

Detailed notes on study permits for international students

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Who needs a study permit?

All international students studying in Canada for more than 6 months need a valid study permit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your study permit remains valid until you complete your program requirements.

Tip: Your study permit becomes automatically invalid 90 days from the date you complete your studies. Your program is considered complete when your registrar's office can issue written confirmation of your program completion (for example, an official letter or final grades).

There are additional details to review if any of the following statements apply to you:

I will be studying in Canada for less than 6 months

You may be exempt from the requirements of getting a study permit. However, we advise students to apply for a study permit even if they do not need one for the following reasons:

- If you apply for a study permit outside of Canada you will automatically get a visa or an eTA, whichever is required to travel to Canada, based on your citizenship.
- A study permit allows a full-time visiting or exchange student to work on campus.
- A study permit makes it easy for you to extend your stay in Canada in case you decide to study for another term.
- A study permit helps you get a Social Insurance Number (SIN) which is usually required to work on campus, open a bank account, get a phone plan or apply for a credit card.

I will be an exchange student

If you are an exchange student who plans to study in Canada for less than 6 months, you are not required to get a study permit. However, we advise students to get a study permit for the reasons mentioned above. If you don't want to get a study permit, you are still required to get an entry visa or an electronic travel authorization (eTA), depending on your country of citizenship.

I will be an International Undergraduate Visiting Research student

If you are coming to Canada to conduct research or complete an internship, we recommend that you apply for an LMIA-Exempt work permit. If your application is successful, you will automatically be issued an entry visa or electronic travel authorization (eTA), depending on your citizenship. Many visiting undergraduate student researchers have come to Canada through the [International Experience Canada](#) or [Research Award Recipients](#) pathway. As each LMIA-Exempt work permit pathway has specific eligibility criteria and documentation, every International Undergraduate Visiting Research student is managed on a case-by-case basis. For more information, please email placements@utoronto.ca.

I will be an International Visiting Graduate Student (IVGS)

If you have been accepted to the University of Toronto through our School of Graduate Studies program (International Visiting Graduate Student [IVGS]) we recommend that you apply for a study permit using your letter of acceptance. This is particularly

important if you plan to work on campus or receive payment from your host supervisor/department.

Canadian Immigration officials may allow visiting students/researchers to study for up to 6 months or conduct research for up to 120 days with visitor status. However, we still recommend that visiting students apply for a study permit to ensure greater rights and flexibility.

Note: Sometimes Immigration officers instruct visiting students/researchers to apply for a work permit instead of a study permit. If you are asked to apply for a work permit, contact our School of Graduate Studies at sgs.international@utoronto.ca. You will need different documents to apply for the work permit.

I am under 18 years old

If you will not be 18 years old by the date you start your program you may need to find a Canadian Citizen or permanent resident who can act as your custodian/guardian. This can be an extended family member, family friend or business associate living in Ontario. There are a number of agencies in Toronto that provide custodianship services for a fee. If you are turning 18 soon, the online application may not request proof of a custodian. If you are unsure, or are applying on paper, we recommend you contact the [the visa office serving your country](#), as they may waive this requirement.

I am coming to U of T from a Canadian high school

You should plan to apply for a new study permit before your current study permit expires.

I am transferring to U of T from a Canadian college or university

Your valid study permit allows you to transfer between different Canadian universities and colleges. You must notify [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada \(IRCC\)](#). To do this, submit a **Designated Learning Institution (DLI) student transfer** request through your online “IRCC Secure” account. Once logged into your account, look for the link “Transfer from DLI number”.

You must also complete this process if you have used an offer from another university to get your study permit.

I am a US citizen or permanent resident, or a resident of Greenland or St. Pierre and Miquelon

You can apply for a study permit at a Canadian border, but we recommend that you apply online in your country at least two to three months prior to the start date of your program of study.

I am a student with dependents

You can include your dependents when applying for your **INITIAL study permit**.

Your spouse/partner can either apply to join you as a visitor or they can request a [spousal open work permit](#).

If you have school-aged children, you are expected to request a study permit for them before coming to Canada. If your children are not yet school-aged, you can request a visitor visa or an eTA (depending on their citizenship) to allow them to enter as visitors. Children of international students can attend school regardless of whether they have a study permit or a visitor record.

Note: Dependents may be granted status expiry dates to match your study permit if they enter Canada with you. If, for any reason, they are given shorter status, an application to extend their status must be submitted before the expiry date.

When you are applying for an **EXTENSION of your study permit** you can also include your dependents.

If you are accompanied by your spouse/partner, you should also extend her/his stay in Canada. If your spouse has a work permit, they should extend their work permit if they entered Canada as a visitor and are currently holding a visitor record they have the option to either extend their stay as a visitor or they can [apply for a spousal work permit](#).

If you have children, you should also extend their study permit if they have one. If they entered Canada as a visitor and are currently holding a visitor record you have the option of either extending their stay as a visitor or you can apply for them for a study permit if they are or will be attending school.

When to apply

INITIAL study permit (outside Canada)

Generally, you must apply for a study permit BEFORE you come to Canada. There are very few exceptions when students can apply from within Canada or at the borders.

The study permit application process can be very time-consuming. In certain countries, it may take 6 to 12 weeks to process a study permit application. [Check the study permit application processing time for your country.](#)

Apply for a study permit as soon as possible after you receive your letter of acceptance/admission from the University of Toronto.

We recommend that you apply at least two to three months before the start date of your program of study, if possible.

Study permit EXTENSION (inside Canada)

If your initial study permit will expire before you complete your degree requirements, you should apply for an extension at least two to three months before the expiry date of your current permit. Extension applications in Canada must be submitted online. If you need help with the application, you can [schedule an appointment with an International Student Immigration Advisor](#) on the CLNx.

How to apply

We HIGHLY recommend you apply online through the IRCC website.

Online applications can be processed faster and are more secure than paper applications.

If you will be applying online, please review the information available on our "[Apply online to Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship \(IRCC\)](#) (PDF)".

If you decide to apply on paper for your INITIAL study permit, follow the steps below:

1. [Download the application package](#) specific to the visa office serving your country of citizenship/residence. The package includes an application guide, the forms you need to fill out, and a checklist of required supporting documents.
2. Fill in the forms, validate (click the button that says 'validate') and sign those that require a signature.
3. Pay your application fees. The application fee is \$150 CAD. You can either pay online and print the receipt or you can pay at the Visa Application Centre (VAC) serving your country of citizenship/residence.
4. Submit your application in-person or by mail to a VAC serving your country of citizenship/residence. Note that if you apply on paper at a VAC, you must also be required to pay the VAC services fees. If you are required to submit biometrics as part of your application, that will often happen at a VAC.

Once your study permit is approved

For your INITIAL study permit

If your application is approved, the visa office serving your country of residence/citizenship will issue you a **Letter of Introduction** and a **visa** or an **eTA** (if applicable). Do not book travel to Canada until you've received your Letter of Introduction. **Present the letter to the border officer when you enter Canada to get the hard copy of your study permit.**

If you require a **Temporary Resident Visa** (TRV, also known as an entry or visitor visa), you will be asked to submit your passport so that the visa officer can affix the visa.

If you require an **electronic Travel Authorization** (eTA), you don't have to submit your passport. An eTA will be issued electronically and associated with your passport number. Your eTA number and expiry date will be included in the Letter of Introduction.

For your study permit EXTENSION

If your application for extension is approved, your extended study permit will be mailed to the Canadian mailing address that you provided when applying. If your application is refused, you will be provided with instructions about what you should do.

Notes and reminders

A **study permit is not a travel document** and does not authorize entry or re-entry into Canada. With the exception of American citizens, international students ALSO need to have either a Temporary Resident Visa (TRV or Entry Visa) or an electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) [depending on your country of citizenship](#)/residence.

eTA: If you are from a [visa-exempt country](#), you will be issued an eTA automatically once your study permit application is approved.

TRV: If you plan to travel outside of Canada and your original TRV is going to expire before the expiry date of your new study permit, apply for a new TRV.

The application for a TRV renewal is similar to the study permit extension. You should log-in to your IRCC account and answer the questionnaire the same way you did when you were applying for the study permit. The system will give you the option to “Apply for a Study Permit” and another option to apply for a “Temporary Resident Visa”. You should proceed with the Temporary Resident Visa option. Check our “[Apply online to Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship \(IRCC\)](#) (PDF)” for detailed information about the application process and the required documents.

If you have a Social Insurance Number (SIN): Once you receive your study permit extension you will need to renew your [SIN](#) by [applying online or by mail](#).

You can also apply for your SIN in person at a [Service Canada Office](#). Below you will find a list of the Service Canada Offices that are close to St. George campus:

- 25 St. Clair Ave. East, Toronto, Ontario
- 559 College Street, Suite 100, Toronto, Ontario

Additional offices and locations can be found on the [Service Canada website](#). There is no fee for getting your SIN and in most cases the SIN will be given to you when you apply for it.

Please note that your SIN will have the same expiry date as your study permit. This means that you need to renew your SIN whenever you extend your study permit or apply for a new work permit.

What happens if ... ?

There is additional information to review if any of the following statements apply to you:

My study permit has expired

Your initial study permit is usually valid until its expiry date. After that date, the IRCC will consider your immigration status to be “Implied” or “Out of Status”.

A. IMPLIED STATUS

Implied Status means that you applied for your extension prior to the expiry date on your initial study permit and that you may legally remain in Canada until a decision is made on your application for extension of your study permit.

There are two types of implied status: **Type One** and **Type Two**. If you are waiting for a decision on your immigration status, you should be aware of which type of implied status you have, as it will affect your legal responsibilities.

Type One Implied Status: You are an international student with a post-secondary study permit and have applied for an extension of your study permit before it expires. Under Type One Implied Status, you may continue your studies in Canada. Additionally, if the original permit allows you to work while in Canada, you may continue your employment. The right to continue to study and/or work during Implied Status is only valid if you remain in Canada while the application is processed.

Type Two Implied Status: You are an international student who has applied to change the type of permit that you hold, for example if you have a work permit and apply for a post-secondary study permit, you are allowed to remain in Canada while awaiting a decision on your permit change. You are not allowed to study until you receive the hard copy of your post-secondary study permit.

B. OUT OF STATUS AND RESTORATION OF STATUS

If your study permit expires and you have not submitted an application to extend, you will be considered Out of Status. You will need to apply for a Restoration of Status no more than 90 days after the expiration of your study permit. In this situation, you will be required to pay an additional fee to restore your student status, as well as the regular processing fee for the study permit extension. The total fee for a restoration of status application is \$350 (CAD).

Note that you are not allowed to study or work until a decision is made on your Restoration of Status application. Also, a Restoration of Status application can only be processed if you remain in Canada. If you leave the country, your application may be cancelled. In this case, you would have to submit a new application to the closest Canadian consulate/embassy or Visa Application Centre (VAC) serving the country you travel to.

I am studying part-time

Studying part-time is authorized but it does have a negative impact on your eligibility to work on and off campus while studying. In addition, studying part-time will affect your eligibility for post-graduation work permit that international students can apply for after graduation.

Current immigration regulations require an international student to have completed their degree requirements on a full-time basis, without any gaps, in order to qualify for the post-graduation work permit. The only exception to the full-time requirement is the very last term (not whole year) and scheduled breaks. The exceptions to the requirement not to have gaps are discussed below.

I am taking a gap term/year or a leave of absence

A condition of a study permit is that international students **are expected to be actively enrolled** in their program of study as long as they are in Canada. Taking a gap/leave may affect your legal status and especially your eligibility to stay or work in Canada.

Under current immigration regulations, a student who takes a leave/gap from their studies will **still be considered as actively enrolled** if the leave/gap **is authorized by the school** and **lasts less than 150 days**. In this case, the student does not lose their legal status. They can remain in Canada, but **they are prohibited from working**. If a student does not resume their studies **within 150 days**, they should do either of the following:

- [change their status to Visitor](#)
- leave Canada

An **authorized leave** of absence that lasts **less than 150 days** will not affect your eligibility for the post-graduation work permit if you had a valid reason for taking the leave/gap.

[Find more information about valid reasons for leave.](#)

I want to study AND work in Canada

Degree students: International students enrolled full time in a degree program are eligible to work on-campus as many hours as they want, off-campus a maximum of 20 hours/week during the academic year and full-time during scheduled breaks. Please visit our [Work permits page](#) for more information.

Non-degree students: Exchange and visiting students may work on-campus if enrolled in full time studies but they are not allowed to work off-campus. Detailed information about the eligibility and conditions related to on and off-campus employment can be found on our [Work permits page](#).

I am under (academic) suspension

Usually a study permit remains valid during suspension and in most cases suspended students are allowed to come back using the same Study Permit and TRV/eTA (if applicable).

However, the study permit DOES NOT ALLOW suspended students to stay or work in Canada. The study permit is an immigration document that **requires an international student to be actively enrolled in a program of study**. The immigration regulations state that a Study Permit becomes automatically invalid 90 days from the date a student officially stops studying.

Suspended students usually have three options:

1. Enroll in [another approved institution](#) and inform the government that they have changed institutions. This can be done online after creating an IRCC account.
2. Leave Canada within 150 days.
3. Change status by applying for [an extension of a stay as a visitor](#) (which requires a detailed explanation of why a student wants to stay in Canada).