



Citizenship and
Immigration Canada

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Immigration Canada

STUDY IN CANADA: Visas, Work and Immigration for International Students



www.cic.gc.ca/study



Canada

Canada has one of the best and most respected education systems in the world. Every year, thousands of students from other countries pursue their educational goals in Canada.

With new ways to gain valuable Canadian work experience during and after your studies, the advantages of studying in Canada are great. There are also permanent immigration options for international students who have graduated from post-secondary programs in Canada.

For full information about your options, please visit the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) website at www.cic.gc.ca/study.

You will need a study permit

If you wish to take academic, professional or vocational training at a university, college or other educational institution in Canada, you will need a study permit before you enter Canada.

There are a few exceptions to this rule. For example, you do not need a permit if you are enrolling in a short-term course or program of six months or less. However, if you think you might study for more than six months, it is a good idea to obtain a study permit before you arrive.

Choose a Canadian school, college or university

Before you can apply for a study permit, you must be accepted at a Canadian educational institution. In Canada, each province or territory manages its own education system. Different provinces and territories have different options and services for students.

Note: Some private institutions, such as career colleges and language schools, are not regulated by the government.

For more information on educational institutions in Canada, see www.cic.gc.ca/schools.

Once you have chosen a place to study, you will need to apply for admission. If the school admits you as a student, it will send you a letter of acceptance. You need this letter in order to apply for a study permit.

Please note that if you apply to study in the province of Quebec, the requirements are different. For more information, contact the school or see www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca.

Apply for a study permit

You must apply for a study permit from outside Canada, at the visa office responsible for the country or region where you live.

Many visa offices have specific local instructions about which documents you must submit with your application. Visit your visa office's website to find out what these are. There is a list of visa offices on the CIC website at www.cic.gc.ca/offices.

All the forms you will need, and guides to help you complete the forms, are available for free on CIC's website at www.cic.gc.ca/study. There is also a document checklist to make sure you include everything you need with your application.

You must include:

- your letter of acceptance;
- proof of your identity; and
- proof that you have sufficient funds for your stay in Canada.

Immigration representatives, consultants and lawyers

There are people who offer immigration advice or assistance to visa applicants. They usually charge a fee for their services.

You do not need to hire an immigration representative in order to apply for a study permit. Hiring one will not cause your application to get special attention.

If you do hire a representative, choose carefully, and make sure you hire someone who is *authorized* by the Government of Canada. CIC will not deal with anyone who is not authorized.

For more information, see the CIC website at www.cic.gc.ca/fraud.

Letter of acceptance

You must include the original letter of acceptance you received from the educational institution you plan to attend. This is to prove that you have been accepted.

You must ensure that all the necessary information is included in the letter. You can find the requirements at www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/accllet-e.pdf.

Proof of funds

You must also include proof that you have sufficient funds for your stay in Canada. This includes money for:

- tuition fees;
- living expenses for you and any family member coming to Canada with you; and
- return transportation for you and your family.

Please visit your visa office's website for information on accepted proof of funds.

For information about tuition fee estimates, cost of living in Canada's provinces, study permits and scholarships in Canada, visit www.educationau-incanada.ca.

Other information about study permits

You may be asked to provide additional documents. In many cases, you and any family member coming to Canada with you will need a medical examination. You and any family member who is 18 or over may also need a security check. The visa office can assist you with these matters.

The visa office may ask to interview you as part of the process. If so, they will tell you when and where the interview will take place.

If your application is approved, you will receive a letter of introduction confirming the approval. This is not your study permit, but it is proof that your application has been approved. You will need to bring this letter to Canada with you in order to obtain your study permit upon entering.

Depending on your citizenship or where you live, you may also need a temporary resident visa to enter Canada. To check the requirements for a visa, and to find out how to apply, see www.cic.gc.ca/visit.

Obtaining your study permit

When you arrive in Canada, you will be met by an officer from the Canada Border Services Agency.

You will need to show the officer:

- your letter of introduction from the visa office;
- your passport or other valid travel documents;
- the letter of acceptance from the school you will be attending;
- proof of funds documents; and
- your temporary resident visa, if required.

If you meet all the necessary conditions, the officer will give you a study permit.

Note: Canada Border Services Agency officers make the final decision on whether you will receive a study permit, based on Canadian law.

Renewing your study permit

You can apply to renew your study permit if you want to study longer. It is important to apply well before your current permit expires to ensure your permit remains valid. For information on how to renew your study permit, please visit www.cic.gc.ca/study

Work in Canada during and after your studies

You and your spouse or common-law partner may be able to work while you study and after graduation through a number of work permit programs for international students. Working in Canada can provide a source of income while you study, give you valuable work experience, help you make business contacts for the future, and even allow you to immigrate after your graduation.

Working while you study in Canada

You and your spouse or common-law partner may be eligible to work temporarily in Canada while you study. You may also be able to gain Canadian work experience after you graduate.

Working on campus

If you have a valid study permit, you may be able to work on the campus of the institution you attend without a work permit. You can work for the institution itself, or for a private business located on the campus.

To do this, you must be a full-time student at a public university, a community college, a *collège d'enseignement général et professionnel* (CEGEP), a publicly funded trade or technical school or a private institution authorized to confer degrees.

Working off campus

To work off campus, you must have a work permit. Through the Off-Campus Work Permit Program, you can work part-time during regular academic sessions (20 hours per week) and full-time during scheduled breaks, such as winter and summer holidays, and spring break. You can work in any occupation, and you can change employers whenever you like.

To qualify for the program, you must have a valid study permit, be a full-time student at a recognized postsecondary educational institution, and maintain satisfactory academic standing. Recognized institutions generally include a public, post-secondary college or university, a CEGEP in Quebec and degree-granting programs offered by private institutions.

For a list of participating institutions in the Off-Campus Work Permit Program, visit www.cic.gc.ca/institutions. Check with your institution to make sure the program that you choose is eligible.

Co-op and internship programs

If you are in a program with a work experience component, such as a co-op or internship placement, you will need a work permit as well as a study permit.

To get a work permit, you must prove that the work experience is essential to completing your program. Acceptable proof could include a letter from the school you are attending or a copy of the school curriculum.

The work experience cannot be more than 50% of your total program of study.

Working after graduation

The Post-Graduation Work Permit Program allows you to gain valuable Canadian work experience after you have completed your studies in Canada. This can help you apply to become a permanent resident of Canada.

To qualify, you must have graduated from a public or private institution that grants degrees recognized by the province or territory. These institutions may include a university, college or CEGEP.

Work permits under this program are valid for the length of your study program, up to a maximum of three years. For example, if you graduate from a four-year degree program, you could be eligible for a three-year work permit. If you graduate from an eight-month certificate program, you would be eligible for a work permit that is valid for eight months.

You must apply for a post-graduation work permit within 90 days of receiving written confirmation from your educational institution that you have met the requirements for completing your academic program.

With this permit, you can work in any occupation and change employers anytime you wish.

Work permits for spouses of students

If you are a full-time student at a recognized post-secondary institution, and you have a valid study permit, your spouse or common-law partner can apply for a permit to work in Canada. As long as they have a work permit, they can work in any occupation and change jobs at any time.

These permits are valid for the same period of time as your study permit.

For more information, visit www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work-spouse.asp.

How to apply

For more information about working during or after your studies in Canada, and how to apply, visit www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work.asp.

Staying in Canada permanently

If you want to make Canada your permanent home, there are a number of ways to apply. In most cases, you will not need to leave Canada.

Canadian Experience Class

The Canadian Experience Class makes it easier and more convenient for international students to apply for permanent resident status in Canada. If you have graduated from a post-secondary program at an eligible institution in Canada, and you have at least one year of work experience in Canada in a managerial, professional, technical or trade occupation after graduation, you may be eligible.

For more information, visit www.cic.gc.ca/cec.

The Federal Skilled Worker Program

If you have skills and experience that meet Canada's labour market needs, you may qualify for permanent resident status in Canada under the Federal Skilled Worker Program.

The CIC website has an interactive tool that will help you determine whether you meet the basic requirements. By answering a few simple questions, this tool will tell you if you may be eligible and what other options may be available to you. You can find it at www.cic.gc.ca/cometocanada.

Please visit the CIC website at www.cic.gc.ca/skilled to see the current eligibility criteria.

Note: The province of Quebec is responsible for selecting its own skilled workers. If you plan on living in Quebec, please visit www.cic.gc.ca/quebec for more information.

Provincial Nominee Program

Most Canadian provinces and territories have agreements with the federal government that allow them to nominate immigrants who have the skills, education and work experience needed to meet their specific economic and labour market needs. One of the standard requirements is that applicants must intend to settle in the province that nominates them.

To qualify, you must apply to the province or territory where you wish to settle and complete its nomination process. Each province or territory has its own requirements and application process.

If your application is accepted by the province or territory, you must apply separately to CIC for permanent residence. A CIC officer will then assess your application based on Canadian immigration regulations.

For more information on the Provincial Nominee Program, including links to provincial and territorial government websites, visit www.cic.gc.ca/pnp.

Entering Canada—The basic requirements

Everyone must meet basic requirements to come to Canada. For example, you must not pose a threat to the health, safety or security of Canada. Any record of criminal activity could prevent you from being allowed to come to Canada. You also must not provide false information or fraudulent documentation, or withhold information that could be related to your application.

Contact us

In Canada: You can call the CIC Call Centre at 1-888-242-2100 (toll-free) for more information. The automated voice response system can provide you with answers to general questions 24 hours a day. You can also speak to an agent during normal business hours. If you are hard of hearing and you use a text telephone, you can access the TTY service at 1-888-576-8502 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. your local time.

Outside Canada: You can contact the Canadian embassy, high commission or consulate responsible for your region.

Help us serve you better! Tell us what you think of this publication at www.cic.gc.ca/feedback.