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Government of Canada announces further measures to support international students

From: [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#)

News release

Ottawa, February 12, 2021—International students bring so much to Canada, contributing more than \$21 billion annually to our economy and supporting the vitality of our communities. The pandemic has presented myriad challenges for international students, and the Government of Canada has taken action to assist them through this difficult time with a variety of measures, including offering open work permits for former international students who hold or held a post-graduation work permit (PGWP).

As part of the Government's efforts to support international students, the Honourable Marco E. L. Mendicino, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, today announced further measures to ensure that international students won't miss out on opportunities after they graduate due to the pandemic. With the prospect of many international students continuing online learning from abroad for several more months, temporary changes to the PGWP Program put in place earlier in the pandemic are being extended and expanded.

These measures will assist international students by ensuring that studies completed outside Canada will count towards a future PGWP, and by allowing international students to complete their entire program online from abroad and still be eligible for a PGWP. The measures apply to all international students who are enrolled in a PGWP-eligible program, and meet all other PGWP criteria.

The government has made significant efforts to encourage international students to settle permanently in Canada. They bring strong employment and language skills, bolstered by their Canadian education and work experience, so they are typically well positioned to apply for permanent resident status. More than 58,000 graduates successfully applied to immigrate permanently in 2019, and their decisions to stay in Canada will help to address our stark demographic challenges.

As we confront the pandemic's second wave and chart a course for our recovery, attracting skilled immigrants is a central part of our plan. This new policy will help more graduates fill pressing needs in areas like health care, technology and more. As we look forward, it will help even more former international students build their futures in Canada, contributing in ways large and small to our short term recovery and long term prosperity.

Quotes

“Whether as health workers on the pandemic’s front lines, or as founders of some of the most promising start-ups, international students are giving back to communities across Canada as we continue the fight against the pandemic. Their status may be temporary, but the contributions of international students are lasting. This new policy means that students hoping to work in Canada after graduation won’t miss out on opportunities, while ensuring that Canada meets the urgent needs of our economy for today and tomorrow. Our message to international students and graduates is simple: We don’t just want you to study here, we want you to stay here.”

—The Honourable Marco E. L. Mendicino, P.C., M.P., Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Quick facts

- In 1971, there were 6.6 people of working age for each senior. There are currently 3 Canadian workers for every retired Canadian, but by 2035, there will be only 2 workers for every retiree. Without immigrants to help support the needs of an aging population, younger Canadians will end up paying more per person to provide the same benefits.
- These measures apply to all international students who
 - are enrolled in a [PGWP-eligible program](#)
 - began, or will begin, a program in any semester from spring 2020 to fall 2021, or whose program was already in progress in March 2020
 - have a study permit or approval for a study permit, or applied for a study permit prior to starting their program and are eventually

approved

- meet all other PGWP criteria

Associated links

- Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Visitors, temporary workers and students
- COVID-19: A guide for international students in Canada arriving from abroad

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