

Post-Graduation Work Permit Application Guide

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Important Notes About This Guide and About PGWPs

This is a practical guide that most Carleton students can use to assess their eligibility and prepare an application for a Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) from within Canada. Watch for the alert icons: some students are advised to seek a personal consultation with an ISSO immigration advisor.

- This guide assumes you are making an online application for a PGWP (only) from within Canada and that you have a valid study permit at the time of submission. Students may be applying in other circumstances such as:
 - From outside of Canada
 - With restoration of status in Canada
 - Applying for a PGWP together with extensions of status for accompanying family members
 - Applying for the residual portion of a PGWP, if a first PGWP was valid to passport expiry only



Contact the ISSO for information about these options, which are not covered in this Guide. The ISSO does **not** recommend the “flagpoling” option for the PGWP.

It's important to know:

- Following this guide does not guarantee a particular outcome.
- IRCC stands for *Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada*, the government department that establishes PGWP eligibility rules, reviews and makes decisions on work permit applications. Official and fully detailed information about the PGWP is found on the [IRCC website](#).
- Eligibility for the PGWP depends on your academic record throughout your program. Part-time study and some breaks from study can make you ineligible. If you took an [authorized leave](#) from

studies you can still be eligible for a PGWP, but your application must explain and document the circumstances related to your leave.

- There is a strict 180-day eligibility period to apply for the PGWP. This eligibility period usually starts *before* your graduation date, as explained in Part One of this guide.
- Due to COVID-19, IRCC implemented temporary PGWP rules related to distance learning (online study). These temporary rules over-rode some of the usual PGWP rules, so that distance learning, either inside or outside of Canada, did not affect PGWP eligibility or validity (length) during most of the period 2020 to 2022. The temporary rules were phased out during 2023 and end entirely on December 31, 2023. Temporary rules for 2020 to 2023 are explained on [the IRCC website](#). This guide presents only the regular PGWP rules related to distance learning, which are:
 - Completing the program with more than 50% done as distance learning makes the student not eligible for the PGWP; and
 - Online learning from outside of Canada is not credited towards the length of the PGWP.
- If you want to work in certain fields (which are listed in the set-up questionnaire for the PGWP application), you may need an immigration medical exam (IME). IMEs are normally valid for one year, but IRCC has a temporary policy in place until October 6, 2024. In-Canada applicants who would normally require an IME may be exempt from completing a new exam if they had a clear IME within the past five years. Find details on the [IRCC website](#).

Other ways to learn about PGWPs are:

- Online PGWP information sessions — Multiple sessions each term are listed on the ISSO’s [Events Calendar](#).
- The ISSO’s [PGWP Brightspace course](#) — You can self-enroll and watch the videos at your own pace.
- Carleton University students may contact the ISSO for additional information and support.

Email: immigration.advising@carleton.ca
Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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Part One: Check Eligibility and Get Ready to Apply

Once your final marks are posted on Carleton Central, you can get the Carleton documents you need to apply for your PGWP. It's not possible to apply before you have completed all program requirements. If you answer "yes" to each question below, you are ready to begin the application.

a) Are you eligible for a PGWP?

Applying for the PGWP can be a waste of your time and application fees if you don't first confirm that you are eligible. Some of the important eligibility criteria are:

- You completed a Carleton degree, diploma or certificate program that is at least 8 months long.
- You studied with full-time status throughout your program, unless it was a summer break period or in only one final term.
- You have been compliant with [conditions of study permit holder status](#), including not taking [unauthorized leaves](#) from your studies.
- Are not ineligible for one of the reasons listed under "Exceptions to the eligibility requirements" at the [IRCC website](#). A few of the exceptions are:
 - You previously had a PGWP
 - You received funding from certain scholarship or fellowship programs
 - You did more than 50% of your program credits through online study

This is not a complete or detailed list of the eligibility criteria. It is important to check all the criteria at the [IRCC website](#), including an explanation of what types of breaks may be "authorized".



If you are not sure whether you are eligible for a PGWP, or if you have concerns about part-time study, distance learning, or breaks from studying, contact the ISSO.

b) Do you have a valid study permit?

Your study permit is valid if:

- It has not yet expired according to the date printed on it, and
- It has not become invalid because more than 90 days has passed since the date on your program completion letter from Carleton, and you aren't continuing to study in another program.



If you don't have a valid study permit, you may still be able to apply for the PGWP, provided you are still within the 180-day eligibility period. Contact the ISSO for more information.

- c) Do you have a document from Carleton confirming that you have completed all program requirements and are eligible to graduate?

This document is *not* your diploma given at convocation. It can be *one* of the following options:

- *For those who want to apply as soon as possible, **Confirmation of Eligibility to Graduate** —* The letter is available at Carleton Central once your audit indicates “All Requirements Identified Below Have Been Met”. Look under “Student Online Applications” → “Apply to Graduate”.
- Following the Carleton Senate Convocation Meeting, which usually takes place 1-2 months after the end of your final term, a **Certificate of Enrolment, option 4 showing graduation**, is available from Carleton Central and may be used as a completion of studies letter.

- d) Is your completion of studies letter from Carleton dated within the past 180 days?

If more than 180 days have passed, you are no longer eligible for a Post-Graduation Work Permit.

- e) Do you have a final transcript?

Once your final grades have been posted, you can request a transcript from Carleton Central. IRCC accepts an unofficial transcript for an online PGWP application.



Some students cannot order documents from Carleton Central due to a financial hold. The ISSO may be able to facilitate a process that will allow you to apply for your PGWP within your eligibility period. [Contact an immigration advisor](#). *Please note* that we cannot guarantee that IRCC will accept documents sent by Carleton. It is much better for you to pay what you owe to the university so you can include all required documents with your application.

- f) Do you have a valid passport?

Your PGWP won't be valid beyond the expiry date on your passport. If your passport is going to expire soon, you may want to get a new passport before you apply for the PGWP. If you choose not to do that, your initial PGWP will be issued to passport expiry. You can apply for the remaining PGWP validity once you have a new passport. You will have to pay the application fees a second time. This is the only scenario in which you can apply for an extension of a PGWP.

Other Considerations Before You Apply

- a) Do you know the application fees for a PGWP?

Total fees are \$255: \$155 for a work permit application plus a \$100 open work permit fee.

- b) Do you know if you have given biometrics within the past 10 years?

If you are not sure, use the [Check Status tool](#). If you haven't given biometrics previously, you may have to give them with your PGWP application. There is an additional \$85 fee for biometrics.

After you submit your application you will receive a biometrics instruction letter. You can then make an appointment with a Service Canada collection centre.

- c) Do you know what work is authorized while you are transitioning from study permit holder to work permit holder?

If you have a valid study permit when you apply for the PGWP AND you have been authorized to work off-campus while studying, AND you have not worked more than authorized by your study permit, then these rules apply:

- *Until you receive confirmation that you are eligible to graduate* — You have the usual school term work authorization, limited to 20 hours per week off-campus.
- *Once you receive the confirmation* — You have no authorization to work, either on- or off-campus.
- *Once you submit an application for the PGWP* — You can work full-time. The proof of this is your study permit, the Acknowledgement of Receipt from your online application, your sworn statement on IMM 5710, and [IRPR 186\(w\)](#). *If you did not apply while you had a valid study permit, you are not allowed to start working until you receive the work permit.*

If your work permit application is refused, you must stop working. Unauthorized work can make you ineligible for a PGWP and inadmissible to Canada for a period of six months.

- d) Do you know how long your work permit will be valid?

The validity period of the work permit is the amount of time between the issue and expiry dates. These are the guidelines for Post-Graduation Work Permit validity:

- Program length more than 8 months and less than 2 years: PGWP validity period is the same as the program length
- Program length is 2 years or more: PGWP validity period is 3 years.

The immigration officer looks at your Carleton documents to determine program length and make a decision on PGWP validity. Distance learning from outside of Canada is not credited in the PGWP validity period.

Detailed information on how officers determine PGWP validity is found at the [IRCC website](#).

- e) Do you know what work you will be authorized to do with a PGWP?

A PGWP is an open work permit, which means you may work at most types of jobs, for any employer, anywhere in Canada. There will be a few restrictions noted on the work permit, especially if you choose not to do a medical exam before applying for the work permit.

If you hope to use your work experience on a PGWP to qualify for one of Canada's permanent residence programs for skilled workers, you should know that:

- Canada’s largest PR programs for economic immigrants that do intake through Express Entry require work experience in skilled position (TEER 0, 1, 2 or 3) according to Canada’s [National Occupational Classification](#).
- You may be self-employed on a PGWP. However, self-employment is not qualifying work experience for the [Canadian Experience Class](#).

f) Will you be able to extend your PGWP?

It’s not possible to extend a PGWP, unless the validity of an initial PGWP was limited due to passport expiry.

g) Can you get a second PGWP if you do a second qualifying program of study?

No. You are not eligible for a second PGWP if you have already had one.

h) Do you have a spouse or common-law partner with an open work permit?

Their current work permit is valid until the expiry date, even if you have finished school. They aren’t eligible to apply for a new work permit until you can provide an employer’s letter showing you are working. [Learn more about work permits for family members](#).

Part Two: Make an On-Line Application

- 1) [Sign in](#) to an IRCC Secure Account to begin an application
- 2) Scroll down your home page to look for “Start an Application → “Apply to Come to Canada”
- 3) Choose “Visitor visa, study or work permit”
- 4) Answer the eligibility questionnaire:
 - See Part Four: *Answer the Eligibility Questionnaire*

After you finish the questionnaire, the system will create your document list. Most in-Canada PGWP applications will consist of these items:

- IMM 5710 — Application to Change Conditions or Extend your Stay in Canada as a Worker
- Recent Education Transcript
- Completion of Studies Letter
- Passport
- Digital Photo

Optional Items

- Schedule 1 – IMM 5257. If you answer “No” to the background questions 3-6 on IMM 5710, you don’t need to complete this form.

- Client Information – This is a letter from you and/or any additional documents. You should include these if you need to explain breaks from studies or anything else about your academic history.



Important note for graduate students: If the number of courses on your transcript might lead the immigration officer to believe you were not a full-time student (fewer than 1.5 credits per term), then add historical Certificates of Enrolment to your application, as they will confirm your full-time status.

If you have questions about what additional documents to include in a PGWP application or where to put them in the application, [contact the ISSO](#).

Once you start the online application, you have 60 days to finish it. The system automatically saves your work.

Upload your documents in digital format, one document per line. The website www.smallpdf.com can be used to merge multiple PDFs into one document, or to reduce file size.

When all your documents are uploaded, “continue” to sign the application electronically, pay the fees and submit the application.

Once you submit the application, you will immediately receive an Acknowledgement of Receipt. This is an important letter that you should keep in your files.

IRCC also provides a second letter that you can show to employers to confirm your authorization to work. This letter will state that you are authorized to work until a certain date. However, according to [Canadian law](#), you may be authorized to work without a work permit for as long as it takes for IRCC to process your application. You **do not** have to stop working on the date given in this letter. Your SIN also remains valid while IRCC is processing your application for renewal of status.

If you need an updated letter showing that you are authorized to work past the date on the original letter, you may request a new one using the [IRCC web form](#).

Part Three: Complete Application Form IMM 5710

- Download the form from the document list to your computer
- Open the file with [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)
- Fill in the information on your computer (*tips are found below*)
- When it is complete, click “Validate”, then save the document on your computer.
- Upload the form to your application

Tips for completing the form:

- If a field is marked with a “*”, it must be completed. Other fields may be left blank, if the question does not apply to you.

- Page One: UCI = Unique Client Identifier. This is your ID number with IRCC. You can find this number on your study permit.
- Page One: I am applying for one or more of the following — Select “Apply for a work permit for the first time or with a new employer”
- Page One: Current country of residence – Canada
Status: Student
From: (Date of start of studies/first study permit) to (expiration date of current study permit)
- Page Two: National Identity Document — Not all countries have a National ID. If yours does, provide the information.
- Page Two: Mailing address in Canada — This is where you want IRCC to send the new study permit. Residential address — This is where you are living now.
- Page Three: Date and place of your original entry to Canada; date and place of your most recent entry to Canada — Dates and locations of entry should match stamps in your passport or your travel records, if you don’t have a stamp.
- Page Three: Document number of your current status document — This number starts with an F and is printed in black ink near the top right of your study permit.
- Page Three: Details of Intended Work in Canada — Select “Post-Graduation Work Permit” from the pull-down menu. The rest of the section can be left blank – except for checking “No” beside the question *Have you been issued a certificate under the Provincial Nominee Program?* Details about employer, job title and duties aren’t relevant to an open work permit like the PGWP.
- Page Three: Employment — For current activity, you may want to say that you are a “Job Seeker”, in which case write “not applicable” or “none” in the field for the employer.
- Pages Four and Five: Background Information — Read the questions carefully and answer truthfully. Provide explanations for “yes” answers. Your answers to these questions are a sworn statement. Incorrect or missing information may be treated by IRCC as [misrepresentation](#), making you inadmissible to Canada.
- Page Five: Signature — Type your name in the box.

Part Four: Answer the Eligibility Questionnaire

These are *suggested* answers, assuming the application is made in Canada with a valid study permit. You should always provide the correct information for yourself and your situation. The questionnaire may have fewer or more questions, depending on your personal answers.

What would you like to do in Canada? Work

How long are you planning to stay in Canada? Temporarily – more than 6 months

Select the code that matches the one on your passport [Select your country from the pull-down menu]

What is your current country of residence? Canada

Do you have a family member who is a Canadian citizen or permanent resident and is 18 years or older? [Yes/No. The answer should be Yes if your family member is a spouse or common-law partner, dependent children, and their dependent children. Answer No otherwise.]

What is your date of birth? [Select from pull-down]

Are you a lawful permanent resident of the United States with a valid U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) number? [Yes/No]

What is your current immigration status in Canada? Student

Do you plan to work on campus? No

Are you a full-time student at a participating post-secondary institution and want to work off-campus up to 20 hours per week? No

Have you recently graduated from a participating Canadian post-secondary institution for which your study program was full-time and minimum of eight months? Yes

Is work an essential part of your studies (for example, a Co-Op or internship program)? No

Have you been told by an Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada office that you are approved in principle for permanent residence in Canada? No

Have you submitted a permanent resident application in Canada? No

Do you have a written job offer? No [Even if you have a job offer, or are working, your answer to this question is No because you are applying for an open work permit, meaning that no employer is named on the permit.]

Do you have an official letter from your school that confirms you've completed your study program, as well as a copy of your final transcript? Yes

Marital Status [Choose from pull-down. Single = never married]

What is your province of destination? If visiting multiple provinces, select the one in which you will be spending most of your time? Ontario

At this point, you may be offered the choice of a Temporary Resident Visa or a Post-Graduation Work Permit. Click "Continue" next to the PGWP. If you need a TRV, you will apply for it after you get your work permit.

Do you have an official letter from your school that confirms you've completed your study program, as well as a copy of your final transcript? Yes

Have you had a medical exam performed by an IRCC authorized panel physician (doctor) within the last 12 months? [Yes/No]

A medical exam is needed before you submit your application for foreign nationals who:

- *Want to stay in Canada for more than 6 months and have live in one or more designated countries or territories for more than six months in the past year or;*
- *Intend to work in one of the following jobs:*
 - *Health sciences worker*
 - *Clinical laboratory worker*
 - *Patient attendant in nursing or geriatric homes*
 - *Medical student admitted to Canada to attend university*
 - *Medical elective and physician on short term assignment*
 - *Teacher of primary or secondary schools or other teachers of small children*
 - *Domestics worker, someone one gives in-home care to children, the elderly and the disabled*
 - *Day nursery worker*

Do you fit into one of these categories? [Yes/No] If you answer No, you will be restricted from working in these jobs.

Do you want to work in one of the following jobs? [Yes/No]

- *Health sciences worker*
- *Clinical laboratory worker*
- *Patient attendant in nursing or geriatric homes*
- *Medical student admitted to Canada to attend university*
- *Medical elective and physician on short term assignment*
- *Teacher of primary or secondary schools or other teachers of small children*
- *Domestics worker, someone one gives in-home care to children, the elderly and the disabled*
- *Day nursery worker*

Do you want to submit an application for a family member? [Yes/No] If you answer Yes, you will have the option to add temporary resident applications for other family members.]

Are you giving someone access to your application? No

In the past 10 years, have you given your fingerprints and photo (biometrics) for an application to come to Canada? [Yes/No]

There are fees associated with this application. Will you be paying your fees or are you fee exempt? Yes, I will pay my application fees.

Are you able to make a digital copy of your documents with a scanner or camera? Yes

Will you be paying your application fees online? To pay online, you can use a credit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, JCB, China Union Pay) or a Visa Debit or Debit MasterCard). Yes

You will have the chance to review your answers, and any answer may be changed up until the time you submit your application.

Part Five: Online Resources

- Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) website (www.Canada.ca → Immigration)
- **PGWP info and links to application material:** <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work-postgrad.asp>
- **Operational Manual – Post-Graduation Work Permits** (additional info for immigration officers): <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/temp/students/post-grad.asp>
- **Facts About Biometrics:** <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/campaigns/biometrics/facts.html>
- **Online Application: Sign in or Create an Account** — <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/account.html>
- **IRCC Web Form** — <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/contacts/web-form.asp> Use this form to:
 - Ask about an application that is taking longer than published processing time
 - Update an application or add new information
 - Change contact information
 - Report a technical problem
- **IRCC Call Centre** — **1-888-242-2100**. Speak to an agent Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. In all Canadian time zones.
- **IRCC Help Centre (Frequently Asked Questions)**
— <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/index-featured-can.asp>
- **Application Processing Times** — <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/check-processing-times.html>