

Processing Times and Service Delivery

Key Messages

We remain committed to processing 80% of applications within service standards. When application volumes exceed admissions targets, some applicants may need to wait until admissions space becomes available, which can increase overall processing times.

As of February 28, 2026, 80% of new study permit applications were processed in 28 days or less, meeting the 60 day service standard. Study permit extensions were being processed in 90 days or less, well within the 120 day service standard.

To help clients better understand the estimated processing times, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) provides this information via an online processing times tool. Clients are able to check the number of applicants in the queue and the estimated time it will take to process their application so that they can plan accordingly.

IRCC continues to improve the information it provides to clients on their files through its online accounts and status-checkers.

If pressed:

Processing times are influenced by a range of factors, including: the annual immigration levels approved by Parliament, the number of applications received, the complexity of individual cases, how quickly applicants respond to requests for information, and the processing capacity of the Department. Despite these variables, the majority of applications are processed well within established service standards.

Application intake caps in key lines of business (e.g., Federal Skilled Worker, Canadian Experience Class, Quebec Skilled Worker and study permits) coupled with more restrictive requirements for work permits (i.e. tightening eligibility requirements for the Post-graduation Work Permit, limiting work permits for spouses of temporary residents, etc.) help us to maintain predictable processing times and achieve service standards.

To improve transparency to our clients, forward-looking processing times and in-queue information are now available in IRCC's online processing times tool for several permanent resident and citizenship lines of business. This tool provides estimates based on current inventory levels and target admissions, offering a more accurate view of when an application may be finalized.

Over the past year, efficiencies in IRCC's operations coupled with the rollout of transparency initiatives have improved client access to the Department. With these changes the Department's Client Support Centre is currently meeting service standards for its phone and email operations.

Key Facts and Figures (as of February 28, 2026)

Service Standards & Processing Times

Line of Business	Service Standard	Processing Times* (As of February 28, 2026)	Forward-Looking: What Most New Clients Can Expect** (As of February 28, 2026)
Permanent Resident*	(in months)		
Canadian Experience Class	6	5	7
Quebec Skilled Workers	11	8	10
Federal Skilled Workers	6	7	7
Provincial/Territorial Nominees (Express Entry)	6	9	7
Provincial/Territorial Nominees (Non-Express Entry)	11	16	13
Spouses, Partners, and Children: Overseas (Rest of Canada)	12	13	14
Temporary Resident**	(in days)		
Work Permit	60	34	45–65
Study Permit	60	28	30–50
Study Permit - Extensions	120	90	40–60
Temporary Resident Visa	14	49	40–60

* Permanent Resident: Processing times refer to the time in which 80% of complete applications were finalized by IRCC in the past six months from the date indicated.

** Temporary Resident: Processing times refer to the time in which 80% of complete applications were finalized by IRCC in the previous eight weeks from the date indicated.

** Forward Looking Processing Times: The expected time to process an application received today based on the number of applications in the inventory, dedicated processing capacity, and expected application volume.

Humanitarian and Compassionate/Refugees

The Department processes applications for permanent residency in accordance with the annual Immigration Levels Plan. If the number of applications in the inventory is greater than the corresponding allotted admissions space, inventory accumulates and processing times increase. For some lines of business, such as Humanitarian and Compassionate immigration categories, Privately Sponsored Refugees, and Protected Persons Landed in Canada and their dependents abroad, the number of applications in the inventory are greater than available admissions space, leading to increasing processing times.

February 2026 Service Standard Adherence

At the end of February 2026, service standards were met in the Canadian Experience Class and Quebec Skilled Workers permanent residence categories; as well as for new work permits, study permits, and study permit extensions. Additionally, citizenship grants continue to be processed within the established service standard.

Access to the Client Support Centre

The Department is currently meeting (up until February 28, 2026) the service standard of responding to 80% of email inquiries within three days, up from 21% last fiscal year. We have achieved an answer rate of 50% for callers requesting to speak to an agent, up from 39% last fiscal year.

From April 1 2025 to February 28 2026, IRCC's Client Support Centre received over 8.2M inquiries across all service channels, including clients who accessed information independently through the automated phone system.

Significant improvements in service standard adherence across channels continues to take place, due to multiple initiatives to streamline processing (e.g., enhanced use of artificial intelligence), the creation of a hybrid workforce and optimization of resources. The flexible deployment of hybrid agents between the phone and email channels based on demand led to faster email responses, which, in turn contributed to fewer calls. At the same time, productivity (calls answered per full-time equivalent) has increased by 7%. The resulting increase in the answer rate contributed to the reduction of re-dials, which declined by 8%.

Overall inquiries have decreased by 17% between April 1 2025 and February 28 2026, compared to the same period last fiscal year.

Modernization Efforts to Improve Processing Times

IRCC continues to invest in new tools that align with the commitment to provide greater transparency with clients. Providing this transparency from the outset strengthens operational efficiency and gives clients better access to the information they need to help them make informed decisions. Increased transparency will be important in providing clarity and minimizing uncertainty for clients, as the impacts of lower immigration levels may lead to an increase in wait times across some lines of business.

The Department continues to digitize application processes and harness automation technologies to improve processing times while protecting and prioritizing the health, safety, and security of Canadians.

Advanced analytics help identify routine applications for streamlined processing. This allows IRCC to better manage its work, so clients receive decisions sooner. Advanced analytic models are not used to make or recommend negative decisions. All refusals are made by human officers after they review the application themselves.

IRCC is undertaking a service standards review to ensure service standards are meaningful and relevant for our programs, in line with the Department's ability to forecast demand and address intake. This is part of IRCC's ongoing efforts to set clear expectations for clients and increase transparency on performance.

