ASCEND

Applied Skills Curriculum to Empower Newcomer Development

ASCEND Participant FAQ

Q1:   What does 'ASCEND' stand for?

A: ASCEND stands for: **Applied Skills Curriculum to Empower Newcomer Development (ASCEND)**

Q2:   How is ASCEND funded?

A: ASCEND is funded through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the department of the Government of Canada with responsibility for matters dealing with immigration to Canada, refugees, and Canadian citizenship

Q3:   Who is eligible to access ASCEND at no cost?

A: There is no cost for eligible immigrants to participate in the program. Eligible immigrants include:

- Incoming and Landed Immigrants, including:
    o Individuals approved in principle to immigrate to Canada (*and their spouses)*
    o Permanent Residents already in Canada (*and their spouses)*
    o Convention Refugees
    o Ukrainian temporary residents and their dependents in Canada *(until further notice)*

Participants should also meet these criteria:

- Able communicate effectively at a Canadian workplace skill level (CLB 6)
- Previous work experience (does not need to be Canada-specific)

Q4:   Can non-eligible participants access ASCEND?

A: Participants that do not meet the eligibility requirements *are* able to access ASCEND, for a fee. Examples of non-eligible participants who access ASCEND on a fee-for-service basis include Temporary Foreign Workers, Canadian Citizens, International students, etc. Please contact ascend@iecbc.ca for more details on program costs for non-eligible participants

Q5:   How many online modules does ASCEND have, and how long does it take to complete?

A: The full ASCEND program includes introductory survey, Getting Started and Benchmark Assessment sections that require about 1 hour to complete, followed by 7 online modules, each of which takes approximately 2-3 hours to complete. All online modules are completely self-paced. Learners typically spend 15-20 hours completing all online modules and assignments. It is recommended that participants complete 1 online module per week to stay on track

Q6: What content do ASCEND's online modules cover?

A: ASCEND's seven online modules help develop participant's understanding and application of soft skills. Content includes:

1. **Module 1: The value of your existing skills and experience**	• Helps participants in identifying the transferable skills that they already possess and can utilize in their job search and the workplace, topics include:
	
	   o Identifying strengths
	   o *Game*: How to describe existing strengths
	   o *Journal exercise*: Transferable skills timeline
	   o Video interview with newcomer mentor
	   o Accountability action plan
	     …and much more!

2. **Module 2: Personal branding**	• Teaches participants how to share and present their transferable skills in a way that Canadian employers will connect with. Topics include:
	
	   o *Video:* Connecting through Personal branding
	   o Guide to LinkedIn
	   o Social media for employment
	   o *Game:* Personal branding advice
	   o Creating a digital portfolio
	   o Making a positive on-screen impression
	   o Working from home
	   o Video interview with an employer
	     … and much more!

3. **Module 3: Developing your professional community of support**	• Details the importance of a network, and how even a small, purposeful community can support you, and vice-versa, including:
	
	   o Strategies for building your community of support
	   o How to benefit from informational interviews
	   o *Journal exercise*: Developing your professional community of support
	   o *Video:* Mentorship
	   o *Game:* Appropriate questions to ask mentor
	   o Reaching out to potential mentors
	     … and much more!

4. **Module 4: Building your job search and interview soft skills**	• This is where most participants think they should begin the program, but employers and hiring managers share that a solid understanding of the first 3 modules is essential! This module reviews key techniques and tips for a successful application and interview process, including:
	
	   o Matching your skillset to a job
	   o *Game:* Canadian resume format
	   o Keywords and your resume
	   o *Journal exercise:* Matching your resume to a job description

	o Professional references o Interview types o *Video:* Gauging the interviewer's reaction o Following up after an interview and maintaining positivity *… and much more!*
5. **Module 5: Professional communication**	• Learn how strong communication skills impact every part of your career—understanding and applying communication effectively can help you build a foundation for success. This module includes: o Communication channels and their use o Video meetings o Communication styles o *Game:* Different styles of communication o *Journal exercise*: Professional communication o Non-verbal communication o Video interview with an employer *…and much more!*
6. **Module 6: Onboarding and organization culture**	• There is no 'one size fits all' rule to onboarding and organizational culture—there are variations across industries and companies. This module informs participants what they can do to best support their experience, and includes: o Negotiating salary o Your first month(s) on the job o Understanding organizational culture and hierarchy o *Game:* Onboarding o *Journal exercise*: Onboarding and organizational culture o Video with HR Manager *…and much more!*
7. **Module 7: Career progression**	• This module explains how framing *how* your employment journey can support your career goals isn't something you need to wait 5, 10 or 20 years from now to think about—your employment journey can and should support progress *throughout* your career. Topics include: o Handling and giving feedback o Taking responsibility o Workplace conflict o Brainstorming and problem solving o Work-life balance o *Journal exercise*: Career progression o Employer interview *… and much more!*
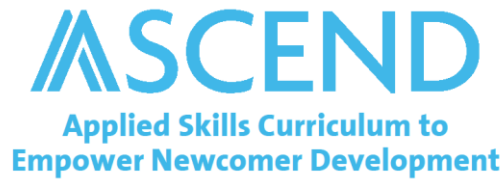
Q7:   How do participants earn their ASCEND Certificate of Completion?

A: Participants that complete all online module content to the end of Module 7 will earn their Certificate of Completion. The Certificate is 'unlocked' for a participant after the final 'post-program survey' in Module 7 is completed. This is explained in both the 'Getting Started' module and again at the end of the program.

Note that the Certificate of Completion is linked to online module completion, *not* workshop attendance/participation

Q8: What content do ASCEND's optional workshops cover?

A: The 6 ASCEND optional workshops provide participants with an opportunity to apply the topics learned online in an experiential, supportive environment with a group of peers. The workshops are all activity based and require no lectures or slides. The workshops can be delivered using an online video tool (like Zoom), or in-person. Each workshop runs for about 2.5 hours in total