Canada Temporarily Allows International Students To Work More Hours To Address Labour Shortage



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has announced a temporary measure allowing certain international students in Canada to work more than 20 hours per week. Full-time international students who are in Canada with valid study permits and the allowance to work off-campus will be allowed to work full-time from November 15, 2022 to December 31, 2023. Full-time students are typically limited to working no more than 20 hours per week while school is in session. This temporary lift occurs as employers face unprecedented challenges in finding and retaining workers during a period of economic recovery and growth.

Study permit holders are still expected to balance their study and work commitments: those who stop studying or reduce course loads to only study part-time are not eligible to work off-campus, and therefore not eligible for this additional work authorization. Foreign nationals who have already submitted a study permit application as of October 7, 2022 will also be able to benefit from this temporary change, provided their application is approved.

New legal obligations may arise for employers during this time period arising from this temporary allowance. For example, employers may need to amend employment agreements to confirm that eligible international students may work over 20 hours per week, but only during the period from November 15, 2022 and December 31, 2023. Consideration should also be given to applicable hours of work and overtime thresholds, set by the applicable provincial or federal employment standards legislation, as well as break and eating period requirements. Wage rates must also be reviewed to ensure minimum wage standards are being met.

IRCC has also announced a pilot project to automate some approvals of study permit extension applications, meant to address a backlog.

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