



Canadian Bureau for
International Education
Bureau canadien de
l'éducation internationale

March 20, 2020

COVID Update

CBIE is in close communication with senior IRCC officials, in coordination with other national associations, to highlight the various ways that the COVID-19 crisis is impacting the immigration status of and policies pertaining to international students and faculty. Working closely with our Immigration Advisory Committee, CBIE is also seeking clarification of rapidly evolving immigration policies within a very fluid and ever-changing environment.

As we receive clarifications, we will share these with our members. We encourage you to also monitor the Government of Canada publications regarding COVID-19. These are being reviewed and updated on a regular basis:

- [Special measures to help temporary and permanent residents and applicants affected by the novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Temporary Resident COVID-19 program delivery](#)
- [New Measures for COVID-19 Response](#)
- [IRCC Twitter](#)

Update on key IRCC questions as of March 20, 2020 – 6:00pm EST

International students' reentry into Canada

Earlier this week it was communicated by Prime Minister Trudeau that international students and workers, including Study Permit Holders and Post Graduate Work Permit Holders who are currently outside of Canada and the United States will not be permitted to board an aircraft to return to Canada, unless they are the spouse, common-law partner or dependent child of a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.

As of 8:22 p.m. on Friday, March 20, 2020, a Government of Canada News Release has specified that exemptions to the air travel restrictions will apply to foreign nationals who have committed to working, studying or making Canada their home, and they will be considered essential travel with regards to land border restrictions. This includes:

- **temporary foreign workers;**
- **international students who held a valid study permit or had been approved for a study permit when the travel restrictions took effect on March 18.**

The Government of Canada has advised that eligible students should not try to travel to Canada immediately. The Government will announce when the exemptions are in place, which they anticipate will be early next week.

International students, workers on visas and temporary foreign workers will be able to enter Canada from the United States, with the expectation that they will respect the government's request to self-isolate for 14 days.

- [Canada US Border Deal for COVID-19 Response](#)

We will communicate any relevant updates to this evolving situation as soon as they are available. We expect further official updates to come from the Government of Canada shortly.

International students currently in Canada

IRCC has been clear that, as a basic principle and to the extent possible, clients who are currently in Canada should not be adversely impacted as a result of circumstances beyond their control.

All temporary residents who are already in Canada and unable to depart are encouraged to apply for an extension so that they may maintain their temporary resident status in Canada.

Once the application is submitted, the client will benefit from implied status and may remain in Canada until a decision is rendered on their application, or the required documents can be submitted.

- [Temporary Resident Unable to Leave Canada](#)

Post-Graduation Work Permit Eligibility

IRCC will take the effects of COVID-19 under consideration when assessing Post-Graduation Work Permit program eligibility. Although under normal circumstances, in order to be eligible for the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program, international students must maintain their full-time student status during each academic session of the program or programs of study they complete and submit as part of their Post-Graduation Work Permit application, if an international student is unable to meet this criteria due to reasons related to COVID-19, they will still be considered eligible for the PGWPP, provided they meet all the other program criteria.

IRCC will require that the international student's DLI provides a letter explaining the circumstances for the student to include with their PGWP application.

- [IRCC's Social Media – March 13, 2020](#)

Working on or off-campus

In regards to working on or off-campus, given that COVID-19 is beyond a student's control, international students who were eligible to work on or off-campus, can continue to work on or off-campus even if they have been forced to drop to part-time studies or take a break in studies.

However, these students are still subject to the authorized number of hours they would have been permitted had they been full-time students. Therefore, they can work part time (up to 20 hours a week) off campus during an academic session and full-time during a regularly scheduled break.

DLIs should be prepared to provide letters of support in the event that a student is questioned regarding how COVID-19 impacted their full-time status.

We will continue to provide updates as they become available.