



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

March 31, 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 31, 2020 – 4:00pm EST

International students' reentry into Canada

The travel restriction [exemptions](#) that were announced are now in place. If you're exempt, you can now travel to Canada.

- If your in-class courses are being moved to an online-only format because of COVID-19, your eligibility for the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) Program won't be affected.
- A new travel restriction as of March 30th: any Canadian traveller who shows COVID-19 symptoms will be banned from boarding any domestic flights or trains, in an effort to limit the spread of the virus between provinces and cities.

Visa Application Centres (VACs)

Some [VACs](#) have temporarily closed or are operating with limited hours and services. Check your VAC website before you go.

If your VAC is closed and you need to contact us urgently, use the [Web form](#). Do not go to a visa office.

Until further notice:

- Book your appointment online or by contacting the VAC. You can't book your appointment in-person at a VAC.

- VACs will no longer provide in-person information services. Contact the VAC by phone, email or webchat with any questions.
- Only applicants with biometrics appointments will be allowed to enter VACs.
 - Friends and family members will only be allowed to enter the VAC to assist an elderly applicant or an applicant with mobility challenges
- You'll have to submit or retrieve your passport by mail or courier
- All staff and clients will maintain a safe 1m distance between each other

Apply online:

Due to service disruptions, we're experiencing difficulties receiving and processing applications submitted by mail or in person at a VAC.

At this time, if you're applying for a visitor visa, study permit or work permit, apply online.

Automatic biometrics extension

You now automatically have 90 days (instead of 30) from the date on your biometrics instruction letter (BIL) to give your biometrics.

You don't have to contact us to get this extension and you don't need a new BIL for a future appointment.

Your application won't be refused or closed if you can't give your biometrics during this period.

Biometrics collection in Canada

As a temporary measure, to help keep everyone safe:

- All biometrics appointments, including walk-ins, at Service Canada offices are cancelled until further notice.
- No application will be refused or closed if you aren't able to give your biometrics within the 30-day time period indicated on your BIL.

While the service is temporarily suspended at Service Canada locations, don't go to another biometrics collection service, including

- Canadian ports of entry
- other international biometrics collection locations

When Service Canada resumes collecting biometrics, you'll have to make a new appointment at a [designated Service Canada office](#). You won't need a new BIL.

Biometrics collection outside Canada

If you can't give your biometrics due to a location closure near you or a service disruption, don't go to another biometrics collection service, including

- Canadian ports of entry
- other international biometrics collection locations, like a visa application centre (VAC)

If you have a biometrics appointment scheduled

- at a VAC: the VAC will notify you if your appointment is cancelled
- at a U.S. Application Support Center (ASC): all ASCs are closed until further notice

When biometrics collection resumes, you'll have to make a new appointment at a VAC or ASC when they start collecting biometrics again. You won't need a new BIL.

How to find out when biometrics collection resumes

Keep visiting canada.ca/biometrics for updates on when biometrics collection will start again.

Visitors, international students or temporary foreign workers in Canada

If your visitor, study or work status hasn't expired:

You can apply online to extend your stay in Canada.

If you're a visitor, you can [apply for a visitor record to extend your stay in Canada](#).

If you're a worker or student, you have 2 options:

1. If you're no longer working or studying, you can
 - apply to change your status to visitor, as long as your study or work permit has not expired
 - find out [how to extend your stay in Canada as a visitor](#)
 - For more information, see [Guide 5551 – Applying to Change Conditions or Extend Your Stay in Canada – Online application](#).
2. If you want to continue working or studying, you may be able to extend your [work permit](#) or [study permit](#) if you're eligible.

When you apply, make sure you include a note explaining why you need to extend your stay in Canada.

If your visitor, study or work status has expired:

If it's been less than 90 days since your status expired

You can apply to restore your status.

To restore your status, use the document checklist and guide for extending your stay as a:

- [visitor](#)
- [student](#)
- [worker](#)

When you apply, make sure to:

- Select Restore my status under section 3 at the top of the form.
- Include a note explaining the reason you need to extend your stay.
- Include the restoration fee.

If your temporary resident status is restored, you'll get a visitor record or appropriate permit.

Your record or permit will outline the conditions of your stay in Canada.

Your temporary resident status in Canada will be extended until a specified date.

If it has been more than 90 days since your status expired

You may be eligible to apply for a temporary resident permit and remain in Canada with legal status.

When you apply, make sure you include a note explaining the reason you need to extend your stay.

[Apply for a temporary resident permit](#)

We will continue to provide updates as they become available.