

International Student Start-Right Guide

**Arrive, study and work without putting your
status at risk**

For prospective and newly arrived post-secondary international students



PRACTICAL. CLEAR. SOURCE-BASED.

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www.theworldbridge.ca





How to use this guide

Use the actions in the order that fits your status, province and circumstances. Write in the planning pages and return to the source page before a high-consequence decision.

01**Start with legal and safety steps**

Confirm documents, conditions, deadlines and immediate needs before optional purchases.

02**Use official sources**

The linked authorities are the primary reference. Rules and eligibility can change.

03**Keep evidence**

Save confirmations, receipts, records and written advice in a secure system.

04**Ask early**

Use free newcomer supports and seek individualized advice for high-consequence decisions.

**IMPORTANT**

This guide provides general information and practical orientation. It is not a substitute for individualized immigration, legal, tenancy, employment, financial, tax or medical advice. Eligibility, procedures and provincial or territorial rules can change. Verify current requirements with the linked authority before acting.

Before travel and at entry

1

Carry the right evidence

- Passport, visa or eTA and port-of-entry letter of introduction
- Current letter of acceptance and proof of tuition or financial support
- School address, accommodation and contact details
- Medical or custodianship records where applicable

2

Be ready to explain your plan

- Know your program, school, start date and length
- Explain how the program fits your academic or career direction
- Be able to show how you will pay tuition and living costs
- Disclose material changes since approval

3

Inspect the study permit

- Check your name, passport details, school and expiry date
- Read all printed conditions
- Confirm whether work wording appears where expected
- Keep the original safe and report suspected errors promptly

Understand what your permit requires

1

Your core responsibilities

- Remain enrolled at the designated learning institution named for your studies
- Actively pursue the program unless an authorized exception applies
- Respect work, medical and location conditions
- Leave Canada or obtain new status by the required date

2

Permit, visa and SIN are different

- The study permit governs study status inside Canada
- A visa or eTA is generally used for travel to Canada
- A SIN is needed for authorized employment
- One document does not automatically renew the others

3

Keep a compliance file

- Save enrolment letters, transcripts and tuition records
- Keep proof of authorized leaves and school communications
- Record work hours and scheduled academic breaks
- Save every IRCC submission and confirmation

Before accepting any job

1

Confirm that you are eligible

- Your study permit must contain the required work condition
- You must meet IRCC's on-campus or off-campus requirements
- You cannot begin working before your study program starts
- A SIN does not create work authorization by itself

2

Check the job itself

- Confirm employer identity, duties, location, wage and hours
- Ask for written terms and keep pay statements
- Never pay for a job offer
- Do not let anyone keep your passport or permit

3

Know when to pause and ask

- Authorized leave, program completion and part-time study can change work eligibility
- Remote or self-employed work can still raise immigration questions
- A permit condition may require an immigration medical examination for certain jobs
- Get advice before working where the rule is unclear

Hours, breaks and placements

1

Regular academic sessions

- Eligible students may work off campus up to 24 hours per week
- Count all off-campus jobs together
- Keep your own weekly record even when employers track time
- Exceeding the limit can be unauthorized work

2

Scheduled breaks

- Eligible students may work full-time during a regularly scheduled break
- You generally must be a full-time student before and after the break, subject to IRCC rules
- A self-created break is not a scheduled break
- School calendars are important evidence

3

Student work placements

- As of April 1, 2026, eligible post-secondary students generally do not need a separate co-op work permit for required student placements
- Secondary students continue to need a co-op work permit
- Confirm that the placement meets IRCC and school requirements
- Keep placement letters and course records

Enrolment, leaves and academic changes

1

Actively pursue studies

- Attend and progress as required by your institution
- Respond to school requests and academic concerns
- Keep evidence where illness or another serious event affects studies
- Do not assume paying tuition alone proves compliance

2

Authorized leave

- Follow your school's formal leave process
- Understand that students cannot work during an authorized leave
- Keep approval, dates and reasons
- Seek advice if a leave may exceed IRCC limits or affect PGWP eligibility

3

Part-time studies

- Part-time status can affect work and PGWP eligibility
- Final-semester exceptions are specific and evidence-based
- Confirm course load before dropping a course
- Do not rely solely on informal advice from friends

Changing your school or program

1

Changing a post-secondary DLI

- A school change now generally requires a new study permit application
- Follow current IRCC instructions before changing institutions
- Keep the new acceptance letter and application evidence
- Do not begin based on outdated pre-November 2024 rules

2

Changing a program

- Confirm the new program's level, duration and PGWP implications
- Check the Classification of Instructional Programs code where field-of-study rules apply
- Consider tuition, transfer credits and completion timing
- Document the academic reason for the change

3

Before withdrawing

- Ask the school about refunds and reporting
- Review status, work authorization and future application consequences
- Plan a lawful next step before ceasing studies
- Obtain individualized advice where needed

Protect future PGWP eligibility

1

Confirm school and program eligibility

- A DLI is not automatically PGWP-eligible for every program
- Verify the specific program before registering
- For applicable non-degree programs, check the eligible field-of-study list
- Save the program page and your admission records

2

Protect your academic record

- Maintain required full-time study, subject to limited exceptions
- Keep evidence of every authorized leave
- Avoid unauthorized work
- Request completion and transcript documents promptly

3

Plan for current requirements

- Most PGWP applicants now need approved language test results
- Application timing and passport validity affect the permit
- IRCC generally allows up to 180 days after graduation to apply if requirements are met
- Review the current rules before your final semester

High-risk mistakes

1

Working when not authorized

- Before the program begins
- During an authorized leave
- Beyond permitted hours in a regular session
- After studies end without meeting the applicable work rules

2

Making undocumented changes

- Dropping to part-time without understanding consequences
- Changing schools without following current IRCC instructions
- Taking an informal leave
- Ignoring permit errors or expiring documents

3

Trusting sales language

- Do not rely on guarantees of work, PR or PGWP
- Verify the DLI, program and representative
- Request written school policies
- Use current IRCC sources, not recycled social-media posts

Semester compliance checklist

1

At the start

- Confirm permit and passport expiry dates
- Download the official academic calendar
- Confirm full-time course load and work eligibility
- Create a weekly work-hours log

2

During the semester

- Keep enrolment, tuition and attendance records
- Record changes, leaves and school advice in writing
- Review work hours every week
- Address academic difficulty early

3

Before the semester ends

- Confirm whether the upcoming break is officially scheduled
- Review next-semester enrolment
- Check immigration deadlines and travel documents
- Update your PGWP preparation file

My student status tracker

1

Documents

- Passport expires: _____ Visa/eTA: _____
- Study permit expires: _____
- SIN expires: _____
- Health insurance expires: _____

2

Academic record

- DLI and program: _____
- Expected completion: _____
- Full-time status confirmed by: _____
- Scheduled breaks: _____

3

Employment record

- Employer(s): _____
- Weekly hours tracker stored at: _____
- Permit condition checked on: _____
- Questions requiring advice: _____

Reliable sources and next steps

Open the linked authority and confirm the current rule before acting.

01 **IRCC - Prepare for arrival as a student**
www.canada.ca

02 **IRCC - Study permit conditions**
www.canada.ca

03 **IRCC - Work off campus**
www.canada.ca

04 **IRCC - Student work placements**
www.canada.ca

05 **IRCC - Changing schools**
www.canada.ca

06 **IRCC - PGWP eligibility**
www.canada.ca

07 **IRCC - PGWP field-of-study requirement**
www.canada.ca

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