

You Asked...

Answers to your questions from Just Ask! A Workshop for International Students held on November 15, 2006

WORKING IN CANADA

Q: What kinds of work permits are there?

A: There are 3 types of work permits for international students in Canada:

1) **Off campus work permit**

The work permit authorizes you to work up to 20 hours per week outside of the school you are studying in during regular academic sessions, and full time during scheduled breaks (e.g., winter or summer holidays and spring break). See the next question for eligibility requirements for this type of work permit.

2) **In program work permit—working under the Co-op and internship programs**

This work permit authorizes international students to participate in a co-op or internship program as part of a mandatory program requirement.

3) **Post graduation or after- program work permit**

This type of work permit allows an International student who has successfully completed a full time program to work at least 8 months in Canada in a job related to the program just completed.

Q: How can I apply for a work permit?

A: To be eligible for a work permit under the **Off-Campus Work Permit Program**, you must meet the following criteria:

- be registered full time in a certificate, diploma or degree program;
- have a valid study permit;
- you must have studied full time at an eligible institution for at least six months out of the 12 months before you apply;
- you must maintain satisfactory academic standing (1.7 or higher overall GPA with passing grades in all courses).

You can download the application form and guide for work permits, as well as the other forms that must be submitted with your application at:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/applications/work-students.html>

To be eligible for a work permit for a **co-op or internship program**, the following conditions must be met:

- you must have a valid study permit;
- your intended employment must be an essential part of your program of study in Canada;
- your employment must be certified as part of the academic program by the International Centre;

- your co-op or internship employment cannot form more than 50 percent of the total program of study.

You may download the application form from:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/applications/extend-worker.html>

Q: How can I apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN)?

A: To apply for a Social Insurance Number, you must complete an application form. You can obtain an application from Service Canada, which is located at:
25 St Clair Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 3A4
Phone: (416) 973-6915

In addition, you may download the application form from:

http://www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/cs/sin/0300/0300_000.shtml#f1

Q: How can I find a job?

A: You will need a professional résumé and cover letter. Counsellors in the office of **Counselling & Career Coaching** can help you write these through workshops and one-on-one appointments. They also offer workshops on job search strategies, interview skills and networking. The Counselling & Career Coaching locations are as follows:

Casa Loma Campus

**160 Kendal Ave., Room C317 (Student Service Centre)
Telephone: 416-415-5000 x4585**

St. James Campus

**200 King St. E.,
Room 582C
Telephone: 416-415-5000 x2107**

Website: www.georgebrown.ca/saffairs/counselling.aspx

Q: How can I create a Canadian résumé?

A: Counselling & Career Coaching offers assistance in writing résumés, succeeding at job interviews, preparing a professional portfolio, and much more!

You may book an appointment with a counsellor to review and improve your résumé.

For online résumé help please visit the following link:

http://www.georgebrown.ca/saffairs/stusucc/resume_help.aspx

Q: How can I find a job at George Brown College?

A: You should check with the departments in the college to see if they are hiring students for different positions. There are offices and departments that hire students including the International Centre, Athletics, Student Association, Counselling and Career Coaching, Disability Services, Book Stores and more.

In most cases, you will need a résumé and cover letter to apply. **Counselling & Career Coaching** can help you create a professional résumé and cover letter that will increase your chances of getting hired.

Usually, most of the hiring happens before the semester starts or at the very beginning of the semester; however, some departments look for students throughout the academic year.

Q: Which kind of work permit do I need for a long term contract after my graduation?

A: After you graduate, you may work under the post-graduation work program. This program is designed to provide graduating students with Canadian work experience in their field of study. It allows certain students to work for up to two years after their graduation. However, the work permit cannot be valid longer than the length of time the student studied. For example, students graduating from a four-year degree program might be eligible for a one-year work permit or, if they meet the criteria, a two-year work permit. Students graduating from an eight-month certificate program would only be eligible for a work permit of eight months.

To obtain a post-graduation work permit that is **valid for one year or less**, you must meet the following requirements:

- you must have graduated from a public post-secondary institution;
- You must have studied full-time for at least eight months preceding the completion of your program of study;
- you must have completed and passed the program of study and received a notification that you are eligible to obtain your degree, diploma or certificate;
- you must have applied for a work permit within 90 days of receiving written confirmation (e.g., transcript, official letter from the institution, etc.) from your institution indicating that you have met the requirements of completing your academic program;
- you must have a job offer from an employer for a job that is related to your field of studies;
- you must have a valid study permit when you apply for the work permit.

In order to apply for a work permit of **up to two years** after your graduation, you must meet all of the requirements above. You must also have

- successfully completed a program of at least two years of full-time studies;
- received written confirmation (transcript, letter, etc.) from the educational institution indicating that you have met the requirements of completing the program of study;
- studied at and graduated from an institution located **outside** of the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM), the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) or the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD);
- Found employment outside of the CMM, GTA or GVRD.

Q: What does an employer typically look for from an international student?

A: An employer is looking for the same skills and abilities that he/she is looking for from a Canadian student. It depends on what kind of job you are applying for, but most of the time, employers are looking for enthusiasm, hard work, professionalism, talent and related experience

or education. It is illegal in Canada to make a hiring decision based on a person's religion, race or place of birth – that would be considered discrimination. See Human Rights website for more information on your rights as a job applicant and worker in Canada.

<http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/discrimination/grounds-en.asp>

Q: Why would an employer hire an international student instead of a Canadian, considering the same background of studies?

A: As the Canadian government announced, Canada needs skilled workers. International students may have an advantage because you come from a different culture that may help the business in different ways. For example, you may speak other languages that Canadian students may not know or you can help the business to grow in that part of the world. You may also want to emphasize your ability to adapt to change and your motivation.

Q: I am bilingual, speaking English and French, is it a definite advantage?

A: Definitely. Canada has two official languages: English and French. There are many opportunities for bilingual workers. In some cases it gives you an advantage over other applicants, in others it is a requirement for the job.

Q: Is there a career advising office at GBC in order to help student to choose their career?

A: Yes, Counsellors at **Counselling & Career Coaching** can explore different options with you.

Q: How can I find a job after graduation?

A: After creating a Canadian cover letter and résumé, you should start applying for positions in your field of study. You may apply through the internet, newspaper ads, or other sources. It is very important for you to try and create a network of people that might help you to find a job after your graduation. **Counselling & Career Coaching** provides workshops and one-on-one appointments to help with your job search.

www.georgebrown.ca/saffairs/counselling.aspx.

Q: How long can I stay in Canada after my graduation?

A: You must leave Canada once your study permit expires.

Q: After graduation, What if I can only find a part time job? Will I still be able to extend my stay in Canada?

A: There are some programs where the jobs available are only part time. In the past, the CIC has issued a Post –graduation work permit even for a part time job offer. However to maximize your opportunities try and find a full time job offer if possible that is related to your program of study.

EDUCATION

Q: How and where can I extend my study permit? How much money do I need?

A: You should apply to renew your visa at least one month before your study permit expiry date. To extend your student visa you must download the application form “Application to Change Conditions, Extend my Stay, or remain in Canada” and apply to the Canadian Immigration Office in Alberta.

Send your application to
Citizenship and Immigration Study Permit
Case Processing Centre
Unit 101
Vegreville AB T9C 1X5

You can find the application form at:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/applications/extend-student.html>

Q: How can I apply for a University program?

A: You may apply to a university program directly from the university’s website. If you are applying to a program in a university located in Ontario, you must apply through the Ontario Universities Application Centre’s website: www.ouac.on.ca.

If you get accepted to a university program, you may be considered for advanced standing or transfer credit. Generally when you apply you are asked to submit copies of transcripts from previous academic institutions, including George Brown. Upon acceptance, the university will do an assessment for transfer credit or advanced standing. You may also be asked to submit course outlines of previous courses taken.

If you have academic documents from another country and have not had them evaluated for equivalency in Canada, you will need to do that before you submit them with your application. You may get your documents evaluated at International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS) <http://www.icascanada.ca/>, at World Education Service (WES) <http://www.wes.org/ca/>, or at University of Toronto’s Comparative Education Service <http://www.adm.toronto.edu/ces/> for a fee. Visit their website for more information. If you cannot afford to pay the fee, the Polycultural Immigrant and Community Service may provide this service for free.

Their contact information is as follows:

Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services
3363 Bloor Street West
Etobicoke, Ontario M8X 1G2
(416) 233-0055

Q: Does GBC work with the other universities in Vancouver or other parts of Canada?

A: George Brown College is a recognized institution so you may get some transfer credits for courses you have taken. If you apply and are accepted, the university or college would do an official transfer assessment. They would review the outlines and decide if and how the courses would be transferred. Each university may decide differently. There is no single policy for all universities and colleges.

Q: If I want to enroll in a Master’s in Business Administration at George Brown College what should I do?

A: While George Brown College offers a variety of Business programs, it does not offer Master’s programs as these are only offered by universities. If you are interested in doing a Master’s of

Business Administration, check out university websites or see a Counsellor at the **Counselling & Career Coaching** to help you outline an academic path.

Q: Are there any loans for international students?

A: You are expected to come to Canada with enough money to live and pay your bills while you are studying. George Brown College does not provide loans for international students. However, the college offers a limited number of scholarships and awards to help students with a great academic record to fund their education. Visit the GBC Financial Assistance website at <http://www.georgebrown.ca/financialaid/06awards.aspx> for more information.

Q: Can I receive a loan from a Canadian bank?

A: You may receive a loan or a line of credit from a Canadian bank, however whether you will receive a loan is based on each individual's situation. You must have a good credit history and will probably need a co-signer. Contact your bank for more information.

CANADIAN LIFE

***Disclaimer:** Please note that everyone experiences Canadian life differently; therefore, the answers to these questions are subjective and based on the opinions/experiences of the writers of this Q&A. These answers may be very different from the way you view Canadian life.*

Q: Can I apply for immigration? Would it conflict with my study visa?

A: If you are eligible for immigration, you can apply anytime. There is no conflict between a study permit and immigration. You stay in the study permit status until the time your case will be approved for landed immigrant status.

Q: How can I keep updated about my rights and opportunities in Canada?

A: You could check Canada's official source of immigration and citizenship information website for updates, changes, and rights: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/index.html>

Q: How can I ask a Canadian classmate to speak slowly?

A: You can ask them politely that you cannot understand them and ask them to speak slowly. For example: "I am sorry, I am an international student and I did not understand what you said. Would you please say it again slowly?"

However, in Toronto people tend to speak quite slowly compared to the other parts of Canada. So, try to talk and listen to them as much as you can to improve your English skills.

Q: What is Canadian food?

A: Hamburgers, BBQ chicken or ribs could be considered Canadian foods, just to name a few. There are lots of Canadian restaurants where you can taste typical food. Many diners, some bars and family restaurants will serve what is considered Canadian food. However with so many people living in Canada from so many different backgrounds, Canadian food is now also doners, congee, curries, thalis, pad thai, perogies, empanadas etc. The list could go on and on.

Q: Why is the subway quiet? Is it because Canadians are not friendly or they are cold?

A: There can be many reasons why Canadians are quiet on the subway, which makes this question difficult to answer. However, one of the possible reasons is that people usually commute to their work place without their friends and family so they feel they have no one to talk to. When they commute to work everyday and they spend an average of 1 hour on the bus/subway, they try to use that time to read books or magazines or to relax by listening to music. It has nothing do to with their social life. However, when they do talk, most North American people have a loud voice, compared to eastern culture.

Q: Are Canadians lonely? Why do they like dogs and cats?

A: To Western people who often have smaller families than some other cultures, they tend to view their cats and/or dogs as companions or as an adopted member of the family. Dogs are especially good companions for Westerners because they tend to respect their owner and remain loyal for as long as they live. Elderly people are sometimes lonely as their grown up children often live far away or are not able to visit them as often as they would like – so they may decide to have a cat or a dog to keep them company.

The information in this document was correct on December 13, 2006; however, it changes frequently. Please check with the International Centre and the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website (www.cic.gc.ca) for more up-to-date information.