

POST-GRADUATE WORK PERMIT

Opening Statement

The labour shortage in Canada is an economic crisis. Private institutions have the capacity to upskill and reskill international students, however, they are not a designated learning institutions under the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program (PGWPP) except for those that operate in Quebec. As a result, international students would not be eligible for the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program, which would fast track their permanent residence, and allow them to gain valuable work experience. Additionally, part time students are excluded from this program. This leads many international students to move to large cities with public post-secondary institutions that offer degrees, such as an associate, bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree authorized by a province. These public institutions are unable to meet industry needs by creating programs quickly as they require provincial approval that can take many years.

The current Post-Graduation Work Permit Program is excluding institutions and individuals from gaining valuable skills to access today's labour market. This exclusion is further exacerbating the labour shortage crisis.

Background

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. Skilled Canadian work experience in National Occupational Classification (NOC) skill type 0 or skill level A or B that is gained through the PGWPP helps graduates qualify for permanent residence in Canada through the Canadian experience class within Express Entry.

Post-graduation work permit eligibility requirements

To obtain a post-graduation work permit, the applicant must currently hold valid temporary status or have left Canada. They must have graduated from an eligible designated learning institution (DLI). They must also submit clear evidence that they meet all the following criteria:

- They have completed an academic, vocational, or professional training program at an eligible institution in Canada that is at least 8 months in duration leading to a degree, diploma or certificate.
- They have maintained full-time student status in Canada during each academic session of the program or programs of study they have completed and submitted as part of their post-graduation work permit application.
- They have received a transcript and an official letter from the eligible DLI confirming that they have met the requirements to complete their program of study.

Eligible institutions

The applicant must provide evidence that the program or programs of study were taken in Canada at one of the following eligible Canadian designated learning institutions (DLIs):

- a public post-secondary institution, such as
 - a college
 - a trade or technical school
 - a university

- CEGEP (in Quebec)
- a private post-secondary institution that operates under the same rules and regulations as public institutions in Quebec
- a private or public secondary or post-secondary institution in Quebec offering qualifying programs of 900 hours or longer leading to
 - a diploma of vocational studies (DVS)
 - an attestation of vocational specialization (AVS)
- a Canadian, private institution authorized by provincial statute to confer degrees, such as an associate, bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree, but only if the student is enrolled in a program of study leading to a degree, as authorized by the province, which may not include all programs of study offered by the private institution

Tying Industry Needs to Education

International students are needed to fill the workforce shortage many industries are facing today but international students are currently excluded from being able to access the PGWPP. Part time students are also excluded, which is large group of people that are currently working but require upskilling or reskilling to compete and engage in today's labour market.

The training that industry requires can be filled by public and private¹ post-secondary institutions, but there are limitations. BC public post-secondary institutions require their curriculum to be approved by the BC Government, which could take many years. Private institutions can create programs that satisfy industry needs much quicker.

Rural areas in Canada do not have the same public post-secondary institutional investments as urban cities. In these rural areas, private institutions can fill that gap, and offer training and programs that will help build and expand the rural economy. International students need incentive to go and living in rural areas. While programs exist it incentivize immigrants to make rural parts of Canada their home, the lack of educational access and programs that support that access deter people from settling in those areas.

THE CHAMBER RECOMMENDS

That the Federal Government:

1. Expand the Post Graduate Work Permit Program eligibility to part-time students; and,
2. Expand the Post Graduate Work Permit Program to include accredited Private post-secondary institutions as Designated Learning Institutions across Canada.

Submitted by the Surrey Board of Trade

¹ Private post-secondary institutions in Quebec qualify as a DLI