differed for participants who accessed FAST alone, FAST alongside other employment services, or IRCC-funded employment services without FAST.

Weighting and regression make the groups more comparable based on available characteristics in the linked data. However, they cannot account for differences that were not measured, such as motivation, employment networks, or readiness to pursue work. The findings should therefore be interpreted as estimates of the relationship between service participation and longer-term outcomes rather than definitive evidence that FAST caused the differences.

4.4. Participant samples, data sources, and sample sizes

The evaluation draws on two participant samples. The Phase 3 FAST sample was used to compare the standard, time-limited, and cohort-based delivery models. A separate sample of earlier FAST participants was linked to administrative data to examine longer-term employment and earnings outcomes.

4.4.1. Phase 3 FAST participant sample and data sources

The Phase 3 sample included **790 participants** who enrolled in FAST between June 2024 and June 2026 and for whom IEC-BC provided administrative data records. Within this sample:

- **77 cohort-based participants** enrolled between June 2024 and September 2025.
- **275 time-limited participants** enrolled between June 2024 and March 2025 and were randomly assigned to receive eight weeks of access.
- **274 standard-model participants** enrolled during the same period and were randomly assigned to receive up to 12 months of access.
- **713 participants** were in the **open-enrolment comparison group**, which included the 275 time-limited, the 274 standard-model, and 164 other participants who completed FAST through its open-enrolment model outside the A/B test period.

All participants who enrolled were invited to complete an online exit survey eight weeks after enrolment and a follow-up survey three months later. The exit survey collected information about their experiences, satisfaction, perceived usefulness, completion, and early employment outcomes. The follow-up survey measured employment and earnings outcomes three months later.

Because participants complete FAST at their own pace, the exit survey did not necessarily correspond with program completion. Standard-model participants could still be working through FAST when they received the survey while time-limited and cohort-based participants had reached the end of their eight-week access period. This difference should be considered when comparing participant experiences and outcomes across the models.

Table 6 summarizes Phase 3 data sources, sample sizes, and response rates.

Table 6 | Phase 3 data sources and sample sizes

Participant characteristics	Time-limited A/B test		Cohort-based comparison		All
	Time-limited model	Standard model	Cohort-based	Open enrolment	
FAST administrative data: Captured enrolment and module completion.	275	274	77	713	790
Exit survey: Captured participant completion, experiences, satisfaction, perceived usefulness, and employment outcomes eight weeks after the program began.	39.6%	41.2%	62.3%	41.1%	43.2%
Three-month follow-up survey: Captured employment and earnings outcomes three months after the exit survey.	47.6%	36.5%	64.9%	39.8%	42.3%

4.4.2. Linked administrative data sample and data sources

The linked administrative data analysis examined individuals who participated in FAST or accessed qualifying IRCC-funded employment services between January 2019 and December 2021. These years were selected because sufficient time had passed for subsequent tax records to become available. This sample is separate from the participants included in the Phase 3 delivery model analyses described above. The analysis combined three sources of administrative data:

- **FAST administrative records**, identifying FAST participants and their service dates.
- **IRCC administrative records**, identifying individuals who accessed short- or long-term IRCC-funded employment-related services and when they accessed them. Essential skills training was not included as an employment-related service for this analysis.
- **Statistics Canada's Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB)**, including linked tax records, provided information about participants' characteristics at landing, previous employment and earnings, and employment and earnings after services.

Service records were included when they could be successfully linked to the IMDB and contained the information required for the analysis. The linked data were used to identify three groups:

- **FAST *without* concurrent IRCC-funded employment services:** Participants who did not access IRCC-funded employment services from three months before FAST began to three months after it ended.
- **FAST *with* concurrent IRCC-funded employment services:** Participants who accessed IRCC-funded employment services from three months before FAST began to three months after it ended.
- **IRCC-funded employment services only:** Individuals who accessed qualifying IRCC-funded employment services but did not participate in FAST.

We constructed a separate, IRCC-only comparison group for each FAST group. Participants who accessed FAST without concurrent IRCC-funded employment services were compared with a weighted group of similar individuals who accessed IRCC-funded employment services only. Participants who accessed both FAST and IRCC-funded employment services were compared with a second, separately weighted IRCC-only group. As described in **section 4.3.3.**, propensity score weighting was used to make each comparison group more closely resemble the relevant FAST group based on characteristics observed before services.

Participants were classified as employed if they had at least $5,850 in employment income during the tax year following services. We selected this amount as the annual earnings corresponding to working 15 hours per week for six months per year at $15 per hour, aligning with a minimal definition of "employed" throughout the tax year. The employment outcome measures whether participants met this income threshold, not whether they had any employment. We assessed three outcomes:

- **Employment:** having employment income of at least $5,850.
- **Earnings among those employed:** average earnings among individuals who met the $5,850 employment-income threshold.
- **Earnings across the full sample:** average employment income across all individuals, including those with employment income below $5,850.

Table 7 (on the next page) presents the sample sizes used in our two analyses. The full samples were used to assess employment and earnings across all participants. The smaller samples included only participants who met the $5,850 employment income threshold and were used to assess earnings among those classified as employed.

The comparison of FAST without concurrent IRCC-funded employment services included a rounded, combined sample of approximately 60,000 records. Most records represent comparison cases of individuals who did not participate in FAST, with a small subset representing FAST participants. Of these 60,000 records, 42,510 met the employment income threshold and were included in the analysis of earnings among those classified as employed. The comparison of FAST with concurrent IRCC-funded employment services included 47,360 records, of which 32,680 met the threshold.

Table 7 | Sample sizes for linked administrative data analyses

Comparison	Sample size for employment and earnings data across full sample	Sample size for employment and earnings data where earnings ≥ $5,850
FAST *without* concurrent IRCC-funded employment services compared with IRCC-funded employment services only	60,000	42,510
FAST *with* concurrent IRCC-funded employment services compared with IRCC-funded employment services only	47,360	32,680

Source. Statistics Canada's IMDB and FAST administrative records

Note. Each sample combines the relevant FAST group and its separately constructed IRCC-only comparison group. The figures do not show the number of individuals in each group.

4.5. Data limitations

Findings should be interpreted within the context of the following limitations:

- **Exit and follow-up timeframe.** All participants in the A/B test and cohort-based model received an exit survey eight weeks after enrolling in FAST, regardless of delivery model. Standard-model participants received up to 12 months of access and may still have been completing FAST when they received the survey. At this point, participants in the time-limited and cohort-based models had reached the end of their eight-week access period. Responses on completion, satisfaction, and usefulness may therefore reflect different stages of the participant journey. The three-month follow-up also captures early employment and earnings outcomes only. Changes in employment, earnings, or job quality may take longer to appear.
- **Baseline data.** FAST did not administer a baseline survey. Some socio-demographic characteristics and outcomes, including employment status, were collected through the exit survey rather than at enrolment. We therefore could not measure how these characteristics and outcomes changed between enrolment and program exit.
- **Survey response rates.** Across the Phase 3 sample, 43.2% of participants responded to the exit survey and 42.3% responded to the three-month follow-up survey. Survey findings may not represent all FAST participants. Response rates also differed across delivery models. Cohort-based participants were more likely to respond to both surveys than open-enrolment participants. At the three-month follow-up, response was also higher among participants in the time-limited FAST than among

those in the standard version. Differences in satisfaction, perceived usefulness, and labour market outcomes may therefore partly reflect differences in who responded to the surveys.

- **Sample size.** Some Phase 3 participant groups were relatively small, particularly the cohort-based group. The number of participants available for survey analysis was smaller still. These sample sizes limit the precision of the findings. Some real differences between delivery models may not be detected while some observed differences may reflect chance.
- **Non-randomized cohort comparison.** Participants were not randomly assigned to cohort-based or open-enrolment FAST. Although the two groups were similar across the characteristics examined in Table 5, they may have differed in ways that were not captured in the available data. We therefore cannot conclude that the cohort-based model caused any observed differences in participant experiences or outcomes.
- **Linked administrative data analysis period.** The linked-data analysis covers participants who accessed FAST or IRCC-funded employment services between January 2019 and December 2021. This period overlaps with the COVID-19 pandemic and reflects an earlier stage of FAST's development. Employment and earnings during and following this period may have been affected by unusual labour market conditions. The findings may not fully represent the outcomes of participants accessing the current FAST model.
- **Linked administrative data comparison.** Participants were not randomly assigned to FAST, IRCC-funded employment services, or both. Propensity score weighting and regression analysis were used to make the groups more comparable based on characteristics available in the linked data. However, the data may not capture other relevant differences, such as participants' motivation to find employment. These unmeasured differences may partly explain estimated differences in employment and earnings. Linked administrative data findings should therefore be interpreted as estimates of FAST's association with outcomes rather than definitive evidence that FAST caused them.

5. Findings: Phase 3



This section presents findings from the evaluation of the two delivery changes introduced during Phase 3: the time-limited and cohort-based versions of FAST. It first examines who participated in Phase 3 and whether reach differed across models. It then presents findings on program completion, participant experiences, and early labour market outcomes. For each measure, we present findings from the randomized comparison of time-limited and standard FAST and the non-randomized comparison of cohort-based and open-enrolment FAST.

When comparing results between groups, we report the size and direction of each difference with its p-value. The conventional threshold for statistical significance is a p-value of 0.05 or lower. However, because some of the Phase 3 groups are relatively small, the analysis may not detect all meaningful differences with this level of statistical confidence. We therefore identify results with p-values above 0.05 but below 0.20 as potential effects.

For the randomized comparison, results meeting the conventional threshold provide stronger evidence that the time-limited model caused the observed difference. Results with p-values between 0.05 and 0.20 may point to a potential effect but require further testing. For the non-randomized comparison, p-values help us assess the statistical uncertainty surrounding differences between cohort-based and open-enrolment participants. They do not account for other differences between the groups or establish that the cohort-based model caused the results.

5.1. Phase 3 reach

FAST reached a highly educated group of newcomers; many had low household incomes.

As shown in **Table 8**, almost all FAST participants had PSE (**97%**). More than half were women (**58%**) and **39%** reported annual household incomes below $20,000. Only **10%** were under the age of 25. Half reported English as their first language.

Characteristics were similar across delivery approaches. Compared with the standard-model group, the time-limited group included more women (**61%** versus **54%**) and participants with household incomes below $20,000 (**44%** versus **37%**). Cohort-based participants were less likely than open-enrolment participants to report English as their first language (**41%** versus **52%**).

Table 8 | Sociodemographic characteristics of FAST participants by delivery approach

Participant characteristic	Time-limited A/B test		Cohort-based comparison		All (N=790)*
	Time-limited model (N=275)	Standard model (N=274)	Cohort-based (N=77)	Open enrolment (N=713)*	
Age (% of participants under 25)	11.3%	9.9%	6.5%	10.5%	10.3%
Gender (% of women)	60.8%	54.0%	59.7%	57.9%	58.1%
Education (% with PSE)	96.8%	97.5%	97.4%	96.9%	97.0%
Language (% with English as first language)	53.8%	50.0%	41.0%	52.0%	50.4%
Household income (% with income under $20k)	43.5%	37.3%	37.9%	38.6%	38.5%

Source. FAST administrative data and exit survey

Note. Sample size includes both A/B test groups plus other open-enrolment (not cohort-based) FAST participants outside of the A/B test window.

5.2. Phase 3 participant experiences

5.2.1. Program completion

Completion rates were higher among time-limited and cohort-based participants compared to those in the standard model.

As shown in **Table 9**:

- **21.8%** of time-limited participants completed all FAST modules in their stream versus **7.3%** of participants in the standard model. This difference of **14.5 percentage points** was statistically significant (p <0.001). Because participants were randomly assigned, the findings provide strong evidence that time-limiting access to FAST increased completion within the sample.
- **31.2%** of cohort-based participants completed all modules in their stream versus **14.7%** of open enrolment participants—a difference of **16.5 percentage points** (p <0.001). However, because participants were not randomly assigned, we cannot conclude that the cohort-based model caused the difference. Findings nevertheless suggest that cohort-based participants were more likely to complete FAST than participants in the open-enrolment model.

Table 9 | Participant completion rates for Phase 3

Outcome	Time-limited A/B test			Cohort-based comparison		
	Time-limited model (N=109)	**Standard model** (N=113)	**Difference test** (p-value)	**Cohort -based** (N=48)	**Open enrolment** (N=293)	**Difference test** (p-value)
Completion (% of participants completing all modules in their stream)	21.8%	7.3%	<0.001	31.2%	14.7%	<0.001

Source. FAST exit survey

p ≤ 0.2 | p ≤ 0.05 | p ≤ 0.01 | p ≤ 0.001

5.2.2. Satisfaction and perceived usefulness

Satisfaction was higher among both time-limited and cohort-based participants than among those in the standard model.

As shown in **Table 10** (on the next page):

- **60.8%** of time-limited participants were satisfied with FAST versus **48.9%** of standard-model participants—a difference of **11.9 percentage points**. This represents a potential effect of the time-limited model, but the evidence does not meet the conventional threshold for statistical significance (p = 0.103).
- **73.3%** of cohort-based participants were satisfied versus **56.6%** of standard-model participants—a difference of **16.7 percentage points** (p = 0.061). This is a potential difference, but the non-randomized comparison means we cannot conclude that cohort-based delivery caused it.

Participants' likelihood of recommending FAST was similar across delivery models; it did not differ greatly between the time-limited and standard models (**36.1%** versus **31.8%**, p = 0.541) or between cohort-based and open-enrolment participants (**40.9%** versus **36.8%**, p = 0.691).

Participants in both time-limited and cohort-based models found FAST's workplace culture content more useful than the participants in the standard model.

- Time-limited participants were more likely than standard-model participants to find FAST useful for improving their workplace culture knowledge (**79.2%** versus **61.1%**). This was a statistically significant difference of **18.1 percentage points** in the randomized sample, providing evidence that the time-limited model increased the perceived usefulness of this content (p = 0.008).
- Time-limited participants were also more likely to find the workplace culture training useful for their job search (**82.9%** versus **73.9%**). This represents a potential effect (p = 0.181). As the curriculum was unchanged across models, these randomized findings indicate that the eight-week timeframe likely increased perceptions of utility of workplace culture knowledge.
- Cohort-based participants were also more likely to find FAST useful for improving their workplace culture knowledge (**93.3%** versus **70.3%**, p = 0.005) and to find the workplace culture training useful for their job search (**95.1%** versus **80.3%**, p = 0.040). Although these differences were statistically significant, the non-randomized comparison means we cannot conclude that cohort-based delivery caused them. However, the pattern of particularly high ratings is consistent with findings from the previous Phase 3 *Interim Report*, in which participants described how peer discussions and facilitator-led sessions helped them understand Canadian workplace norms.

Most other FAST components were perceived as similarly useful across delivery models.

Ratings for technical competency assessments, skills gap training, e-mentoring, BC Job Connect, and webinars were similar between the cohort-based and open-enrolment groups. Cohort-based participants were more likely than open-enrolment participants to find the industry-specific technical competencies useful (**77.8%** versus **65.9%**). This represents a potential difference (p = 0.144).

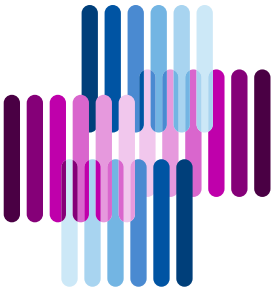
Table 10 | Participant satisfaction and perceived utility rates for Phase 3

Outcome	Time-limited A/B test			Cohort-based comparison		
	Time-limited model (N=109)	**Standard model** (N=113)	**Difference test** (p-value)	**Cohort-based** (N=48)	**Open enrolment** (N=293)	**Difference test** (p-value)
Overall satisfaction (% of participants who were "somewhat" or "very" satisfied)	60.8%	48.9%	0.103	73.3%	56.6%	0.061
Likelihood to recommend (% of participants who were "likely" or "very likely" to recommend FAST or had already done so)	36.1%	31.8%	0.541	40.9%	36.8%	0.691
Perceived utility (% of participants who said each module, component, or topic was "fairly" or "very" useful)						
Industry-specific technical competencies	66.7%	64.4%	0.751	77.8%	65.9%	0.144
Workplace culture knowledge	79.2%	61.1%	0.008	93.3%	70.3%	0.005
Technical competency assessments	78.6%	71.9%	0.350	79.5%	74.6%	0.544
Skills gap training	73.8%	71.9%	0.802	76.9%	74.0%	0.745
Workplace culture training	82.9%	73.9%	0.181	95.1%	80.3%	0.040

Outcome	Time-limited A/B test			Cohort-based comparison		
	Time-limited model (N=109)	**Standard model** (N=113)	**Difference test** (p-value)	**Cohort -based** (N=48)	**Open enrolment** (N=293)	**Difference test** (p-value)
E-mentoring	72.1%	69.2%	0.721	67.6%	71.4%	0.725
BC Job Connect (BC only)	63.0%	61.5%	0.859	62.5%	64.7%	0.832
Webinars	72.9%	67.7%	0.513	80.6%	72.5%	0.310

Source. FAST exit survey

$p \leq 0.2$ $p \leq 0.05$ $p \leq 0.01$ $p \leq 0.001$



"Even though the curriculum remained unchanged across delivery models, time-limited participants were more likely than standard-model participants to find FAST useful for improving their workplace-culture knowledge."

5.3. Phase 3 outcomes

This section examines whether employment and earnings differed across the Phase 3 delivery models at exit and follow-up.

5.3.1. Employment

The time-limited model may have increased employment at follow-up.

- As shown in **Table 11**, at exit, employment rates were nearly identical among time-limited and standard-model participants (**45.9%** versus **46.3%**, $p = 0.950$). However, at follow-up, **59.8%** of time-limited participants were employed versus **50.5%** of standard-model participants. This difference of **9.3 percentage points** represents a potential positive effect of the time-limited model ($p = 0.168$).
- Employment rates did not differ between cohort-based and open-enrolment participants. At exit, **52.2%** of cohort-based participants and **47.8%** of open-enrolment participants were employed ($p = 0.340$). At follow-up, employment rates were **57.1%** versus **57.2%** ($p = 0.560$).

Table 11 | Employment rates by Phase 3 delivery model

Outcome	Time-limited A/B test			Cohort-based comparison		
	Time-limited model	Standard model	Difference test (p-value)	Cohort -based	Open enrolment	Difference test (p-value)
Employment at exit (% of participants with any employment eight weeks after enrolment)	45.9% (N=109)	46.3% (N=108)	0.950	52.2% (N=46)	47.8% (N=320)	0.340
Employment at follow-up (% of participants with any employment three months after the exit survey)	59.8% (N=127)	50.5% (N=95)	0.168	57.1% (N=49)	57.2% (N=311)	0.560

Source. FAST exit and follow-up surveys

p ≤ 0.2 | p ≤ 0.05 | p ≤ 0.01 | p ≤ 0.001

Note. Employment rates are estimated using logistic regression models. The time-limited comparison includes assigned delivery model as the only predictor. The cohort-based comparison adjusts for gender.

5.3.2. Earnings

Earnings were similar across delivery models.

- As shown in **Table 12**, estimated average annualized earnings were nearly identical for time-limited and standard-model participants at exit (**$17,900** versus **$17,800**, $p = 0.995$). At follow-up, earnings were higher among time-limited participants (**$22,000** versus **$19,300**), but the evidence does not indicate that this difference was caused by the delivery model ($p = 0.525$).
- Cohort-based participants had estimated average annualized earnings of **$22,400** at exit and **$24,600** at follow-up versus **$18,700** and **$23,000** among open-enrolment participants, respectively. These differences were not statistically significant ($p = 0.650$ and $p = 0.700$, respectively).

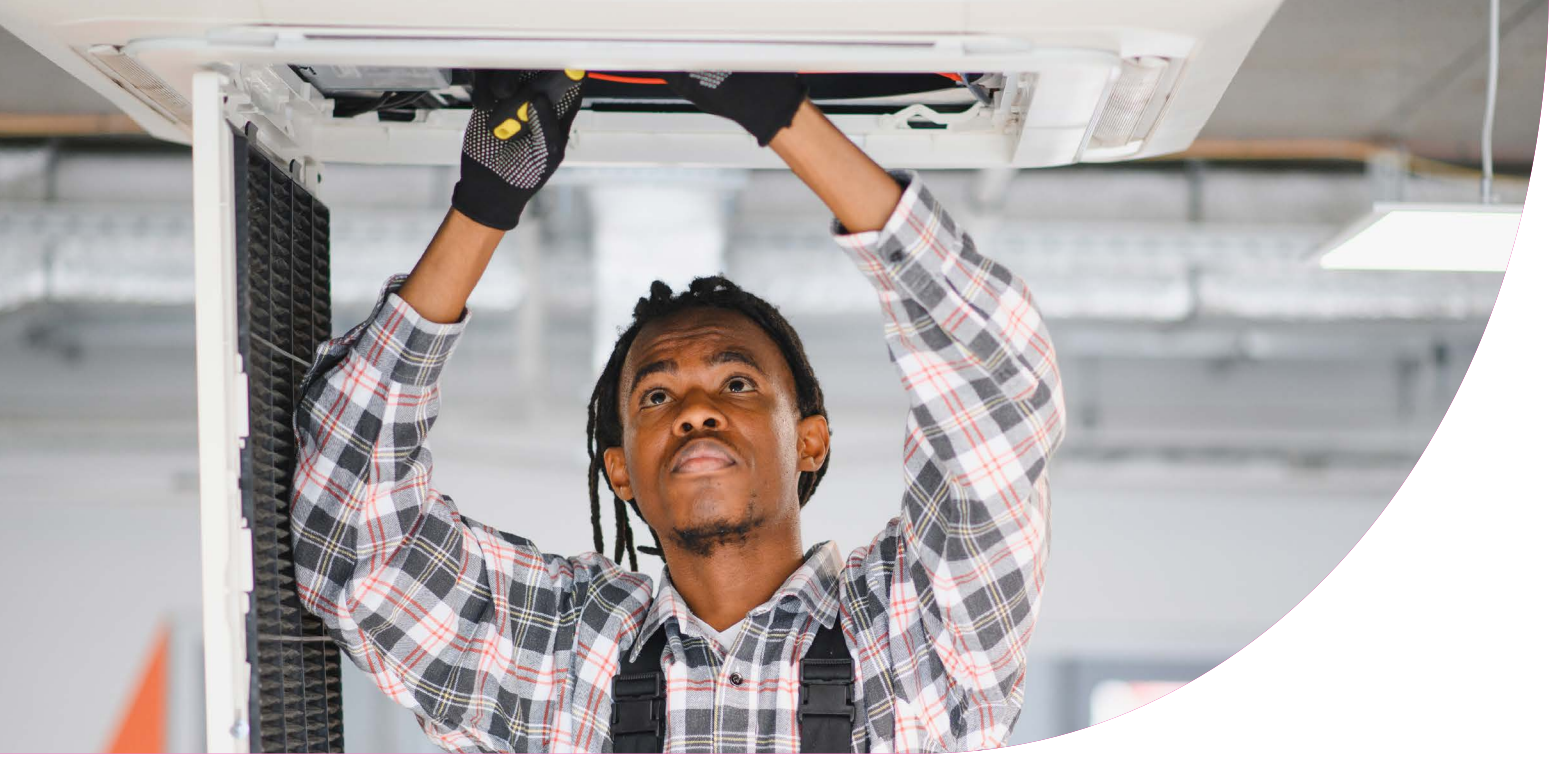
Table 12 | Average annualized earnings by Phase 3 delivery model

Outcome	Time-limited A/B test			Cohort-based comparison		
	Time-limited model	Standard model	Difference test (p-value)	Cohort-based	Open enrolment	Difference test (p-value)
Earnings at exit (average annualized earnings (CAD) three months after enrolment)	$17,900 (N=109)	$17,800 (N=108)	0.995	$22,400 (N=46)	$18,700 (N=320)	0.650
Earnings at follow-up (average annualized earnings (CAD) three months after exit survey)	$22,000 (N=127)	$19,300 (N=95)	0.525	$24,600 (N=49)	$23,000 (N=311)	0.700

Source. FAST exit and follow-up surveys

p ≤ 0.2 | p ≤ 0.05 | p ≤ 0.01 | p ≤ 0.001

Note. Values are estimated group means from ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models. OLS is a statistical method used to estimate average differences in earnings between groups. The time-limited comparison includes assigned delivery model as the only predictor. The cohort-based comparison adjusts for gender. Annualized earnings are capped at $150,000.



6. Findings: Linked administrative data analysis

This section presents findings from the linked administrative data analysis of individuals who participated in FAST compared to those who accessed qualifying IRCC-funded employment services between 2019 and 2021. The purpose was to assess whether participating in FAST, either alone or alongside IRCC-funded employment services, was associated with better employment and earnings outcomes than accessing IRCC-funded employment services alone.

We first compare the characteristics of FAST participants with those of individuals who accessed IRCC-funded employment services *only*. We then examine employment and earnings in the tax year following services. We present findings separately for participants who accessed FAST without concurrent IRCC-funded employment services and those who accessed both FAST and IRCC-funded employment services.

Each FAST group is compared with a separately weighted group of similar individuals who accessed IRCC-funded employment services only. Because participants were not randomly assigned, the findings show whether FAST participation was associated with different outcomes, but they do not establish that FAST caused those differences.

6.1. Reach

Compared with those accessing IRCC-funded employment services, FAST reached newcomers who were more highly educated and more likely to have recorded knowledge of English.

Table 13 (on the next page) compares participants who accessed FAST (with or without concurrent IRCC-funded employment services) with those who accessed IRCC-funded employment services only. Groups were similar in age when services began, averaging **35.8** years among FAST participants

and **36.2** years among IRCC-only participants. Among participants classified as employed, average employment income was similar for FAST and IRCC-only participants (**$25,426** versus **$24,938**, $p = 0.768$).

The following differences were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$):

- FAST participants arrived in Canada more recently, with an average landing year of **2019.2** versus **2017.4** for IRCC-only participants.
- FAST participants were considerably more likely to have entered Canada through the economic immigration class (**84%** versus **52%**) or Express Entry (**64%** versus **27%**). They were much less likely to have arrived as refugees (**5%** versus **31%**).
- More FAST participants had recorded knowledge of English at landing (**97%** versus **80%**) and were more likely to have intended to enter a professional occupation (**34%** versus **14%**).
- FAST participants were also more likely to have accessed IRCC-funded employment services before arriving in Canada (**24%** versus **7%**).
- FAST participants were more likely to be classified as employed in the tax year before services (**30.5%** versus **22.2%**).

Some differences carried less statistical certainty:

- FAST participants had higher levels of education recorded at landing. Graduate education was recorded for **39%** of FAST participants versus **23%** of IRCC-only participants. Only 1% of FAST participants had a secondary-level education or less versus **27%** of IRCC-only participants. The proportion with a bachelor's degree was similar at **34%** and **30%,** respectively.
- Education was unknown for **23%** of FAST participants and for **13%** of IRCC-only participants, which should be considered when interpreting comparisons.

Table 13 | Characteristics of FAST participants and participants in IRCC-funded employment services

Characteristic	FAST with or without concurrent IRCC-funded employment services	IRCC-funded employment services only	Difference test (p-value)
Age			
Age when services began (mean)	35.8	36.2	0.225
Age at landing (mean)	34.5	33.5	0.003
Immigration history and characteristics at landing			
Year of landing (mean)	2019.2	2017.4	<0.001
Economic immigration class	84%	52%	<0.001
Family sponsorship	9%	17%	<0.001
Refugee	5%	31%	<0.001

Characteristic	FAST with or without concurrent IRCC-funded employment services	IRCC-funded employment services only	Difference test (p-value)
Participated in Express Entry	64%	27%	<0.001
Recorded knowledge of English	97%	80%	<0.001
Intended to enter a professional occupation	34%	14%	<0.001
Received IRCC-funded employment services before arriving in Canada	24%	7%	<0.001
Education at landing			
Secondary or less	1%	27%	<0.001
Some PSE	3%	7%	<0.001
Bachelor's degree	34%	30%	<0.001
Graduate education	39%	23%	<0.001
Unknown education	23%	13%	<0.001
Earnings before services			
Classified as employed in the tax year before services (% with employment income ≥ $5,850)	30.5%	22.2%	-<0.001
Earnings in the year before services began (including $0) (sample includes only those with a tax return the year before services began)	$12,167	$10,493	0.079
Average earnings among those classified as employed in tax year before services	$25,426	$24,938	0.768
Employment and earnings after services			
Classified as employed in the tax year after services ended (% with employment income ≥ $5,850)	67.1%	78.5%	<0.001
Average earnings among those classified as employed in tax year after services	$37,940	$49,885	<0.001

Source. Statistics Canada's IMDB, IRCC administrative records, and FAST administrative records

p ≤ 0.2 p ≤ 0.05 p ≤ 0.01 p ≤ 0.001

Within FAST, participation varied by education, refugee status, recorded knowledge of English, gender, immigration pathway, intended occupation and previous residency status.

The regression analysis presented in **Appendix C** accounts for other observable participant characteristics. Participation was less likely among newcomers with secondary education or less, refugees, those without recorded knowledge of English and women (all $p < 0.001$).

Participation was more likely among newcomers who arrived through Express Entry, intended to enter a professional occupation, or had previously held non-permanent resident status (all $p < 0.001$). It was also more likely among those who intended to enter a skilled or technical occupation ($p = 0.030$).

These findings identify associations but do not explain why participation differed across groups.

6.2. Outcomes

This section examines employment and earnings in the tax year following services for two groups of FAST participants:

- **FAST *without* concurrent IRCC-funded employment services:** participants who did not access qualifying IRCC-funded employment services from three months before FAST began to three months after it ended.
- **FAST *with* concurrent IRCC-funded employment services:** participants who accessed qualifying IRCC-funded employment services from three months before FAST began to three months after it ended.

Each FAST group was compared with a separately weighted group of similar individuals who accessed IRCC-funded employment services only. Because participants were not randomly assigned, the findings show associations between service participation and outcomes, but they do not establish that FAST caused the differences.

6.2.1. Employment

FAST *without* concurrent IRCC-funded employment services was not associated with higher employment rates. FAST combined *with* IRCC-funded employment services was.

As shown in **Table 14** (on the next page):

- Participants who accessed FAST *without* concurrent IRCC-funded employment services were estimated to be one percentage point less likely to be employed than the IRCC-only comparison group. This difference was *not* statistically significant ($p = 0.544$).
- However, participants who accessed *both* FAST and IRCC-funded employment services were estimated to be **4.3 percentage points** more likely to be employed than their separately constructed IRCC-only comparison group. This difference was statistically significant ($p = 0.049$).

Table 14 | Estimated effects on employment compared with IRCC-funded employment services only

FAST group	Estimated effect on employment	Standard error	P-value
FAST *without* concurrent IRCC-funded employment services	-0.010	0.016	0.544
FAST *with* concurrent IRCC-funded employment services	0.043	0.022	0.049

Source. Statistics Canada's IMDB, IRCC administrative records, and FAST administrative records

$p \leq 0.2$ $p \leq 0.05$ $p \leq 0.01$ $p \leq 0.001$

6.2.2. Earnings

Participants who combined FAST with IRCC-funded employment services had higher earnings than the IRCC-only comparison group. No statistically significant earnings differences were found for participants who accessed FAST alone.

As shown in **Table 15** (on the next page), our analysis examined earnings:

- across the full sample, including participants with and without earnings; and
- among participants classified as employed.

FAST without concurrent IRCC-funded employment services. Compared with the IRCC-only group, average earnings were an estimated:

- **$610** higher across the full sample (p = 0.668); and
- **$1,400** higher among participants classified as employed (p = 0.330).

Neither difference was statistically significant.

FAST combined with IRCC-funded employment services. Compared with the IRCC-only group, average earnings were an estimated:

- **$4,920** higher across the full sample (p = 0.012), a statistically significant difference; and
- **$3,360** higher among participants classified as employed (p = 0.095), suggesting a potential difference.

The full-sample estimate reflects whether participants were employed and how much employed participants earned. Participants who combined FAST with IRCC-funded employment services were more likely to be classified as employed and may also have earned more when employed. However, the analysis accounts only for characteristics available in the linked data. Unobserved differences, such as motivation, employment readiness, or reasons for accessing both services, may partly explain the results.

Table 15 | Estimated effects on earnings compared with IRCC-funded employment services only

FAST group	Earnings measure	Estimated effect on earnings	Standard error	P-value
FAST *without* concurrent IRCC-funded employment services	Average earnings among those classified as employed	+$1,400	$1,437	0.330
	Average earnings among full sample	+$610	$1,425	0.668
FAST *with* concurrent IRCC-funded employment services	Average earnings among those classified as employed	+$3,360	$2,011	0.095
	Average earnings among full sample	+$4,920	$1,961	0.012

Source. Statistics Canada's IMDB, IRCC administrative records, and FAST administrative records

$p \leq 0.2$ $p \leq 0.05$ $p \leq 0.01$ $p \leq 0.001$



"Compared with the IRCC-only group, average earnings were an estimated $4,920 higher across the full sample (p = 0.012), a statistically significant difference."



7. Discussion and conclusions

7.1. Summary of findings

Overall, FAST's Phase 3 delivery changes improved completion as well as some aspects of participant experience. Time-limited access increased completion and the perceived usefulness of FAST's workplace-culture content. Cohort-based participants also had higher rates of completion, satisfaction, and perceived usefulness. There is limited evidence that these delivery changes improved employment or earnings.

Earlier FAST participants also differed from participants using other IRCC-funded employment services. They were more likely to have higher education, recorded knowledge of English, and economic immigration backgrounds. Although the analysis cannot show that combining services caused these differences, participants who combined FAST with IRCC-funded employment services had higher employment and earnings than the IRCC-only comparison group.

The findings point to two areas for further study: a) whether more structured FAST delivery leads to better longer-term labour market outcomes; and b) whether specific elements of the program are more effective when offered alongside other employment services.

The Phase 3 delivery models reached similar participants to those in the standard model.

Participants in the standard, time-limited, cohort-based, and open-enrolment groups had broadly similar sociodemographic profiles. Most had PSE, and women made up the majority across the models. None of the observed differences in participant characteristics were statistically significant.

Time-limited and cohort-based participants had higher completion rates and found FAST's workplace-culture content more useful.

In the randomized comparison, 21.8% of time-limited participants completed all modules in their stream versus 7.3% of standard-model participants. Completion was also higher among cohort-based participants than open-enrolment participants (31.2% versus 14.7%). Because the cohort comparison was

not randomized, we cannot conclude that cohort-based delivery caused this difference.

Even though the curriculum remained unchanged across delivery models, time-limited participants were more likely than standard-model participants to find FAST useful for improving their workplace-culture knowledge. Satisfaction and the perceived usefulness of workplace-culture training were also potentially higher. Cohort-based participants were similarly more likely than open-enrolment participants to be satisfied with FAST and to find the same workplace-culture knowledge and training useful. Recommendation rates and perceptions of most other FAST components were similar across models.

There is limited evidence that the Phase 3 delivery models improved early employment or earnings.

Employment rates were nearly identical for time-limited and standard-model participants at exit. At follow-up, employment was 9.3 percentage points higher among time-limited participants, representing a potential positive effect. There was no evidence that the time-limited model increased earnings at exit or follow-up.

Employment and earnings were similar for cohort- and open-enrolment participants at both exit and follow-up. The evaluation did not find evidence that cohort-based participation was associated with different early labour market outcomes.

Earlier FAST participants were more likely to have graduate education, recorded knowledge of English, and economic immigration histories than participants in IRCC-funded employment services.

Among participants from 2019 to 2021, 39% of FAST participants had graduate education at landing versus 23% of participants who accessed IRCC-funded employment services only. FAST participants were also more likely to have entered through the economic immigration class or Express Entry, to have recorded knowledge of English, and to have intended to enter a professional occupation. They were less likely to have secondary education or less or to have arrived as refugees.

After accounting for other observable characteristics, refugees, women, newcomers with secondary education or less, and those without recorded knowledge of English were less likely to participate in FAST. Participants were more likely to enrol if they entered through Express Entry, intended to enter professional or skilled and technical occupations, or had previously held non-permanent resident status.

Participants who combined FAST with IRCC-funded employment services had higher employment and earnings.

Participants who accessed both FAST and IRCC-funded employment services were 4.3 percentage points more likely to be employed than the IRCC-only comparison group. Average earnings across the full sample were an estimated $4,920 higher, and earnings among those classified as employed were potentially $3,360 higher. Because this analysis was not randomized, it does not establish that combining FAST with IRCC-funded employment services caused the differences.

In comparison, participants who accessed FAST without concurrent IRCC-funded employment services did not have statistically different employment or earnings outcomes from their weighted IRCC-only comparison group.

7.2. Discussion

Based on our evaluation, we identify four key insights:

1. Adding structure to FAST delivery could improve engagement and help participants get more from its workplace-culture content.

Phase 3 findings show that FAST delivery affects participant engagement and experience.

In the randomized comparison, time-limited access increased completion and satisfaction. Cohort-based participants had higher completion and satisfaction rates than open-enrolment participants. Time-limited and cohort-based participants also found the workplace-culture content more useful than their respective comparison groups—even though the curriculum was the same.

We cannot determine that delivery caused these differences—or which elements of delivery contributed to these differences. However, based on the results, a defined timeline may have helped participants remain focused and engage more consistently with the content. In the cohort model, facilitator support and peer discussion may also have helped participants interpret and apply workplace norms that can be difficult to understand independently.

These findings suggest that incorporating further structure into FAST delivery could strengthen participant engagement without requiring changes to the curriculum itself. Future iterations could retain elements, such as defined timelines, milestones, reminders, or facilitated opportunities to discuss the content.

IEC-BC conducted follow-up interviews and focus groups with employers and learners. These confirmed the finding that tightening program structure could strengthen participant engagement. In response, IEC-BC introduced module surveys into the next iteration of FAST to better understand the usefulness of each module and whether learners intend to continue in the program. Using these data, IEC-BC should continue testing which forms and levels of structure produce the strongest engagement and participant experiences.

2. FAST may need more than one delivery option to respond to different participant needs and circumstances.

Adding structure improved engagement. But the time-limited and cohort-based models could also involve trade-offs. The eight-week model provides less flexibility and could mean that participants lose access even when they continue to benefit from FAST. Cohorts require participants to follow a shared schedule and take part at set times. They also require IEC-BC to provide facilitation. These approaches may therefore be less accessible or appropriate for participants balancing employment, settlement responsibilities, caregiving, or other demands, and be more costly for IEC-BC to deliver.

Our evaluation could not determine whether some groups benefited more from one delivery model than another. The sample was too small to reliably assess differences based on participant characteristics, circumstances, or preferences. It is also possible that some participants value FAST primarily as a flexible resource and intentionally

complete only the content most relevant to them rather than the full program.

Together, findings point to flexibility. Rather than selecting one model for all participants, future iterations could explore who is best served by time-limited, cohort-based, or more flexible delivery. IEC-BC could test whether participants benefit from choosing among delivery options or from lighter forms of structure within the open-enrolment model, such as clearer milestones, reminders, or optional facilitated sessions. Decisions about future delivery should consider participant outcomes alongside accessibility, preferences, delivery costs, and IEC-BC's capacity to offer each model.

3. Longer-term evidence is needed to determine whether FAST's new delivery models improve employment outcomes relative to existing delivery.

At exit, employment and earnings were similar for time-limited and cohort-based versus standard-model participants. Time-limited participants had potentially higher employment rates at the three-month follow-up, but there was no corresponding earnings difference. The available evidence therefore does not show that either new delivery model improved labour market outcomes relative to existing FAST delivery.

This does not mean that the delivery changes have no labour market value. FAST is intended to help newcomers understand Canadian occupations and workplaces, assess how their skills align with occupational requirements, and identify next steps. Participants may need more time to apply this knowledge during their job searches. The three-month follow-up period may be too short to see changes in labour market outcomes, and the small samples, particularly for the cohort-based model, limited the evaluation's ability to detect differences.

The linked data findings from earlier FAST participants demonstrate the value of examining outcomes over a longer period. Although we cannot say if combining services caused differences (or if Phase 3 delivery models would produce similar results), we found stronger employment and earnings among participants who combined FAST with IRCC-funded employment services. Future evaluations could examine whether time-limited and cohort-based delivery produce stronger longer-term outcomes than standard or open-enrolment delivery. This should include whether participants find employment more quickly, whether that employment reflects their skills and experience, and whether it provides stronger earnings, stability, and opportunities for career progression. Administrative data can show whether employment and earnings differences emerge over time, and surveys or qualitative research can assess employment alignment and job quality.

4. FAST may be most valuable as one part of a broader continuum of newcomer employment supports.

The linked data findings provide promising evidence about FAST's role alongside other services. As noted, earlier participants who combined FAST with IRCC-funded employment services had stronger employment and earnings than a matched group that accessed IRCC-funded employment services alone. This earnings difference appears to reflect both higher rates of employment and potentially higher earnings among those employed.

These findings suggest that FAST may complement broader employment services, which can provide additional assistance, including career planning, job-search support, mentorship, employer connections, and work placements. Combining these forms of support may be particularly helpful for newcomers with broader employment needs.

FAST may also offer a lower-intensity alternative for newcomers with fewer or more specific needs. Participants who accessed FAST without concurrent IRCC-funded employment services had similar employment and earnings compared to their IRCC-only comparison group. This is a promising finding. FAST was designed as a flexible, virtual, and cost-effective model that allows newcomers to access training modules "on demand." It may therefore provide some skilled newcomers with a more flexible, less resource-intensive way to achieve outcomes similar to those associated with mainstream employment services.

Findings on reach support the idea that FAST serves a particular population within the broader newcomer employment system. FAST participants were more likely than IRCC-only participants to have graduate education, recorded knowledge of English, an economic-class immigration history, and an intended professional occupation. These characteristics are consistent with FAST's focus on skilled newcomers seeking occupation-specific support. Some may need only the focused guidance FAST provides, and others may benefit from combining it with more comprehensive services.

Findings suggest that FAST may work well on its own for some skilled newcomers and alongside broader employment services for others. Future research should explore who is best served by each approach and how referrals can help newcomers access the right supports at the right time.

7.3. What's next?

In 2025, IEC-BC was awarded additional funding through the FSC Scale stream to update the content of its IT & Data Services and Skilled Trades streams and evaluate them by examining participant outcomes and feedback. Evaluation questions for this new project will focus on whether participant completion, satisfaction, and outcomes for the updated streams are improved relative to previous FAST iterations. It will also examine whether the women, racialized newcomers, and youth who enrol in the updated streams achieve similar outcomes to other participants.

IEC-BC will also use FSC funding to develop a diagnostic tool intended to help small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) better understand their workforce practices and how they can be used to improve hiring, retention, and workforce planning. An evaluation of the newly developed tool will assess whether SMEs find the tool user-friendly and useful and whether SMEs plan to implement changes based on the tool's recommendations.

Blueprint's *Final Report* (planned for December 2026) will present findings related to both areas, in addition to sharing final evaluation results from previous phases of FAST.

Appendix A:
Partnerships

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 nonprofit 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 the 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, nonprofit, 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 nonprofit social enterprise that supports the educational, economic, and social inclusion of immigrants, refugees, and international students in the U.S. 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:
Common outcomes framework

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:
Logistic regression of FAST participation

Table C1 | Logistic regression of FAST participation

Regressor	Slope	P-value
Intercept	−4.415	
Age at landing	0.012	0.009
Birth area: Africa (reference)	—	—
Birth area: Eastern Asia	−0.208	0.208
Birth area: Europe	0.146	0.388
Birth area: Oceania and other Asia	−0.556	0.007
Birth area: South and Central America	−0.185	0.302
Birth area: Southeast Asia	0.009	0.917
Immigration category: economic class + small categories (reference)	—	—
Immigration category: refugee	−1.242	< 0.001
Official language: English + missing (reference)	—	—
Official language: not English (including French)	−1.462	< 0.001
Express program: not in express program (reference)	—	—
Express program: arrived before express program began	−1.732	< 0.001
Express program: in express program	0.588	< 0.001
Female	−0.514	< 0.001
Family status: primary applicant + small groups (reference)	—	—
Family status: spouse / common law	0.040	0.715
Ever a non-permanent resident	0.414	< 0.001
Education before immigrating: bachelor's degree + small groups (reference)	—	—

Regressor	Slope	P-value
Education before immigrating: secondary or less	−1.335	< 0.001
Education before immigrating: any post-graduate	−0.044	0.620
Intended occupation: student + small groups (reference)	—	—
Intended occupation: professional	0.510	< 0.001
Intended occupation: skilled and technical	0.293	0.030
Earnings the year before services: no tax return or $0 (reference)	—	—
Earnings the year before services: $1–$19,999	−0.443	< 0.001
Earnings the year before services: $20,000–$49,999	−0.648	< 0.001
Earnings the year before services: $50,000–$99,999	−0.774	0.006
Industry the year before services: not employed + small industries (reference)	—	—
Industry the year before services: admin. support, waste management and remediation	−0.237	0.253
Industry the year before services: professional, scientific, and technical services	0.037	0.892
Industry the year before services: transportation and warehousing	−0.946	0.038
IRCC services one year before	−0.148	0.225
Years in Canada when services began: 5 years or fewer (reference)	—	—
Years in Canada when services began: 6–10 years	0.631	0.033
Years in Canada when services began: over 10 years	1.388	0.027

Source. IMDB and FSC pilot program data; the outcome is entry into FAST rather than IRCC employment services alone; the comparison group is newcomers who did not enter any FSC-funded program. The regression sample for the results in Appendix C contains three subsamples: 1) IRCC-funded only; 2) FAST only; and 3) both IRCC-funded and FAST. The model predicts being in either (2) or (3) versus being in (1).

Endnotes

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iii Hardy, V. (2026). *Labour market experiences of recent working-age immigrants and non-permanent residents, 2019 to 2024*. Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-222-x/71-222-x2025002-eng.htm

iv Hardy, V. (2026). See endnote iii.

v Lovei, M. (2026). *Job mismatch among core working age immigrants with postsecondary education*. Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-222-x/71-222-x2026002-eng.htm

vi Hardy, V. (2026). See endnote iii.

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