

OFF-CAMPUS WORK PERMIT PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Employer Fact Sheet

As you recruit part-time and summer workers, why not hire an international student? Many international students are highly motivated to bring the skills and knowledge they have learned, their adaptability to different environments, their proficiency in languages other than English, and their unique perspectives, to benefit a Canadian workplace.

The Off-Campus Work Permit Program

Hiring an international student may be easier than you think due to a recent agreement between British Columbia and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). This agreement allows eligible international students attending participating public post-secondary institutions in British Columbia to apply for work permits authorizing them to hold off-campus jobs while they complete their studies. Working off-campus gives international students an opportunity to experience the Canadian labour market and gain a wider understanding of Canadian society.

How do I recruit an international student?

International students holding off-campus work permits are responsible for finding their own work. An international student may respond directly to your advertisements, or you may wish to recruit a student by contacting the employment/careers office at a campus near you.

How do I hire an international student?

1. Make sure the international student has a work permit that authorizes work off-campus.
2. Check that the international student has a Social Insurance Number (SIN). You must ask to see the SIN card of all new employees as soon as they are hired. However, employees may show the card, or proof that they applied for the card, within three days of the start date of employment, and may work during the waiting period. Temporary workers are given SINs that begin with a 9.
3. Read your employee's work permit, especially the "conditions" section. International students are responsible for following the conditions and time limits described on their work permits. An immigration officer may impose conditions regarding what kind of work an international student may do. For example, students must pass an immigration medical examination before they begin work in health care, child care, or primary or secondary education.

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Aside from the above, your role will be the same as with any other employee in British Columbia. For instance, international students are covered by the Workers' Compensation Act and the Employment Standards Act.

How many hours can an international student work?

If granted an off-campus work permit, international students may work for a maximum of 20 hours per week during regular academic terms and full time during regularly scheduled breaks.

Are all international students eligible to work? *Off-Campus Work Permits vs. Co-op Work Permits*

No. International students must meet and maintain certain eligibility criteria in order to participate in the **Off-Campus Work Permit Program**. Specifically, they must hold a valid study permit (and off-campus work permit once granted), remain registered full-time, and maintain satisfactory academic standing as defined by their institution. If participating students fail to meet these criteria, they will become ineligible for the program, must return their work permit to CIC, and must stop working for you.

In some cases, students are required to gain work experience as part of their educational program. International students can apply for a **Co-op Work Permit** if they have a valid study permit, the intended employment is an essential part of their course of study in Canada, the employment is certified as part of the academic program, and the co-op or internship does not form more than 50% of the total program. ***Note that co-op work permits differ from off-campus work permits.*** Some international students may hold more than one type of work permit at the same time.



Is approval from CIC necessary before an international student begins work?

Yes. International students need to obtain an off-campus work permit from CIC before beginning off-campus employment. In British Columbia off-campus work permits do not specify the name of the employer, and the students are responsible for all of the application details themselves. In cases where students are engaged in co-op programs, normally the institution is listed as the employer on the work permit. This provides international students the opportunity to work for a number of different employers during their studies.

Can an international student continue to work for my company after graduation?

In many cases, yes. Under the **Post-Graduation Work Program**, international students who have graduated from eligible post-secondary institutions in Canada may be able to work in Canada for up to one or two years after graduation. The work must relate to their recently completed field of study and they must apply for a post-graduation work permit within 90 days of program completion. In fact, students who are within the 90-day period allowed for transition to post-graduation employment are still eligible to work off-campus, provided that they have a valid study permit and a valid off-campus work permit. For more information on the Post-Graduation Work Program, go to www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work-opps.html.

More information about the Off-Campus Work Permit Program for International Students can be found online at:

-  British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education international education website: www.learnlivebc.ca
-  Citizenship and Immigration Canada website: www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work-opps.html.