

Work Opportunities for Foreign Students

You must come to Canada with enough money to live and pay your bills while you are studying, without needing to work. In certain situations, you may be able to work while you are studying. Working will help you earn extra money and gain Canadian work experience.

Do **not** work without being authorized to do so. If you do, you may be asked to leave Canada. [Learn more about work permits.](#)

You will need a Social Insurance Number to work in Canada. Learn more about [how to apply for a Social Insurance Number.](#)

You can obtain information on the conditions and eligibility requirements for students who want to work in Canada and who are in the following situations or programs:

- [Working on campus](#)
- [Working off campus](#)
- [Working under co-op and internship programs](#)
- [Working under the post-graduation work program](#)
- [Work for students at private institutions](#)
- [Work for your spouse or common-law partner](#)

Application, guide and forms

You can [download the application form and guide](#) for work permits, as well as the other forms that must be submitted with your application, and print them from your computer.

Working on campus

You may work on campus at the institution where you study without a work permit if:

- you are engaged in full-time studies at:
 - a public post-secondary institution;
 - a private post-secondary institution that operates under the same rules and regulations as a public institution, receives at least 50 percent of its financing for its overall operations from government grants (currently, only private college-level educational institutions in Quebec qualify); or
 - a Canadian private institution authorized by provincial statute to confer degrees.
- you have a valid study permit.

Working off campus

The Off-Campus Work Permit Program allows foreign students at publicly-funded post-secondary educational institutions to work off campus while completing their studies.

Publicly-funded post-secondary educational institutions are:

- public post-secondary institutions that have signed an off-campus work agreement with their provincial or territorial government; or
- private post-secondary institutions that operate under the same rules and regulations as public institutions, receive at least 50 percent of their financing for their overall operations from government grants, and have signed an off campus work agreement with their provincial or territorial government (currently, only private college-level educational institutions in Quebec qualify).

Off-campus work is available for students studying at such institutions in provinces or territories that have signed agreements with CIC. Check the [list of participating institutions](#). Participating institutions are eligible institutions that have signed an agreement for the Off-Campus Work Permit Program with their provincial or territorial government.

How do I participate?

To work off-campus, you have to apply for a work permit. Do not begin to work off campus until you have received your work permit. The work permit authorizes you to work up to 20 hours per week during regular academic sessions, and full time during scheduled breaks (e.g., winter or summer holidays and spring break).

To be eligible for an off-campus work permit, you will have to:

- have a valid study permit;
- be studying at a participating institution (see list above);
- have been a full-time student for at least six of the twelve months preceding your application for a work permit;
- be in satisfactory academic standing;
- sign a form authorizing the institution, the province and CIC to share your personal information (in order to confirm that you are continuing to study full time and that you are in satisfactory academic standing);
- complete a [work permit application](#) (available on the CIC Web site); and
- include with your work permit application an official receipt to show you have paid the [application processing](#)

[fee](#) of \$150.

Note: Six (6) months of full-time studies:

- Enrolment and participation in ESL/FSL programs are not included in the calculation of the six months of full-time studies.
- If your institution considers a student to have “full-time” status during the “work experience” portion of the program **and** the student continues to comply with the institution’s co-op rules, the student will be eligible for the work permit. Participation in the work experience portion of the program can be included in the calculation of the six months of full-time studies.

You **are not** eligible to apply for an off-campus work permit if you are:

- participating in a Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship Program funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT);
- participating in a Government of Canada Awards Program funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT);
- receiving funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); or
- attending a participating institution and registered in an English-as-a-second-language or French-as-a-second-language program.

For more information about the program and the application process, contact your institution’s international student advisor.

Remember, a work permit authorizing you to work off campus does not guarantee that you will find a job. It is your responsibility to find a job.

Even if you work off campus, your studies must remain your primary purpose for being in Canada.

If you have recently filed an off-campus work permit application under the terms of the pilot project, you should see your Designated Institutional Representative about the status of your application.

For more information, see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Working under the co-op and internship programs

For some academic programs, work experience is part of the curriculum. Foreign students who wish to participate in a co-op or internship program must apply for a [work permit](#) (there is no fee for this application).

To be eligible for a work permit, the following conditions must be met:

- you must have a valid study permit (unless you are a minor high-school student who does not require a study permit);
- your intended employment must be an essential part of your program of study in Canada;
- your employment must be certified as part of the academic program by a responsible academic official of the institution; and
- your co-op or internship employment cannot form more than 50 percent of the total program of study.

You do not need to pay for an application processing fee for this work permit.

Working under the post-graduation work program

The post-graduation work program is designed to provide graduating students with Canadian work experience in their field of study. Since May 16, 2005, this program has allowed certain students to work for up to two years after their graduation. Previously, students were only allowed to work for one year.

Length of study matters. The work permit cannot be valid longer than the length of time the student studied. For example, students graduating from a four-year degree program might be eligible for a one-year work permit or, if they meet the criteria, a two-year work permit. Students graduating from an eight-month certificate program would only be eligible for a work permit of eight months.

How do I participate?

To obtain a post-graduation work permit that is **valid for one year or less**, you must meet the following requirements:

- You must have graduated from
 - a. a public post-secondary institution;
 - b. a private post-secondary institution that operates under the same rules and regulations as a public institution, receives at least 50 percent of its financing for its overall operations from government grants (currently, only private college-level educational institutions in Quebec qualify); or
 - c. a Canadian private institution authorized by provincial statute to confer degrees;

Note: Distance learning programs are not eligible to

participate in the post-graduation work permit program

- you must have studied full-time for at least eight months preceding the completion of your program of study;
- you must have completed and passed the program of study and received a notification that you are eligible to obtain your degree, diploma or certificate;
- you must have applied for a [work permit](#) within 90 days of receiving written confirmation (e.g., transcript, official letter from the institution, etc.) from your institution indicating that you have met the requirements of completing your academic program;
- you must have a job offer from an employer for a job that is related to your field of studies; and
- you must have a valid study permit when you apply for the work permit.

You **cannot** have previously been issued a post-graduation work permit following any other program of study.

You are not eligible for the post-graduation work permit program if you have graduated from a distance learning program whether it is a degree, diploma or a certificate.

In order to apply for a work permit of **up to two years** after your graduation, you must meet all of the requirements above. You must also have

- successfully completed a program of at least two years of full-time studies;
- received written confirmation (transcript, letter, etc.) from the educational institution indicating that you have met the requirements of completing the program of study;
- studied at and graduated from an institution located outside of [the Communauté métropolitaine de Montreal \(CMM\)](#), [the Greater Toronto Area \(GTA\)](#) or [the Greater Vancouver Regional District \(GVRD\)](#);
- found employment outside of the CMM, GTA or GVRD.

Note: If you complete your studies at a campus located inside the CMM, the GTA or the GVRD, but at an institution whose headquarters for that campus are located outside those areas, you cannot obtain a two-year work permit under this program.

Note: If you graduate from an institution located inside one of those areas, you are not eligible for a second year of work, even if the employment is located outside of those areas.

If you currently hold a one-year post-graduation work permit and you meet the eligibility requirements for a two-year permit, you can apply for a one-year extension of your work permit.

You are not eligible for the post-graduation work permit program if you are:

- participating in a Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship Program funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT);
- participating in a Government of Canada Awards Program funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT); or
- receiving funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Send your work permit application to the Case Processing Centre in Vegreville, Alberta. Be sure to include a written confirmation (e.g., transcript, letter, etc.) from your institution indicating that you have met the requirements of your program, a job offer from an employer for a job that is related to your field of studies, and an official receipt which shows you have paid the appropriate processing fee.

Note: If you have a valid off-campus work permit (these are usually issued for the same period as your study permit: i.e., period of study plus 90 days), you will be able to start the job for which you have received an offer while awaiting the work permit you applied for under the Post-Graduation Employment Program.

When you apply for a post-graduation work permit, you do not have to get a labour market opinion from Service Canada. If you want to extend your work permit beyond the one-or two-year limit, then you will have to obtain a Service Canada opinion.

Work for students at private institutions

Students and graduates of private institutions* may apply for a [work permit](#) to work in Canada. The following conditions apply:

- You must have a job offer that has been confirmed by Service Canada; and
- You must have a valid study permit in order to apply for a work permit from within Canada.

* Private institutions that do not operate under the same regulations and evaluations as public institutions or that do not receive at least 50 percent of their financing for their overall operations from government grants, or that are not authorized to grant degrees.

Work for your spouse or common-law partner

Your spouse or common-law partner may apply for a [work permit](#) if:

- you are a full-time student at a

- public post-secondary institution;
 - private post-secondary institution that operates under the same rules and regulations as a public institution, receives at least 50 percent of its financing for its overall operations from government grants (currently, only private college-level educational institutions in Quebec qualify); or
 - a Canadian private institution authorized by provincial statute to confer degrees.
- you have a valid study permit.

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