TORONTO NORTH Local Immigration Partnership

Summary of Policy Changes for International Students in Canada

Recent changes to Canada's policies for international students are reshaping the landscape, introducing new requirements and regulations that prospective students must navigate. These updates are designed to manage the growing number of international applicants and ensure that the country's educational offerings remain competitive and accessible.

The following table serves as a resource for service providers and educational institutions, offering a clear, concise and organized summary of these changes. Each entry includes a summary of the policy update, the dates when these changes take effect, a brief description with links to learn more, and a quick analysis of their potential impact. By understanding these updates, stakeholders can provide accurate, up-to-date information and support to international students as they adapt to these significant policy changes.

NEW POLICIES	DATE	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL IMPACT
Two-Year Cap on Issuing New Study Permits	2024 – 2025 (starting January 22, 2024)	**Temporary cap on new study permits**, aiming to control international student influx. Permit caps will vary across Canada, as individual permit caps were set for each province and territory. No disruption of the usual renewal process for existing permits. Learn more	• **Expected 35% reduction in new study permits** (WES). • Potentially less interest in or accessibility to Canada as a study destination leading to **financial impact of reduced international enrollment** on universities and colleges. • Universities and stakeholders are responding in various ways: ○ Institutions increasingly relying on private EdTech companies that use AI to predict study permit approval, potentially reducing diversity and equity by favoring students from certain regions over others (The Conversation). ○ National dialogue to address the issues and explore sustainable solutions (CBIE).
Provincial Attestation Letter (PAL)/Territorial Attestation Letter (TAL)	January 22, 2024	International students now **must obtain a PAL or TAL from the province or territory they plan to study in before receiving a study permit**. Provinces will issue PALs to students until they reach their maximum capacity. Several exceptions apply. Learn more	• Potentially **increased delays in application processing** and a potential decrease in international enrollment (WES).
Letter of Acceptance (LOA)	December 1, 2023	A **new letter of acceptance (LOA) verification process** would require post-secondary DLIs to verify the authenticity of all LOAs submitted before a study permit is issued. Learn more	• Intended to **protect students from fraudulent LOAs** (IRCC). • Potential operational and financial uncertainty for educational institutions (BLG).

verification process			
Increased Financial Obligations on International Students	Starting January 1, 2024	**Applying for a study permit now requires proof of CAD 20,635** (increased from CAD 10,000) in available funds in addition to the tuition fee and exclusive of any fees for other family members coming with them to Canada. This amount is 75% of Canada's low-income cut-off (LICO), the minimum income needed to avoid excessive spending on necessities. Learn more	• Intended to **prevent student vulnerability and exploitation**. • **Not all students will be able to meet the new level of savings**; there is a plan to pilot new ideas that will help "underrepresented cohorts" of international students to come to Canada to study (ICEF Monitor). • May deter potential students, channeling them to other countries as similar policy changes did in Australia (IDP Education). It might also retain more international students (Economic Development Winnipeg).
Changes of Post-Graduation Work Permits (PGWPs)	1. February 2024 2. May 15, 2024 3. September 1, 2024 4. January 2025	1. Starting February 2024, **Master's degree graduates may be eligible for a 3-year work permit**, addressing current limitations based solely on program length, which restricts their time to gain work experience and pursue permanent residency. Learn more 2. Starting May 15, 2024: **International students in public-private curriculum licensing programs are no longer eligible for post-graduation work permits**, except for those already enrolled who meet other criteria. Learn more 3. **At least 50% of the program must be completed in-class in Canada for PGWP eligibility**; online studies outside Canada after December 31, 2023, will not count. Learn more 4. **PGWP issuance will align with labour market needs**, prioritizing work permits for students entering high-demand occupations and limiting access for graduates in other fields. Learn more	• Extension of PGWP will **enhance work opportunities for certain international students who achieve a Master's degree**. It may also strengthen Canada's global position as a leading study destination (WES). • **Public College-Private Partnership (PCPP) may dissolve** (HEQCO). • The **pathway to PR status through PGWP may become more complicated** • Aligning PGWP to labour needs streamlines access for some b**ut may decrease opportunities and student enrollment for students not aligned with "occupations in shortage"** (ICEF Monitor).
Limiting Spousal Open Work Permits (SOWP)	Starting April 30, 2024	**Only spouses and common-law partners of international students enrolled in specific professional degree programs**, such as master's, doctoral, and select professional degrees **will be eligible for SOWPs**. **Bachelor of Nursing (BN) is now eligible**, with further clarification between different nursing degrees. Learn more	• **Spouses and partners of international students in undergraduate programs will no longer be eligible for the open work permit** (Economic Development Winnipeg). • Those who applied before this date may still qualify under the previous rules, provided they meet other criteria • Spouses and partners of international students no longer eligible for an SOWP can apply for an alternative work permit or a visitor visa (TRV).

			However, individuals who enter Canada as visitors are not authorized to work
Francophone Minority Communities Student Pilot (FMCSP) programs	August 26, 2024	**Study permits requirements will be simplified for French-speaking international students in Francophone minority communities**, offering **a direct pathway from temporary to permanent status after graduation**. This also expands the Welcoming Francophone Communities (WFC) initiative to support the integration and retention of these students in Francophone minority communities. Learn more	• Exemption from the study permit cap, ensuring **more opportunities for French-speaking students** • Adjusted financial requirements, setting the necessary funds at 75% of the low-income cut-off (LICO), making it more accessible • **Clearer residency pathway**, offering more stability for French-speaking students • Students from **countries not in the eligibility list** will not benefit (CIC News)
Increased Work Hours Off-Campus	Starting September 1, 2024	Students will be allowed to work up to 24 hours per week off-campus starting. During scheduled academic breaks, students can continue working unlimited hours. Learn more	• This will **allow students to gain work experience while prioritizing studies** (CBC). • Academic performance might improve (ICEF Monitor)
Trusted Institution Framework	2024	IRCC will offer a more lenient and faster process for study permits to applicants to Designated Learning Institutions (DLIs) that are acknowledged as Trusted Institutions. Learn more	• **Incentive for post-secondary institutions to meet higher standards** concerning international students (e.g. institutions may need to expand housing capacity to maintain their DLI status and accommodate more students (ICEF Monitor). • Could limit opportunities for students wishing to study in Canada (Singer, 2024).
Proposed: **Mandatory reporting of attendance of international students**	Consultation is complete, decision is awaited.	The Federal government has proposed a regulation where institutions must report attendance and other information of international students to IRCC; non-compliant DLIs may not accept new international students for up to 12 months. placed on a suspension list for up to 12 months. Learn more	• Increase in administrative responsibilities for DLIs • International students who switch DLIs must submit a new study permit application, increasing their administrative burden and costs • Estimated to cost nearly $87 million over 10 years, covering government, institutions, and student expenses (Toronto Star). • Potential reduction in fraud, ensuring that only "genuine" institutions can host international students (CAN Pathways).