



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Canada - New Immigration Pathway for Hong Kong Residents

As part of its campaign to strengthen ties between Canada and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), the government of Canada has announced several immigration pathways to support Hong Kong SAR residents' long-term establishment in Canada. These new pathways offer unique opportunities to Hong Kong SAR residents, such as an open work permit that facilitates valuable Canadian employment experience and priority processing for permanent residence applications.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The government of Canada is creating opportunities to attract and retain young, talented, and experienced individuals who will help drive Canada's economy forward. In particular, the special immigration programs for Hong Kong SAR residents include flexible open work permit options and a fast-track to permanent residence, providing Hong Kong SAR residents an opportunity to live and remain in Canada, develop their careers, and help accelerate Canada's economic recovery.

Currently, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is facilitating priority processing for Hong Kong SAR residents who are applying for a Canadian passport; permanent resident travel document; visitor visa; electronic travel authorization; work permit; study permit; or family sponsorship. Overall, the new programs and expansive measures build on Canada's increasing efforts to support and welcome individuals from Hong Kong who are either seeking to come to Canada or who are in Canada and want to stay.

Opportunity to Apply for an Open Work Permit

Under the new public policy, residents of Hong Kong SAR who are living in Canada or abroad are eligible to apply for an open work permit, which will be valid for up to three years. Applicants must hold either a Hong Kong SAR or a British

National Overseas (BNO) passport.¹ The open work permit option is designed to encourage recent Hong Kong SAR graduates and those with essential work experience to choose Canada as their destination to study, work, and settle.

To qualify for the open work permit, Hong Kong SAR residents must have graduated within the past five years with:

- a degree from a designated learning institution in Canada or an equivalent foreign credential; or
- a diploma from a minimum two-year program from a designated learning institution in Canada or an equivalent foreign credential. An education credential assessment report may be required to demonstrate proof of equivalency.²

Hong Kong SAR residents who are currently in Canada as visitors, workers, or students, can extend their stay or apply for the open work permit online from within Canada. Eligible spouses or common-law partners and dependent children who are 18 years of age or older can apply for an open work permit, while minor dependent children (under 18) can apply for a study permit.

Individuals applying from outside of Canada are subject to Canada's COVID-19 safety measures, including travel restrictions, mandatory quarantine, and COVID-19 testing. Individuals applying from outside of Canada must also:

- have a letter of introduction for an open work permit;
- hold a valid job offer; and
- be able to work after completing their 14-day quarantine in Canada.

Pathways to Permanent Residence

In addition to offering an open work permit option, the government of Canada is expected to implement two other pathways to Canadian permanent residence for Hong Kong SAR residents, which will be announced later this year.³ The permanent residence programs will include:

- a pathway for Hong Kong SAR residents who hold at least one year of work experience in Canada and who meet the language and education requirements; and
- a pathway for Hong Kong SAR residents who have graduated from a post-secondary institution in Canada, who can then apply for permanent residence.

More information will be available later this year.

KPMG NOTE

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

Hong Kong SAR residents 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 “Guidance for special measures to support Hong Kong residents to come to Canada”:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/service-delivery/hong-kong.html>.
- 2 See “Public Policy: Open Work Permits for Hong Kong Recent Graduates”:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/permit/open-work-permit-hong-kong-recent-graduates.html>.
- 3 See “Canada launches Hong Kong Pathway that will Attract Recent Graduates and Skilled Workers with Faster Permanent Residency”:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2021/02/canada-launches-hong-kong-pathway-that-will-attract-recent-graduates-and-skilled-workers-with-faster-permanent-residency.html>.

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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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