

# Mobility: immigration alert

March 2021

## Canada

### Canada temporarily expands post-graduation work permit program

#### Executive summary

On 10 March 2021, the Government of Canada announced a temporary policy to further ease eligibility requirements for a Post-Graduate Work Permit (PGWP) for international students who may have been negatively impacted by COVID-19.

#### Background and analysis

The PGWP is an “open” work permit that allows international students who have graduated from designated Canadian colleges and universities to work for any employer in Canada, gain valuable Canadian work experience and facilitate eligibility for permanent residence through the Canadian Experience Class within the Express Entry system. With COVID-19, travel restrictions meant that many international students were restricted from entering Canada to attend their courses in person, and international students already inside Canada were only able to attend most of their courses online. Prospects for employment following their graduation in Canada have been uncertain as a result.

The new temporary policy allows international students whose eligible program of study was in progress in March 2020, or began or will begin between the spring 2020 and fall 2021 semesters:

- ▶ To complete up to 100% of their studies online from outside Canada and remain eligible for a PGWP

- ▶ To count any time spent studying outside Canada during that period, until 31 December 2021, towards the overall duration of their PGWP when they apply
- ▶ To combine the duration of more than one completed eligible program towards the overall duration of their PGWP when they apply, and
- ▶ To remain eligible for a PGWP even if they put their studies on hold or switch to part-time status during the winter, spring and summer 2020 semesters only, due to course cancellations as a result of public health measures

#### What this means

The Canadian government continues to make significant efforts to encourage international students to settle permanently in Canada, as they help create jobs and fill labor shortages. International students bring strong employment and language skills, bolstered by their Canadian education and work experience, so they are typically well positioned to apply for permanent resident status and succeed as new immigrants to Canada. The Hon. Marco Mendicino, Canada’s Minister of Immigration, recently sent a message to international students, saying “We don’t just want you to study here, we want you to stay here.”



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With the temporary policy to complement previously announced policies, international students affected by COVID-19, who may have been concerned about their ability to complete their studies and qualify for PGWPs, should now feel at ease. Their prospects of finding employment in Canada following graduation remain intact.

We will continue to monitor and review ongoing developments in all areas of Canadian immigration and citizenship policy. For additional information, or if you wish to discuss this further, please contact your EY Law LLP professional.

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EYG no. 002314-21Gbl

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