

Go Ahead and Hire An 'International' Student



The number of international students coming to and staying in Canada has grown considerably over the past decade. Between 2003 and 2012, the number grew 66% from 159,425 to 264,404. In Ontario growth was 92%, whereas growth was 22% in Alberta, 47% in Nova Scotia and 21% in B.C. These numbers include students in many programs and levels of study, including both secondary and post-secondary and trades.

A large number of international students are interested in working both during and upon completion of their studies. The rules for employing international students have changed over the years. For many years international students were only allowed to work 'on campus' during their years of study. Prior to the recession, these rules were relaxed to allow students to work 'off campus' for a limited number of hours per week and additional hours in the summer.

Over the past decade the government has been active in trying to entice many post-secondary degree holders, especially advanced degree holders, to remain in Canada upon graduation. The Post-Graduate Work Permit had allowed students who have completed their degrees to remain eligible to work full time in Canada for up to three years in any job without a waiting period. Employers were also able to avoid the need for a LMO (Labour Market Opinion) when advertising and recruiting these students. The LMO is a process whereby an employer must demonstrate that there is a labour market shortage prior to hiring a foreign worker. Now the rules have changed again.

Recruiting and Advertising for New Foreign Graduating Students

A recent change that came into effect impacts the process of recruiting and advertising for new foreign graduates. As of June 2014, employers seeking to hire individuals transitioning from the Post-Grad Work Permit (PGWP) program are no longer exempt requiring an LMO. Now these positions will need to be advertised as per the LMO process, which means you will need to demonstrate a shortage of Canadian workers and a need to hire a foreign worker.

New Rules For International Students Looking To Work In Canada

- Study permits will only be issued to students accepted for study in 'Designated Learning Institutions'
- Students will be required to actively pursue their studies while in Canada

- **Full-time students** enrolled in a designated institution will be permitted to work **part-time OFF campus** during their studies and **full-time during breaks WITHOUT** a work permit.

Identifying Designated Post-Secondary Institutions

As of June 1, 2014, rules for Canada's International Student Program have changed again. Beginning in June, each Province or Territory will be responsible for designating post-secondary institutions that may enroll international students. Here is a link to the list on the Government of Canada CanLearn website or the Study in Canada website. Students currently enrolled in programs or institutions not on the list have until 2017 to complete their program of study.

Most Full-Time International Students Will Not Require a Work Permit

As of June, most full-time international students will no longer require a work permit to work off campus up to 20 hours per week during the academic year and full-time during breaks. Additionally, they will no longer need to wait 6 months before being eligible to work if they are a full-time student with a student permit and if they are enrolled in a designated learning institution. These students are able to obtain a Social Insurance Number to be permitted to work.

International students, especially those seeking to remain in Canada, often need the opportunity to gain work experience. Hiring an international student can bring the same benefits and rewards as hiring any student. For the most part hiring an international student who is eligible to work in Canada is not difficult, as the student will have a social insurance number and does not require a work permit. As a result, if an international student comes knocking on your door, be open to the hiring conversation.