



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

**April 7, 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 April 7, 2020 – 8:00pm EST**

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is actively involved in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, and working to clarify the uncertainty it places on all our lives and work. Thank you for your collaboration, and understanding, as we manage through these unprecedented times.

Students, Designated Learning Institutions, and other stakeholder groups have approached IRCC to determine what changes, if any, would be made to the eligibility requirements for the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program (PGWPP) in light of recently introduced travel and health restrictions that have prompted many Designated Learning Institutions to begin offering their courses online.

Under the standard processing guidelines for the PGWPP an international student graduating from an eligible Designated Learning Institution may be eligible for a work permit if the graduate has:

- completed a program of study in Canada (minimum 8 month duration);
- completed at least 50% of their studies in Canada; and,
- completed at least 50% of their studies in-class.

Additionally, any time spent studying towards a Canadian credential outside of Canada is deducted from the assessment of the length of the work permit.

As previously indicated, students who were already studying in Canada, and whose classes were moved online due to the travel and health restrictions introduced due to COVID-19 won't be penalized with regard to their PGWPP eligibility, including the length of work permit for which they will be eligible.

However, these students continue to be required to spend at least 50% of their time studying in Canada to be eligible for the PGWPP.

**To address ongoing developments with respect to COVID-19, on April 7, 2020, IRCC introduced temporary policy changes, effective immediately. These temporary policy changes impact students who currently have a study permit, or who have been approved for a study permit, for a program starting in May or June 2020, but who are unable to travel to Canada at this time due to travel restrictions.**

**For these students, if their in-class courses are being moved to an online-only format because of COVID-19, their eligibility for the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) Program won't be affected.**

**International students in this situation may begin their classes while outside Canada and may complete up to 50% of their program while outside Canada if they cannot travel to Canada sooner.**

Given the fluidity of the current context surrounding COVID-19, IRCC will continue to monitor and assess the situation.

We encourage you to communicate this temporary policy change with international students, Designated Learning Institutions and other interested stakeholders to ensure they are aware of the benefits that international students may or may not be eligible to receive at the completion of their program of study.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-covid19/visitors-foreign-workers-students.html#restrictions-students>

We will continue to provide updates as they become available.