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Canadian Immigration & Refugee Law

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR PROVINCIAL NOMINEE PROGRAM

International Graduate Entrepreneur Category

Requirements and Process



Client Information Guide

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This guide is for general information only and does not constitute legal advice.

International Graduate Entrepreneur Category

Client Information Guide – Requirements and Process

Prepared by Kabir & Alam Lawyers | August 2026

1. Overview

The International Graduate Entrepreneur category of the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Nominee Program (NLPNP) is a pathway to Canadian permanent residence for graduates of the province's own institutions – Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic – who have started or purchased a business in Newfoundland and Labrador and actively managed it for at least one full year. It is designed to keep emerging entrepreneurial talent in the province, and it is deliberately accessible: there is no minimum investment or net worth requirement.

The category is the graduate counterpart to the International Entrepreneur category (covered in our companion guide). Where the main category serves established business owners arriving from abroad, this one rewards graduates who have already proven their business on the ground: the operating year comes first, and the nomination follows on the strength of the business's demonstrated viability, evidenced through professional accounting reports prepared by a Newfoundland and Labrador-licensed CPA.

MUN / CNA	2 years	1 year	1/3	CLB 7	No min.
Graduate of Memorial University or College of the North Atlantic	Minimum program length, completed in person	Operating and actively managing the NL business	Minimum one-third ownership of the business	Minimum language level in English or French	No minimum investment or net worth requirement

Figure 1: Core requirements at a glance.

2. Eligibility and Requirements

To qualify under the International Graduate Entrepreneur category, you must meet all of the following criteria:

Requirement	Details
Education	Graduation from a program of at least two years in length, completed in person at Memorial University or College of the

Requirement	Details
	North Atlantic, consistent with federal post-graduation requirements.
Business ownership	At least one-third (33.3%) ownership of a business in Newfoundland and Labrador that you started or purchased.
Operating history	At least one full year of experience actively managing and operating that business in the province before seeking nomination, while holding a valid work permit.
Language	Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) level 7 or higher in English or French – the same graduate-level threshold Alberta applies to its Graduate Entrepreneur Stream.
Financial evidence	A Review Engagement of the business's financial statements and a Special Purpose Report addressing the business's financial health and future sustainability – both prepared by a CPA licensed in Newfoundland and Labrador.
Active management	Ongoing day-to-day management of the business from within the province, with a genuine intention to settle in Newfoundland and Labrador permanently.
EOI / ITA	Submission of an Expression of Interest and receipt of an Invitation to Apply from the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism before a full application can be made.

The authoritative sources are the International Graduate Entrepreneur pages and Application Guide at gov.nl.ca/immigration. Criteria are subject to change and should be confirmed against the current guide before each step.

2.1 Starting versus purchasing – the sub-category conditions

The category mirrors the main entrepreneur category's two routes. Graduates who start a new business must create at least one full-time equivalent position for a Canadian citizen or permanent resident – over and above the founder's own role, and excluding positions filled by dependants or relatives. Graduates who purchase an existing business face the succession-integrity conditions: the business must have operated continuously under the same owner for the previous five years, be actively operating and not in receivership, be purchased at a demonstrably fair market value, and retain existing staff on similar wages and terms.

2.2 The CPA reports carry the file

Because there is no financial threshold to assess, the province assesses the business itself. The Review Engagement provides assurance on the financial statements, and the Special Purpose Report gives a professional opinion on the operation's financial health and sustainability. Only a CPA licensed in Newfoundland and Labrador may prepare them, and their conclusions effectively determine whether the operating year demonstrates a viable business or merely an existing one. Clean books from day one – proper registration, separate accounts, payroll records, and tax filings – make this stage straightforward; informal record-keeping makes it perilous.

3. Ineligible Businesses

Businesses that are not eligible mirror the province's entrepreneur exclusions, including:

- Businesses operated remotely from outside Newfoundland and Labrador
- Passive investment operations deriving income primarily from interest, dividends, or capital gains
- Property rental, leasing, or investment businesses; real estate, insurance, or business brokerages (absent compelling provincial benefit)
- Regulated professional services or professional self-employment
- Payday loan, cheque cashing, money exchange, and ATM businesses; pawn shops and taxi companies
- Home-based businesses (absent compelling provincial benefit)
- Businesses compensating employees solely on commission
- Any business that could bring the OIM, the NLPNP, or the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador into disrepute

4. The Application Process, Step by Step

NLPNP International Graduate Entrepreneur: Process Overview

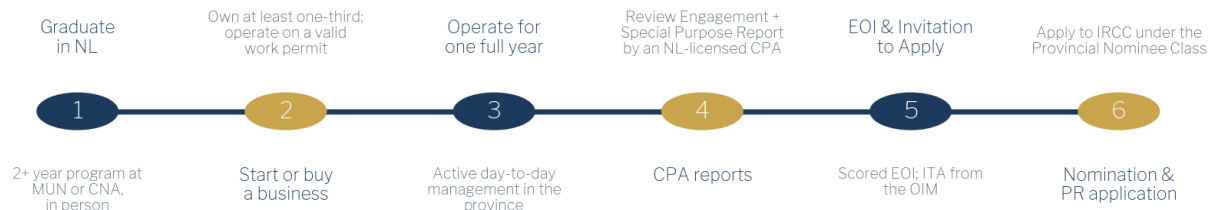


Figure 2: Process overview.

1. **Graduate in the province:** Complete a program of at least two years, in person, at Memorial University or College of the North Atlantic, and secure a work permit permitting business operation (typically a post-graduation work permit).
2. **Start or purchase the business:** Establish or acquire a Newfoundland and Labrador business with at least one-third ownership, meeting the applicable sub-category conditions (job creation for new businesses; the succession conditions for purchases).
3. **Operate for at least one full year:** Actively manage the business day-to-day in the province, keeping rigorous financial records throughout the operating year.
4. **Obtain the CPA reports:** Engage a Newfoundland and Labrador-licensed CPA to prepare the Review Engagement and the Special Purpose Report on the business's health and sustainability.
5. **Submit an EOI and receive an ITA:** Submit the Expression of Interest through the province's online system; competitive candidates receive an Invitation to Apply from the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism.
6. **Nomination and permanent residence:** Submit the full application with supporting documentation. If nominated, apply to IRCC under the Provincial Nominee Class for permanent residence for you and your dependent family members, continuing to operate the business through processing.

5. Fees and Costs

Item	Cost
Provincial application fee	None – there is no fee to apply under this category

Item	Cost
CPA Review Engagement and Special Purpose Report	Applicant's cost
Language test	Applicant's cost
IRCC fees (permanent residence)	Federal fees apply

As with the International Entrepreneur category, Newfoundland and Labrador charges no provincial fee – the material costs are the CPA engagements and federal fees.

6. How This Compares to Related Graduate Pathways

For reference against the province's main entrepreneur category and the comparable graduate stream in Alberta:

Criteria	NL Intl Graduate Entrepreneur	NL Intl Entrepreneur	AB Graduate Entrepreneur
Who it serves	MUN / CNA graduates	Experienced owners/managers	Alberta post-secondary graduates
Net worth / investment	No minimums	\$600K / \$200K	No fixed minimums
Language	CLB 7	CLB 5	CLB 7
Ownership	At least one-third	33.3% (or \$1M equity)	At least 34%
Operating requirement	1 year before nomination	1 year after arrival	1 year qualifies established businesses
Financial evidence	NL CPA reports	Net Worth Verification Report	Net Worth Worksheet
Provincial fee	None	None	\$3,500 (confirm current)

7. Practical Considerations

- The operating year is the application: graduates should run the business from day one as if a CPA will opine on it – because one will. Registration, separate banking, payroll remittances, HST filings, and clean books are what convert twelve months of effort into a nomination case.
- The CLB 7 threshold is higher than the province's main entrepreneur category (CLB 5); graduates should test early, since results must be current when the EOI is submitted.
- The one-third ownership floor accommodates co-founded ventures – including with Canadian partners – but the applicant's own active management role must be demonstrable, not nominal.

- For purchases, the five-years-same-owner and staff-retention conditions apply to graduates exactly as they do to established entrepreneurs; succession acquisitions of retiring owners' businesses are a genuine opening in smaller communities.
- With no financial thresholds and no provincial fee, the practical barriers are viability and patience – this category rewards graduates who commit to the province early and build something real.

Important Notice

This guide is provided for general information only and does not constitute legal advice for any specific case. It summarizes the requirements of the NLPNP International Graduate Entrepreneur category as published by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism (gov.nl.ca/immigration) as of August 2026. Program criteria and processes change from time to time and should be verified against the current Application Guide before any step is taken. Please contact our office to discuss how these requirements apply to your circumstances.

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