

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information

for International Students

Global Affairs Canada's International Education Division is pleased to provide the following information and guidance that may be of assistance to international students. The resources listed provide information on study permit-related issues, as well as travel restrictions and exemptions that may affect international students, and Government of Canada programs for which international students may be eligible.

Canada deeply values the international students that have chosen to study in Canada and the contribution they make to our educational institutions, our communities and our country. Although the current circumstances are challenging, we hope that you will feel supported by your Canadian host institutions and the communities in which you live, whether you may be a first-year student, a soon-to-be graduating student, an exchange student or visiting researcher.

Individuals are encouraged to read through all the information available on each government website listed and to consult these sites regularly for the latest information relevant to their situation.

For international students specifically

- International students who remain in Canada can apply to renew their study permit, and can continue to study and work while their application renewal is being processed.
- At this time, international students who held a valid study permit granted before or on March 18, 2020, will be able to travel to Canada.
- If a study permit was issued to an international student after March 18, 2020, they are currently not allowed to travel to Canada.

Immigration status and related travel

- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has published detailed information on how the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is affecting [immigration, refugees, citizenship and passport services](#).
- This includes specific information, questions and answers related to, among others:
 - [Workers, students and visitors](#)
 - [Post-Graduation Work Permit eligibilities](#)
 - [International students providing essential services](#)
 - Guidance in situations where an international student's status [has expired](#), or is [about to expire](#)

- [Travel restrictions and exemptions](#), as well as details on [exemptions for certain international students](#)
- [IRCC offices and visa application centres](#)
- [Applying for a study permit from outside Canada](#)
- [Biometrics](#) collection
- **Update 2020/07/15:** IRCC has announced new temporary measures regarding legal status in Canada, study permits, and the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program.
 - As a result of the pandemic and its associated challenges, a new policy provides visa-holders with an extension to apply for restoration of status beyond the current 90-day timeframe for foreign nationals in Canada. Former workers, students and visitors whose status expired after January 30, 2020, and who remained in Canada now have until December 31, 2020, to apply to restore their status, provided they meet the requirements for the type of status and authorization they are applying to restore. More details can be found on [IRCC's website: Extension for temporary residents applying to restore their status](#).
 - A **new** 2-stage approval process WILL ALLOW students to start their programs online from their homes by first obtaining an approval-in-principle showing they have been accepted at a Canadian learning institution, and have the available funds and are eligible for the study permit and a final approval and issuance of the study permit once Visa Application Centres reopen and they are able to submit biometrics and other necessary documents.
 - IRCC is developing an "approval-in-principle" which does NOT guarantee that students will receive a full approval and be able to travel to 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.
 - Students will also be allowed 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. This process is available to students starting a program in the fall semester or earlier who submit a study permit application **before** September 15, 2020 and at least 50% of the program is completed in Canada. More details can be found in [IRCC's news release: Minister Mendicino announces changes to facilitate online learning for international students](#).

Eligibility for Government of Canada-funded benefits

- The Government of Canada has introduced a range of measures and programs under its [COVID-19 Economic Response Plan](#), including supports for those who have lost income due to COVID-19, as well as measures targeting [youth, post-secondary students and recent graduates](#).
- International students are invited to consult the Plan's section on [Support for individuals](#), to review measures for which they may be eligible. This could include the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, a removal of restrictions on hours worked for students working in essential services, and access for youth to mental health support, among others. Note that some student-focused measures in the plan may not be available to international students.

Employment Insurance and the Canada Emergency Response Benefit

- International students who are currently in Canada and who meet the eligibility criteria for either the [Employment Insurance \(EI\) program](#), or the **new** [Canadian Emergency Response Benefit \(CERB\)](#), can apply to receive financial support via one of these programs.
- Employment and Social Development Canada has published information on the new [Canada Emergency Response Benefit \(CERB\)](#) introduced as part of the [Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan](#). This measure targets workers in Canada whose income from employment or self-employment has been impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Visit the [Canada Emergency Response Benefit \(CERB\)](#) page for the most up-to-date information, including:
 - [Questions and Answers on:](#)
 - [How to apply](#); and
 - [Eligibility requirements](#), for example:
 - **Can you receive the Canada Emergency Response Benefit if you are not a citizen or permanent resident?**
 - Yes, if you meet the [eligibility requirements](#), which includes residing in Canada and having a valid Social Insurance Number.

Supporting international students working in an essential service

- International students are temporarily allowed to work **more** than 20 hours if they are:
 - A study permit holder in an academic session
 - Eligible to work off-campus
 - Providing an essential service (e.g., health care, critical infrastructure, supply of food or other critical goods).
- This temporary rule change will be in place until August 31, 2020.
- To see if your work is considered an essential service or function, check the [Guide on Essential Services and Functions in Canada During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

Information for Government of Canada-funded scholarship students

- Global Affairs Canada (GAC) is in close contact with its scholarship program administrators to identify guidance and support required by scholarship recipients. Individuals with concerns should reach out to their host institutions in Canada as a first point of contact.
- International students that are currently in Canada under one of the Student Exchange Programs, including the inbound portion of the Canada-China Scholars' Exchange Program (CCSEP), have the option to return to their home countries and finish their studies online (if their school offers that option). There will be no penalties for doing so. If a student wishes to withdraw completely from the program, they will still receive a prorated amount of the scholarship.
- To stay up-to-date with the latest information on Government of Canada funded scholarships, please subscribe to the [EduCanada RSS feed](#) and visit our Facebook page [@EduCanada.Official](#).

Health care, including mental health

- The Government of Canada is giving \$7.5 million in funding to [Kids Help Phone](#), a 24/7, national support service, offering professional counselling, information and referrals to young people in both English and French. The service is completely confidential and provides much-needed mental health support to youth during this difficult time. [You can reach out by phone, text or live chat](#) or dial 1-800-668-6868 to speak with a Kids Help Phone counsellor at any time.
- International students are encouraged to reach out to and remain in contact with their host institutions in Canada, in particular the international students' office, and their health care coverage providers to receive information on measures and supports in place for international students at this time.
- GAC is in regular contact with Canadian education associations, representing Canadian education institutions across the country, and it is our understanding that Canadian institutions are proactively providing psychological and mental health support related to the pandemic to their national and international students.
- Students are also encouraged to consult regularly municipal and provincial/territorial public health resources for information on guidelines and supports that apply to their host communities.

Housing

- International students living on campus are encouraged to reach out to and remain in contact with their Canadian host institutions, in particular the

international students' office, to receive information on housing services and supports in place for international students at this time.

- Each institution makes its own decisions with regard to support and mitigation measures for their students.
- GAC is in regular contact with Canadian education associations, representing Canadian education institutions across the country, and it is our understanding that the majority of Canadian education institutions are keeping their campus dormitories open for international students and Canadian students who may not have other accommodations. Where campus housing is no longer available, institutions are working closely with international students to help them find housing.

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