

# OFFICIAL REFERENCE NOTICE

**Reference Title:** Eligibility of the Joint Pathway Program (JPP) Under IRCC's Joint Program Policy

**Reference Type:** Sector Guidance / Policy Confirmation

**Issued by:** Languages Canada

**Authorized Signatory:** Executive Director

**Effective Date:** February 3, 2026

**Status:** Current

## Purpose

This document constitutes an Official Reference Notice issued by Languages Canada. It is intended to provide authoritative clarification regarding the eligibility of the Joint Pathway Program (JPP) under Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) joint program policy framework.

This notice may be cited or shared with institutional leadership, registrars, compliance offices, education agents, provincial authorities, students, families, and other relevant stakeholders as formal confirmation issued by Languages Canada.

## Issue Summary

In July 2025, IRCC introduced a defined policy category for joint programs resulting in a single credential, accompanied by subsequent client-facing guidance and updated Operational Instructions. These policy changes raised questions within the language education sector regarding the eligibility of language pathway models operating in partnership with public post-secondary institutions.

## Official Clarification

1. Languages Canada sought formal clarification from IRCC regarding the Joint Pathway Program (JPP) model. On November 25, 2025, Languages Canada received written confirmation (excerpted below) from IRCC's International Student Program team (A/Director level) confirming that the JPP model falls within the scope of IRCC's joint program policy, specifically with respect to the language pathway portion of a joint program leading to a single credential.

“Students may only change DLIs with one [study permit] SP when the joint program is a **single integrated program among multiple DLIs that results in a single credential**.

...the credential-granting DLI listed on the study permit in a joint program needs to be responsible for:

- issuing the LOA for the single integrated program. It is imperative to note that the LOA cannot include any academic or progression conditions as requirements that the students must meet before they can move to the other DLI;
- completing the verification for the LOA; and
- reporting on the student via the compliance regime requirements throughout the duration of the whole program.

For the **Joint Language Pathway Program**, I can confirm that **this model falls within the scope of a joint program, specifically, the language pathway portion**. ... I wanted to also provide some additional clarity on the requirements.

- When the student submits an application for the language pathway program, only one LOA needs to be submitted - the one issued by the public DLI for the language pathway program. It is unnecessary to include the conditional LOA from the public DLI for the student's degree/diploma/certificate program. This is because when the student submits an application for a SP-EXT for their degree/diploma/certificate program, they will need to submit an LOA (unconditional) from the public DLI with their SP-EXT application.
- When the student applies for their SP-EXT for the degree/diploma/certificate program at the same DLI, they will not require a new PAL/TAL. While the student waits for their SP to be approved, they benefit from maintained status and would be able to begin their studies for their degree/ diploma/ certificate program while waiting for their new SP-EXT to be approved. They will however, be unable to work off-campus until their new SP is approved, as language pathway programs are not eligible for off-campus work.

2. The IRCC client/student facing website includes the following information for students enrolled in a joint program resulting in a single credential:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/change-schools.html>

### **Changing your school or program**

#### **New process for post-secondary study permit holders**

Starting November 8, 2024, you must be enrolled in the designated learning institution (DLI) named on your study permit.

**If you're enrolled in a joint program that results in a single credential**

You don't need to apply for a new study permit to attend each DLI in your joint program. The primary DLI who issues your credential must meet the following conditions:

1. The DLI issues a [letter of acceptance](#) showing that no academic conditions are required to advance to the next DLI in your joint program.
2. The DLI completes the [compliance report](#) confirming your enrolment and attendance in each DLI in your joint program.

3. IRCC's Operational Instructions were [updated](#) on November 24, 2025, providing "Clarifications to the policy for international students in a joint program that results in a single credential."

The Operational Instructions now state:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/temporary-residents/study-permits/designated-learning-institutions.html#s24>

**Joint programs issuing a single credential**

Students pursuing a joint program that results in a single credential may be issued

- one [provincial/territorial attestation letter](#) from the province or territory of the DLI issuing the credential and
- one study permit for the DLI issuing the credential for the entire duration of their studies (or for the duration of their passport validity, whichever comes first).

The DLI issuing the credential must

- issue the LOA with no academic conditions required to advance to the next DLI in the joint program
- complete the LOA verification activity
- complete the international student compliance regime report, which includes reporting on the student when they are studying at any other DLI that is part of the administration of the joint program

## Practical Implications for Institutions and Partners

- Public post-secondary institutions and accredited private language schools may implement the Joint Pathway Program within IRCC's joint program framework, provided the credential-granting DLI fulfills all required responsibilities.

- Education agents may present the Joint Pathway Program to students as a compliant joint program model under current IRCC policy.
- Students enrolled in the Joint Pathway Program may transition from the language pathway to the subsequent degree/diploma/certificate program without the issuance of a new PAL, subject to standard study permit extension requirements.

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## Contact for Verification

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## Authorization

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*Issued on behalf of Languages Canada.*

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