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Additional information about International Student Program reforms

Ottawa, February 5, 2024—Further information is being provided to clarify the announcement of an intake cap on new international study permit applications and other changes. International students make important contributions to Canada's campuses, communities and economy; however, we have seen unsustainable growth in the International Student Program in recent years. These recently announced reforms will support sustainable population growth in Canada and improve system integrity, while helping to ensure that international students have a positive experience in Canada.

1. Cap and provincial attestation letter

As of 8:30 a.m. ET on January 22, 2024, most new post-secondary international students at the college or undergraduate level must provide a provincial attestation letter (PAL) from a province or territory with their study permit application. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

(IRCC) will return any application received that does not include a PAL, unless otherwise exempt.

This attestation will serve as proof that the student has been accounted for under a provincial or territorial allocation within the national cap. Provinces and territories have been asked to have a plan in place for issuing PALs by March 31, 2024. The Government of Canada is working with the Government of Quebec to determine how the certificat d'acceptation du Québec pour études could serve as a PAL.

International students whose applications were received by IRCC before 8:30 a.m. on January 22, 2024, as well as those who have already been approved for a study permit and intend to travel to Canada for an upcoming program, do not need to take further action as a result of the cap.

Who needs a provincial attestation letter?

- most post-secondary study permit applicants
- most non-degree granting graduate programs (for example, certificate programs and graduate diplomas)
- anyone else not included in the exception list below

Who doesn't need a provincial attestation letter?

- primary and secondary school students

- master's or doctoral degree students
- **in-Canada** visiting or exchange students **studying at a designated learning institution** | Corrected on February 27, 2024
- in-Canada study permit and work permit holders (includes study permit holders applying for an extension)
- in-Canada family members of study permit or work permit holders
- students whose application we received before 8:30 a.m. EST on January 22, 2024

2. Post-graduation work permit (PGWP) update for graduates of master's degree programs

In recognition that graduates of master's degree granting programs are excellent candidates to succeed in Canada's labour market and potentially transition to permanent residence, we have made a change to the length of the PGWP, so that they have the opportunity to meet the required Canadian work experience in order to apply for their permanent residence.

Starting on February 15, 2024, a longer, 3-year post-graduation work permit will be available to those who are graduating from a master's degree program that is less than 2 years and who meet all other PGWP eligibility criteria.

The length of PGWPs for programs other than master's degrees will

continue to align with the length of the study program, to a maximum of 3 years.

Who is eligible for a longer post-graduation work permit (PGWP)?

- Graduates of programs that are at least two years in length at PGWP-eligible designated learning institutions are eligible for a 3-year PGWP, as are graduates of master's degree programs less than 2 years in length.

3. PGWP eligibility for public-private partnership college programs

Some provinces allow public colleges to license their curriculum to be delivered by an affiliated private college. In these cases, students physically attend a private college, but graduate with a diploma from a public institution. Concerns have been raised with regard to the quality of education provided by these institutions, as well as the lack of sufficient student supports. The Auditor General of Ontario has also raised concerns about a lack of oversight into program quality and student services at these institutions.

As such, IRCC has made a change to restrict PGWPs for these institutions, anticipating that without the ability to apply for a PGWP, there will be a reduction in the number of international students enrolling in them.

Who is eligible for a PGWP after graduating from a public-private partnership college program?

- International students currently enrolled will remain eligible for a PGWP if they meet other program eligibility criteria.

Who is not eligible for a PGWP after graduating from a public-private partnership college program?

- New students enrolling in this type of program will not be eligible for a post-graduation work permit.

4. Changes to open work permit eligibility for spouses

In the coming weeks, eligibility for open work permits for the spouses and common-law partners of international students will be updated.

Who can get an open work permit?

- Eligibility is limited to the spouses and common-law partners of students in graduate (master's and doctorate) and professional degree-granting programs only.
- Once these changes are in effect, spouses and common-law partners of international students seeking to extend their existing work permit will continue to be eligible under this stream.

Who will not be eligible for an open work permit?

- The spouses and common-law partners of international students in other levels of study, including undergraduate and college programs, will no longer be eligible for an open work permit unless they already hold an open work permit under this stream.

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