



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

COVID Update from IRCC – July 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](#)

Minister Mendicino announces changes to facilitate online learning for international students

From: [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#)

News release

July 14, 2020—Ottawa—International students make immense cultural and social contributions to Canada, and generate more than \$21 billion in economic activity. Since the onset of the pandemic, the Honourable Marco E. L. Mendicino, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, has made a number of [temporary policy changes](#) to support and reassure international students and learning institutions.

As the fall season is fast approaching, the Minister has announced additional measures to support international students beginning a new program online this fall with a Canadian learning institution, if their institution is offering the program online, so that they can pursue their education while ensuring everyone's safety.

These changes will give students more certainty about their ability to enter Canada once travel and health restrictions are eased in Canada and their own home countries. They mean that students will be eligible to work in Canada after graduation, even if they need to begin their studies online from overseas this fall.

The changes will continue Canada's reputation as a premier destination for international students and demonstrate the importance of the international student program and the contributions international students make to Canada.

The new measures include

- providing priority study-permit processing for students who have submitted a complete application online, to ensure that permits are processed as quickly as possible
- allowing students to count the time spent pursuing their studies online abroad toward their eligibility for a post-graduation work permit, if they have submitted a study permit application and if at least 50% of their program is completed in Canada
- providing reassurances to international students who cannot submit all of the documentation needed to complete processing of their applications, and who choose to pursue programs through distance learning, by implementing a temporary 2-stage approval process

The temporary process will allow applicants to count the time spent studying online abroad towards their post-graduation work permit once they receive an approval-in-principle, as long as they are able to satisfy all requirements and receive the full approval of their study permit application at a later date. As services begin to reopen, applicants will be required to submit remaining documents and receive an approved study permit before being allowed to travel to Canada.

This process is available to students starting a program in the fall semester who submit a study permit application before September 15, 2020. This measure will reassure students that they can enrol and begin their studies this fall online, even when they are not able to submit all required documentation due to pandemic-related closures.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has presented a number of challenges worldwide, Canada's whole-of-government approach is aimed at protecting the health of Canadians while minimizing the economic and social impact of restrictions. With these changes, it is expected that international students will continue contributing to the health and vitality of Canada and the local communities where they study from coast to coast to coast.

It is important for prospective students to note that commencing their studies online from abroad following approval-in-principle of a study permit application is not a guarantee that they will receive a full approval of their study permit application, or be authorized to pursue their studies in Canada. It is still possible that an applicant could receive a negative final decision on their study permit based on factors such as inadmissibility for criminality or security reasons, and the inability to predict how the COVID-19 situation and any associated travel restrictions will evolve.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2020/07/minister-mendicino-announces-changes-to-facilitate-online-learning-for-international-students.html>