The Complete Express Entry Roadmap 2026

A practical guide for Iranian applicants

By Hadi Imani — Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC #R522575) | AvalVisa

> Every number and rule in this guide was checked directly against the official Government of Canada pages on canada.ca and IRCC's official rounds data on August 26, 2026. Immigration rules change constantly — always confirm the latest status before you act.

1) How Express Entry actually works

Express Entry is not itself a visa. It is the online system the Canadian government uses to manage permanent residence applications for three programs:

- **Federal Skilled Worker (FSW)** — the main route for applicants who have lived and worked outside Canada. This is where most Iranian applicants, whether applying from Iran or from elsewhere in the diaspora, fit.
- **Canadian Experience Class (CEC)** — for people with skilled work experience inside Canada.
- **Federal Skilled Trades (FST)** — for qualified tradespeople.

The official process has four steps:

1. You create an online profile and enter the pool of candidates.
2. IRCC holds "rounds of invitations" and invites the highest-ranked candidates.
3. If you receive an Invitation to Apply (ITA), you have only **60 days** to submit a complete permanent residence application.
4. IRCC assesses the application and issues a final decision.

Here is the point many applicants miss: on the FSW route you are dealing with **two separate scoring systems**:

- **The 67-point grid** is the entry test. Score below 67 out of 100 and you never enter the pool at all.
- **The CRS score** determines your rank inside the pool and decides whether you get invited.

Do not confuse the two — their rules differ, and the clearest example is how each one treats a job offer, which we will get to shortly.

2) The FSW entry test: the 67-point grid

Before any points are counted, you must meet the **program minimums**:

- At least **1 year of continuous, full-time paid work experience** (or 1,560 hours part-time equivalent) within the last 10 years, in an occupation classified as TEER 0, 1, 2 or 3. The work must have been paid — volunteering and unpaid internships do not count.
- Language results of at least **CLB 7 in all four abilities** from an approved test.

- A completed educational credential (for non-Canadian degrees, accompanied by an ECA report).
- The intention to settle in a province other than Quebec.

Six factors are then scored, and your total must reach **at least 67 out of 100**:

Factor	Maximum	How it is scored
First official language	24	Per ability: CLB 9 or higher = 6, CLB 8 = 5, CLB 7 = 4 (below CLB 7: not eligible)
Second official language	4	At least CLB 5 in all four abilities = 4 points
Education	25	Doctorate 25; Master's or professional degree 23; two credentials, one of them 3+ years, 22; Bachelor's (3+ years) 21; two-year credential 19; one-year credential 15; secondary school 5
Skilled work experience	15	1 year = 9; 2–3 years = 11; 4–5 years = 13; 6+ years = 15
Age	12	18–35 = 12; one point less for each year from 36; 47 and over = 0
Arranged employment	10	A valid job offer: at least 1 year, full-time (30 hours/week), non-seasonal, in TEER 0–3, backed by an LMIA or a specified LMIA exemption
Adaptability	10	Combination of the items below, capped at 10

Adaptability points: your own previous work in Canada 10; your own previous study in Canada (at least 2 years of full-time study) 5; accompanying spouse's language at CLB 4+ in all four abilities 5; spouse's past study in Canada 5; spouse's past work in Canada 5; holding a valid job offer 5; having an eligible relative in Canada (parent, child, sibling, aunt or uncle, niece or nephew — aged 18+ and a citizen or permanent resident) 5.

The key 2025–2026 point about job offers: as of **March 25, 2025**, job offer points were removed from the **CRS only** (the 200 points for Major Group 00 executive roles and 50 points for other skilled occupations). But on the **FSW 67-point grid, a valid job offer is still worth 10 direct points** — plus 5 adaptability points — and it can also exempt you from the proof-of-funds requirement. A job offer has not become worthless; it simply no longer raises your CRS rank.

A realistic example: a 33-year-old applicant with a Master's degree, 6 years of related experience, and IELTS General at CLB 8 across all four abilities scores: language 20 + education 23 + experience 15 + age 12 = **70 points — eligible**.

Calculate your score precisely and free of charge with the AvalVisa FSW 67-point calculator.

3) Your CRS score and the reality of 2026 draws

Once you are in the pool, your rank is set by the CRS. The core structure:

Component	Max without spouse	Max with spouse
Age	110	100
Education	150	140
Official languages	160	150
Canadian work experience	80	70
Spouse factors (education, language, Canadian work)	—	40

On top of these come **skill-transferability points** (each combination of strong language, education, foreign and Canadian experience is worth up to 50) and **additional points**: French ability up to 50, Canadian post-secondary study up to 30, a sibling in Canada 15, and a **provincial nomination worth 600**.

What the 2026 rounds actually look like (through August 26)

IRCC has held **49 rounds** so far this year — and **not a single general round**. In other words, a high CRS score on its own, without fitting into one of the streams below, is currently not producing invitations. The official 2026 numbers:

Round type	Rounds	CRS cutoff range	Total ITAs
French-language proficiency	10	382–420	50,500
Canadian Experience Class (CEC)	14	507–523	49,250
Provincial Nominee Program (PNP)	16	708–805	7,399
Healthcare and social services	2	467–475	8,000
Trades	1	477	3,000
Transport	1	470	300
Physicians with Canadian work experience	2	169–223	662
Senior managers with Canadian work experience	2	392–429	750
Skilled military recruits	1	368	4

The most recent round (August 19, 2026) was a French-language draw: 5,000 invitations with a CRS cutoff of **382**.

The officially announced categories this year are: French-language proficiency, healthcare and social services, STEM, trades, education, transport, physicians, senior managers, researchers, and skilled military recruits. Note that **no STEM or education-category round has actually been held in 2026** so far.

What this means in practice if you have no Canadian work experience — three realistic paths:

1. **Category-based draws** (healthcare, trades, transport) if your occupation is on a category list — cutoffs have sat around the 470 mark.
2. **French to NCLC 7 or higher** — by far the most attainable cutoffs of the year (382–420) and the largest volume of invitations.
3. **Provincial programs (PNP)** — a nomination adds 600 points and makes an invitation all but certain.

Tools: the CRS calculator and the live Express Entry draws tracker.

4) The documents you will need

Language testing

Approved English tests: **CELPIP General, IELTS General Training, and PTE Core**. Approved French tests: **TEF Canada and TCF Canada**. Two warnings that trip people up: Academic IELTS is not accepted, and an **IELTS One Skill Retake** result is not accepted for Express Entry either. Test results are valid for **2 years** and must be valid both when you submit your profile and when you submit your PR application.

The FSW minimum for your first language is CLB 7, but the right target for CRS purposes is **CLB 9** — the skill-transferability combinations (worth up to 50 points each) only switch on from CLB 7 and only pay out in full at CLB 9. To convert IELTS, CELPIP or PTE scores into CLB levels, use the AvalVisa CLB converter.

Educational Credential Assessment (ECA)

For degrees from Iranian universities, an ECA report is both an FSW eligibility requirement and the basis of your education points. The organizations designated by IRCC are **WES, CES (University of Toronto), ICAS, IQAS and ICES**. An ECA is valid for **5 years**, and in most cases assessing only your highest credential is enough. For Iranian degrees, obtaining official confirmations and having your university dispatch documents directly to the assessor is usually the slowest part of the entire file — start it before anything else.

Proof of funds

The official table (updated July 7, 2025 — revised annually):

Family members	Minimum required (CAD)
1 person	$15,263
2 people	$19,001
3 people	$23,360
4 people	$28,362
5 people	$32,168
6 people	$36,280
7 people	$40,392
Each additional member	+$4,112

The rules that matter: the money must be available both when you apply and when your visa is issued. You need an official bank letter on letterhead showing account numbers, opening dates, current balances and the **average balance over the past 6 months**. Borrowed money and real-estate equity are not accepted; a joint account with an accompanying spouse is. If you are currently authorized to work in Canada and hold a valid job offer, you are exempt from proof of funds.

Other documents and fees

Prepare police certificates from your countries of residence, a valid passport, and identity and marriage documents well in advance. Current government fees for the PR application (per the official fee page): **$1,590** for the principal applicant, $1,590 for a spouse, and $270 per dependent child.

5) The mistakes Iranian applicants keep making

1. **Employment letters that don't match the NOC.** The officer must be able to see that your duties match the lead statement and main duties of the NOC code you chose. A letter that lists only your job title and dates puts the file at risk of refusal — and picking the wrong NOC code is just as dangerous.
2. **Waiting for a "general draw."** There has not been one all year. If your entire plan is "raise my CRS and wait," you effectively have no plan. You need to fit into a category or a provincial route.

3. **Thinking about proof of funds too late.** The bank must report your 6-month average. A large sum suddenly deposited right before applying, without documented origin (a property sale, a documented gift, business income), is one of the most common problems in Iranian files. Given the restrictions on transferring money out of Iran, plan a clean, traceable path for moving and holding your funds from month one — this applies whether your money sits in Tehran, Dubai or Toronto.
4. **Settling for CLB 7.** CLB 7 gets you into the pool but leaves you behind in the CRS race. For many profiles the gap between CLB 7 and CLB 9 is worth tens of CRS points — it is the highest-return investment you can make in yourself.
5. **Underestimating ECA timelines.** Getting confirmations and official transcripts sent from Iranian universities to the assessment body routinely takes months. Start the ECA in parallel with your language preparation, not after it.
6. **Inconsistencies or omissions.** Unexplained gaps in your timeline, trips or jobs left out, or contradictions between forms and documents can be treated as **misrepresentation** — which means refusal plus a multi-year ban on filing a new application.
7. **Letting documents expire in the pool.** If your language test (2 years) or ECA (5 years) expires while you sit in the pool, your profile becomes ineligible. Sequence your dates so everything stays valid to the end of the process.

6) The action plan — from today to your ITA

Step 1 | Get an accurate assessment (this week). Check your eligibility with the 67-point calculator and your competitiveness with the CRS calculator. Below 67? The FSW door is closed for now, and you should be looking at provincial or study routes instead.

Step 2 | Book your language test (month one). Choose your test (IELTS General, CELPIP or PTE Core) and book early. The target is CLB 9. If you are serious about the French route, set up your TEF/TCF study plan now.

Step 3 | Start the ECA (months one to two). While preparing for the language test, file the assessment request for your highest credential and start chasing the official dispatch of documents from your university.

Step 4 | Engineer your proof of funds (from month one). Keep the required amount, with a safety margin, in accounts a bank can report on, and document the origin of every large deposit so the 6-month average is clean.

Step 5 | Build your profile and enter the pool. With your language results and ECA in hand, submit the profile. Every entry must match your documents word for word.

Step 6 | Improve your position inside the pool. Learn French, retake the language test, keep scanning provincial programs, and monitor the weekly draws on the Express Entry draws page. Update your profile immediately after any change — a new score, a new credential, a marriage, a new child.

Step 7 | After the ITA. You have exactly 60 days. Upload police certificates, employment, financial and identity documents against your checklist and pay the fees. One weak document at this stage can undo a year of work.

Get a professional assessment

Every file has its own details — especially for Iranian applicants navigating document logistics, proof-of-funds complications and route selection, whether you are applying from inside Iran or from anywhere in the diaspora. If you want to know your real pathway before spending a single dollar, complete the AvalVisa assessment form and have your situation reviewed professionally.

This guide is general information, not individual legal advice. Hadi Imani is a licensed Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC #R522575) and a member of the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants (CICC).

Free Aval Visa tools: CRS calculator → avalvisa.com/en/crs-calculator · CLB converter → avalvisa.com/en/clb-converter · Draw tracker → avalvisa.com/en/express-entry-draws · Free assessment → avalvisa.com/en/assessment

---

Compiled by Aval Visa (AvalVisa Immigration Services) · Reviewed by Hadi Imani, RCIC #R522575 · Updated August 26, 2026 · Informational only, not legal advice. Sources: official canada.ca pages (verified August 2026).