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 stop studying or complete your studies. Your program is considered complete when you
receive written confirmation of your program completion (for example, an official letter or final grades) from your registrar office.

There is additional information 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 you will automatically get a visa or an eTA, whichever applies to your country of citizenship.

A study permit allows a 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.

**Exchange students**

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.

**International Undergraduate Visiting Research students**

If you are coming to Canada to conduct research or complete an internship, we recommend that you apply for an LMIA-Exempt work permit. You may also be required to get an entry visa or an electronic travel authorization (eTA). Many visiting undergraduate student researchers have come to Canada through the [International Experience Canada](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/international-experience-canada.html) or [Research Award Recipients](https://www.canada.ca/en/research-innovation/services/graduate-students-research-awards.html) 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.

**International Visiting Graduate Students (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. Often, Canadian Immigration officials allow visiting students/researchers to study for up to 6 months or conduct research for up to 120 days using the visitor’s visa or the eTA; whichever is applicable to your country. However, we recommend that visiting students apply for a study permit using their letter of acceptance, especially if they plan to work on campus or receive payment from their supervisor/department.

Note that 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 will 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, 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 will need a post-secondary study permit, even if your high school study permit is still valid. It is illegal to study at the university level with a high school study permit.

**I am transferring to U of T from a Canadian college or university**
Your valid study permit is transferable between different Canadian universities and colleges. You must notify the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). You must also notify IRCC if you have used an offer from another university to get your study permit. The easiest way to do this is online with your IRCC account also called a MyCIC account. Look for the link “Transfer Schools” and submit the transfer form.

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 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 you may apply for them for a spousal work permit.

If you have children, you have the option of either getting them a study permit or they may apply for a visitor’s visa or an eTA and enter as visitors. However, if your dependents join you as visitors you will have to extend their stay by applying for a visitor’s record, which allows them to stay with you on a visitor’s status until you graduate. Children of international students can attend school regardless of whether they have a study permit or a visitor’s record.

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

If you are accompanied by your spouse, 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’s 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’s 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 for your 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 six to 10 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 you receive a letter of acceptance/admission from the University of Toronto.

We recommend that you apply two to three months before the start date of your program of study.

When to apply for a study permit EXTENSION (inside Canada)?

If your initial study permit will expire before you complete your degree requirements, you should apply for an extension two to three months before the expiry date of your current permit. You can apply either on paper or online. We highly recommend that you apply online as it is faster and more secure than paper applications. If you need help with the application, you can schedule an appointment with the 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. A paper application can take more than three months to process.

**First, be sure you are eligible to apply for a study permit.** Answer a series of questions in the [Come to Canada assessment tool](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coming-canada/camassessment-tool.html). The tool will generate a personal reference code that looks similar to QK4350881372. The code is located at the top of the page. Record your personal reference code for later use.

**Apply on paper**

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 the application guide and all the forms you need to fill out.
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 CDN $150. 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 pay the VAC services fees.

The IRCC no longer accepts paper applications for study permit extensions; you must apply for an extension online.

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**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 your 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 or Entry Visa), you will be asked to submit your passport to be stamped with a visa.

If you require an **electronic Travel Authorization** (eTA), you don’t have to submit your passport. An eTA will be issued to you automatically. 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 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 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 set to expire before the expiry date of your new study permit, renew your 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 [visa application page](#) 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**. You should 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
• 100 Queen Street West, Floor 1, 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 study permit, you are allowed to remain in Canada while awaiting a decision on your permit change. However, you are not allowed to study until you receive the hard copy of your 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 and you will have to submit a new application to the closest Canadian consulate/embassy or application centre serving your country.

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 the three-year post-graduation work permit that international students get after graduation.

Per the current immigration regulations, an international student is required 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.

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

International students are expected to be actively enrolled in their program of study during the validity of their study permit. 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 90 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.