



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

COVID Update from IRCC – May 14, 2020

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](#)

Flexibility in post-graduation work permit rules to help international students and Canadian post-secondary institutions

Ottawa, May 14, 2020—

International education represents a significant economic benefit to Canada, with international students contributing \$21.6 billion to Canada's GDP and supporting nearly 170,000 jobs in 2018. International students are also often excellent candidates to apply to remain in Canada permanently, with nearly 54,000 former students becoming permanent residents in Canada in 2018.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a considerable impact on international students. In response to the health and travel restrictions that are in place, many designated learning institutions (DLIs) are offering their courses online.

Post-secondary institutions and prospective students alike are considering their approach to the fall semester. Both have sought guidance from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada regarding eligibility for the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program (PGWPP) for students starting at an eligible DLI this fall.

Under normal circumstances, criteria for the PGWPP limit an international student's ability to pursue a program via distance learning, from inside or outside Canada, and time spent studying outside Canada is deducted from the length of the work permit for which they are eligible.

PGWPP eligibility will not be affected for international students whose fall 2020 courses will be online due to COVID-19. This is in line with guidance provided to students already studying in Canada or whose program had a spring or summer start date.

Students in this situation may begin their classes while outside Canada and complete up to 50% of their program via distance learning if they cannot travel to Canada sooner.

In addition, they will not have time deducted from the length of a future post-graduation work permit for studies completed outside of Canada, up to December 31, 2020.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/pgwpp-rules-covid19.html>

Online courses won't affect your PGWPP eligibility

If your in-class courses are being moved to an online-only format because of COVID-19, you're still eligible for the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program (PGWPP).

If you have a study permit, or been approved for a study permit for a program starting in the spring, summer or fall, but you can't travel to Canada at this time due to travel restrictions, you're also still eligible for the PGWPP.

If you're in this situation, you may

- begin your classes while outside Canada, and
- complete up to 50% of your program while outside Canada, if you can't travel to Canada sooner.

If you start your studies in **fall 2020**, you won't have time deducted from the length of your post-graduation work permit for studies you complete while outside Canada between fall 2020 and December 31, 2020.

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