



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Canada – New Work Permit Being Offered to Retain International Students in Canada

In the wake of COVID-19, international students in Canada have been struggling to secure Canadian work experience required for permanent residence. As part of its efforts to support international students, on January 8, 2021, the government of Canada announced¹ a temporary public policy to allow international students with an expired or expiring post-graduate work permit to apply for a new work permit, which will be valid for 18 months.

WHY THIS MATTERS

For many holders of a Post-Graduate Work Permit (PGWP), the pandemic's disruption and economic uncertainty has jeopardized students' chances of obtaining the work experience they need to apply for Canadian permanent residence. As Canada confronts its second wave of COVID-19, the country is focused on supporting international students. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) estimates that as many as 52,000 graduates with expired or expiring PGWPs could benefit from this new public policy. The policy will help more graduates fill pressing needs in growing sectors such as health-care and technology, while also supporting Canada's economic recovery from the global pandemic.

Context

International students contribute over \$21 billion annually to Canada's economy.² The Canadian government has made significant efforts to encourage international students to permanently settle in Canada, as they help create jobs and fill labour shortages. Currently, the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program (PGWPP) allows students who have graduated from eligible Canadian designated learning institutions (DLIs) to obtain an open work permit to gain valuable Canadian work experience.³ This work experience can help individuals qualify for Canadian permanent residence, usually through the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) and the Provincial Nominee Program.

Opportunity to Apply for an Open Work Permit

Under the new public policy, foreign nationals affected by the pandemic with an expired or expiring PGWP will have an opportunity to apply for a new open work permit. The work permit will be **valid for 18 months** and will allow the foreign nationals to remain in Canada, continue to seek employment, and build their future in Canada. To apply for an open work permit under this policy, an applicant must:

- have a PGWP that expired on or after January 30, 2020, or a PGWP that expires in four months or less from the date they apply;
- still be in Canada; and
- have a valid temporary status or be applying to restore their status.

Applications will be open from January 27, 2021 to July 27, 2021. IRCC plans to release more information on January 27, 2021.

KPMG NOTE

We recommend continuing to monitor KPMG Law LLP's *GMS Flash Alert* newsletter for more information.

International students who are seeking to benefit from the new policy or have concerns about next steps are encouraged to contact their current immigration counsel or a member of the KPMG Law LLP immigration team (see the Contact Us section) for further guidance.

FOOTNOTES:

1 See January 8, 2021 news release "Government of Canada announces new policy to help former international students live in, work in and continue contributing to Canada" by clicking [here](#).

2 Ibid.

3 See "Post-Graduation Work Permit Program (PGWPP)" by clicking [here](#).

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Contact us

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional* or one of the following professionals with the KPMG International member firm in Canada]:



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