

The International Student Program

In the COVID-19 context

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Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

Canada

The International Student Program

Key Figures

- **Canada is amongst the most competitive international education destination in the world, hosting over 828,000 international students in 2019.**
 - Despite significant success in attracting international students, Canada's student population is highly concentrated. Students from India (35%) and China (21%) represented the large majority of the study permits issued in 2019.
 - Ontario's Designated Learning Institutions attracted nearly half of students issued study permits last year, followed by British Columbia (21%) and Quebec (14%).
 - Valid study permit holders in 2019 were largely destined to post-secondary institutions (university and college 38% each, with 14% of study permits having been issued for K-12 learning.)
- **The Post-Graduation Work Permit Program is a significant draw for international students to Canadian post-secondary institutions**
 - In 2019, over 99,000 post-graduation work permits were issued, bringing the PGWP population to over 237,000 in the 2019 Calendar Year.
 - Nearly 60% of 2019 post-graduation work permits were issued for the maximum 3 year duration.

Immigration Program Impacts of COVID 19

Health and Safety Measures

- **Border Measures: Due to COVID-19, travel restrictions continue to be in place across all ports of entry.**
 - International students (and PGWP holders) who have a valid study permit, or were approved for a study permit on or before March 18, 2020 are exempt from the travel restrictions. Students should avoid travel unless it is necessary to enter Canada.
 - Those traveling by air need to follow all airline requirements and pass a health check conducted by airlines before allowed to board a flight. Anyone who shows symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed to enter Canada by air.
 - Upon arrival in Canada, travellers' health will be assessed before leaving the port of entry. Travellers must have a plan to quarantine for 14 days upon arrival in Canada. This is mandatory, and those not able to comply should not travel to Canada.
- **Travel restrictions eased to facilitate family reunification:**
 - Immediate family members of temporary residents in Canada for the purpose of reuniting with their immediate family members, may now travel to Canada with an authorization letter by an IRCC officer.
- **A Border Services Officer will make a final determination on the foreign national's eligibility to enter Canada at port of entry, as the discretionary test continues to apply.**

Immigration Program Impacts of COVID 19

Measures for current and prospective students

- **Study Permit Applications**

- IRCC continues to process Study Permit Applications.
 - Processing times are longer than usual due to the significant increase in applications received, and challenges related to the collection and submission of supporting documents, such as biometrics, police checks, etc.
- No applications will be refused or closed if an applicant can't give their biometrics due to COVID-19 related service closures.
 - The requirement for biometric collection has been extended beyond the original extension, and students currently do not have to submit their biometrics until the sites reopen.
 - Students should check the VACs website to confirm what services they offer.
 - Applicants who do not have the required documents for **Student Direct Stream** (SDS) upon submitting their application should apply through the regular study permit channels, until regular services resume.

- **Extending or Restoring Status in Canada**

- To extend the validity of a study permit or restore one's status from within Canada, students must apply on-line.
 - Due to restrictions on non-essential travel at the US-Canadian border, students **cannot travel** from inside Canada to apply at a port of entry.
 - Detailed instructions for those needing to update their status in Canada are available on IRCC's [website](#).

Student Work Programs during COVID 19

Work Authorizations for current Study and Work Permit holders

- **Student work authorizations**
 - Students can continue to work even if COVID-19 has forced them to become a part-time student or take a break in studies if they are
 - a full-time student
 - authorized to work on- or off-campus during studies
 - If working off campus, students can work up to 20 hours per week during an academic session. Students can work full-time during scheduled breaks in the academic year.
- **Temporary authorizations for students to work more than 20 hours/ week if:**
 - a study permit holder in an academic session
 - eligible to work off campus, and
 - providing an essential service
 - **This change is in effect until August 31, 2020**
 - Public Safety Canada provides guidance on Essential Services and Functions in Canada during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Immigration Program Impacts of COVID 19

Temporary Measures for Students

- **Temporary Measures for Post-Graduation Work Permit Program (PGWPP) eligibility**
 - In situations where in-class courses were moved to an online-only format because of COVID-19, students remain eligible for the PGWP.
 - Applicants may count the time spent pursuing their studies online from outside of Canada toward their eligibility for a post-graduation work permit, if:
 - they hold a study permit or have been approved for a study permit for studies beginning in the spring, summer and fall 2020 semesters, and
 - at least 50% of the program is completed in-class, in Canada.
 - If a student completes more than one PGWP-eligible programs of study within two years, the programs can be combined to determine the length of the work permit. Please note, 50% of each program must be completed in-Canada in order to be eligible for a post-graduation work permit.
 - Designated Learning Institutions should be prepared to provide a letter of support to explain how applicants' studies were affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, in the event that officers' require further information to assess future applications.

Immigration Program Impacts of COVID 19

Business Resumption and Next Steps

- **IRCC is currently working on updating guidance on international student programs and processes during COVID-19.**
- **The Department is also putting an operational plan in place and exploring options to support the fall 2020 intake of international students and to ensure that study permits are processed as efficiently as possible with available resources.**
- **IRCC is with working with the Provinces and Territories, as well as Education Sector Associations, to map out business resumption plans across the sector to ensure there are solid plans and accountabilities in place that will protect health, while also supporting the economy in preparation to ease travel restrictions.**



Questions?