

## **Chinese Embassy Virtual Information Session**

### **Global Affairs Canada Information for International Students**

Global Affairs Canada's International Education Division is pleased to provide the following information and guidance that may be of assistance to international students. The resources listed provide information on study permit-related issues, as well as travel restrictions and exemptions that may affect international students, and Government of Canada programs for which international students may be eligible.

***Individuals are encouraged to read through all the information available on each government web-site listed and to consult these sites regularly for the latest information relevant to their situation.***

Canada deeply values the international students that have chosen to study in Canada and the contribution they make to our educational institutions, our communities and our country. Although the current circumstances are challenging, we hope that you will feel supported by your Canadian host institutions and the communities in which you live as you navigate your own situation, whether you may be a first-year student, a soon-to-be graduating student, an exchange student or visiting researcher.

***The information and guidance from the Government of Canada shared below is the most up to date information available, however, due to the rapidly changing situation, the information provided by the relevant Government of Canada authorities may change or be modified going forward.***

#### **Information on Study Permits, Travel Restrictions and Exemptions**

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has published detailed information on how the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is affecting immigration, refugees, citizenship and passport services. Information below is available via the following page:

**How the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is affecting immigration, refugees, citizenship and passport services**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-covid19.html>

Detailed information on travel restrictions and exemptions, as well as on study permit status and post-graduate work permit eligibility, is available here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-covid19/travel-restrictions-exemptions.html>.

This page includes a Questions and Answers section with information on processing of applications and deadlines, as well as a section with information specific to international students. Some key Questions and Answers are excerpted below.

### **Questions and Answers**

#### **What should foreign nationals who are in Canada with valid temporary status as a visitor, worker or student do if their status is about to expire?**

Temporary residents who are currently in Canada are able to apply to extend their status online if they need to extend their status. A temporary resident who has applied to extend their status is allowed to remain in Canada until a decision is made on their new application, even if their initial status expires while they are waiting for that decision. This is called implied status.

*They should not travel to a port of entry (POE) to apply directly to a border services officer. Travelling to a POE from inside Canada for the purpose of getting immigration services is not considered essential travel, and they will not receive these services.*

#### **What are the air travel exemptions?**

*Temporary foreign workers, some international students and approved permanent residents who haven't yet landed are now able to enter Canada.*

On March 20, 2020, the Government of Canada provided an update on travel restrictions put in place to stem the spread of COVID-19. Foreign nationals who have committed to working, studying or making their home in Canada will be permitted to enter Canada by air or land. They will be exempt from the air travel and border restrictions and will be allowed to enter Canada.

Temporary foreign workers, as well as international students who have a valid study permit or who were approved for a study permit before March 18, 2020, and foreign nationals who were approved for permanent residence before March 18, 2020, but who hadn't yet travelled to Canada, will be exempt from these restrictions.

The travel restriction exemptions that were announced are now in place. If you're exempt, you can now travel to Canada.

If you're travelling by air, you need to pass a health check before you're allowed to board your flight. Anyone who shows symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed to enter Canada by air.

When you arrive in Canada your health will be assessed before you leave the port of entry. **You must isolate for 14 days even if you have no symptoms. This is mandatory.**

Only people who provide essential services and truck drivers who regularly cross the border to maintain the flow of goods are exempt from the isolation requirements.

### **What is the impact of the restrictions on international students?**

As announced on March 20, 2020, international students who held a valid study permit or had been approved for a study permit when the travel restrictions took effect on March 18, 2020, will be able travel to Canada by air or land. They will be exempt from air travel and border restrictions. This exemption is to accommodate students who are in the middle of their course of study or who have just been approved to study in Canada, but were outside Canada when the travel restrictions took effect.

Like all travellers, including Canadian citizens and permanent residents, international students who are exempt from air travel restrictions will undergo the necessary health checks and must isolate for 14 days upon arrival in Canada.

**What about international students who are concerned that having to pursue their course by distance learning will impact their ability to apply for a post-graduation work permit?**

Courses of study being delivered online on an exceptional basis due to COVID-19 will not affect Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) Program eligibility. Time spent in distance learning due to the current situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic will be counted towards PGWP eligibility.

### **Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>

International students who meet the eligibility criteria laid out for either the Employment Insurance (EI) program, or the new Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) program, will qualify to receive these financial supports. International students who are currently in Canada, who have worked the minimum number of hours and who meet the minimum income threshold can apply to these programs.

In the coming days, the Government of Canada will be providing more details about the CERB temporary income support measure, which is part of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan. This measure targets workers in Canada whose income from employment or self-employment has been impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. More information on the CERB can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>.

The Government of Canada is working urgently to develop and implement this new measure. The portal for accessing the CERB will be available in early April. Information will be posted on the following website as it becomes available: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html>

### **Information for Government of Canada-funded scholarship students**

Global Affairs Canada is in close contact with its scholarship program administrators to identify guidance and support required by scholarship recipients. Individuals with concerns should reach out to their host institutions in Canada as a first point of contact.

GAC has extended all open scholarship competition deadlines by three weeks. More information can be found at the EduCanada.ca website here:

<https://www.educanada.ca/scholarships-bourses/news-nouvelles/2020/2020-03-18.aspx?lang=eng>

International students that are currently in Canada under one of the Student Exchange Programs, including the inbound portion of the Canada-China Scholars' Exchange Program (CCSEP), have the option to return to their home countries and finish their studies online (if their school offers that option). There will be no penalties for doing so. If a student wishes to withdraw completely from the program, they will still receive a prorated amount of the scholarship.

To stay up-to-date with the latest information on Government of Canada funded scholarships, please subscribe to the EduCanada RSS feed: <https://www.educanada.ca/media-medias/news-nouvelles/subscribe-abonnement.aspx?lang=eng> and visit our Facebook page @EduCanada.Official: <https://www.facebook.com/EduCanada.Official/>.

## **Health Care, including Mental Health**

International students are encouraged to reach out to and remain in contact with their host institutions in Canada, in particular the international students' office, and their health care coverage providers to receive information on measures and supports in place for international students at this time.

GAC is in regular contact with Canadian education associations, representing Canadian education institutions across the country, and it is our understanding that Canadian institutions are proactively providing psychological and mental health support related to the pandemic to their national and international students.

Students are also encouraged to consult municipal and provincial/territorial public health resources for information on guidelines and supports that apply to their host communities.

## **Housing**

International students living on campus are encouraged to reach out to and remain in contact with their Canadian host institutions, in particular the international students' office, to receive information on housing services and supports in place for international students at this time.

Each institution makes its own decisions with regard to support and mitigation measures for their students.

GAC is in regular contact with Canadian education associations, representing Canadian education institutions across the country, and it is our understanding that the majority of Canadian education institutions are keeping their campus dormitories open for international students and Canadian students who may not have other accommodations. Where campus housing is no longer available, institutions are working closely with international students to help them find housing.