

FAQs from FGS Town Hall:

1) ***Dependent family members of study permit holders:***

Minor Children

- Study Permit requirement: Minor children intending to study are required to apply for a study permit before entering Canada. Please refer to the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) website and [guidelines for minor children](#).
- Letter of Acceptance:
 - If a minor child is applying for a study permit from outside of Canada, they are exempt from needing to provide a Letter of Acceptance (LOA) with their application.
 - However, if a minor child comes to Canada as a visitor and is later applying for a study permit from inside of Canada, they must include a LOA with their application.

Spouse/Common-Law partners of Study Permit Holders

Eligibility for Open Work Permit: If the spouse or common-law partner of an international student is meeting the [eligibility requirements](#) to apply for an open work permit, based on the student status of the study permit holder, then they can apply for an open work permit (OWP) when:

- a) The international student (principal applicant) applies for their study permit from outside of Canada (in this case, the application is as a family group),
- b) If the international student travels to Canada first, their spouse or common-law partner can still apply for the OWP from outside of Canada, or
- c) If the international student travels to Canada first, their spouse or common-law partner can apply for a visitor visa or eTA (if needed), travel to Canada as a visitor, and then apply for the OWP from inside Canada. While visitors aren't eligible to apply for a work permit from inside of Canada, the spouse could remain in Canada under their visitor status while their work permit is processed outside of the country.

All options come with their unique set of considerations. Please note that the OWP for the spouse or common-law partner of an international student will expire when the study permit of the international student expires. This is important to consider when deciding when and where to submit their OWP application.

Spouses/common-law partners of work permit holders (PGWP) applying for an open work permit:

- Eligibility Change (Effective January 21, 2025):
 - The eligibility of spouses/common-law partners of foreign workers (including post-graduation work permit holders) to apply for a family OWP will be limited. Only *wives* of foreign workers employed in certain high-demand occupations will qualify. These occupations include:
 - [TEER 0 or 1](#) occupations, or

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- Select TEER 2 or 3 occupations in sectors with labour shortages or linked to government priorities. Please visit the IRCC website for a [full list of the TEER 2 and 3 occupations](#) that are eligible under this measure.
 - NOTE: TEER 4 or 5 occupations are no longer eligible for OWP.
- Requirements for PGWP holder: This means that the PGWP holder must show evidence of their employment in one of these TEER occupations. The spouse or common-law partner does not need to show evidence of employment in their OWP application.
 - Validity periods: Your PGWP or authorized work must be valid for at **least 16** months **after** IRCC receives your spouse or common law partner's open work permit application.

Note: When your spouse or common-law partner is able to submit their application for an OWP under this measure will depend on when they will have evidence that they meet all of the eligibility criteria. For example, if you as the international student do not have a job or job offer that meets the above criteria when you're applying for your PGWP, then you can't add your spouse to your application at that time for their OWP.

- Previous OWP approvals: OWPs that were approved under the previous measures and have not expired will remain valid.
- Dependent children of foreign workers will no longer be eligible to apply for an open work permit

2) Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP):

PGWP eligibility and application timeline:

- Eligibility: To apply for a PGWP, the application must be received by IRCC within 180 days of receiving written confirmation of program completion from the institution. The 180-day period begins on the earlier of:
 - The date when your final mark for the program are issued, or
 - The date you receive official confirmation that your program is complete.
- For graduate students, the 180-day timeline begins when you submit your thesis/comprehensive exam and all other forms to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) through the M-Space platform. However, you should be submitting your PGWP application while your study permit is still valid. This would be on whichever comes first:
 - 90 days after program completion, or
 - The day on which the permit expires.

NOTE: You don't need to wait until you've received your degree or attended your graduation ceremony to apply for the PGWP. You just need to have documentation to show to IRCC that you have met the requirements to complete your program of study.

- Job Offer not required: You don't need a job offer to apply for the PGWP, as employment is not a requirement for the PGWP.

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For additional information and a full overview of the application process for the PGWP, please visit the [International Centre's website](#).

Post- Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) duration:

If your study program is 2 years or longer, your work permit will typically be valid for 3 years. The final decision is always up to the IRCC officer reviewing your application.

- **Master's degree graduates:** Starting February 15, 2024, graduates of Master's degree programs, even they are less than 2 years in duration, are eligible for a 3-year PGWP if they meet all other eligibility requirements.
- **Passport Expiry:** The validity of your PGWP cannot exceed the expiry date of your passport. If your passport is expiring before the validity period that you should be eligible for, your PGWP will only be valid until your passport expires. In this case, you may have to apply for a work permit extension after renewing your passport. This would be indicated in a note on your initial PGWP.
- **Recommendation:** If your passport is expiring earlier than the full PGWP validity period you are eligible, then it is recommended that you research the process to apply for & receive a new passport before you complete your program.

3) Registration status at the UM:

- **Full-time Status for graduate students:** Most Masters & Ph.D. students who are actively participating in studies during an academic term and/or are registered in the academic year are considered full-time students.
- **Credit hours:** For most Master and Ph.D. programs, student status is not determined by the number of credit hours taken per term.
- **Further details:** Please refer to our [full-time status document for immigration purposes](#) for more detailed information about student status at the graduate level.

4) Working in Canada:

Work hours for International Graduate Students:

- **On-campus work:** There is no limit to the number of hours that an international graduate student can work on-campus, in addition to working part-time hours (24 hours/week) off-campus, as long as all eligibility requirements are being met at all times.
- **Off-campus work:** international graduate students can work off-campus for up to 24 hours/week and also work any number of hours at an on-campus job.

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NOTE: Please refer to the information about [working in Canada as an international student](#) on the International Centre website.

Working during the Summer Term:

- Full-time status in Summer: The regular academic session for graduate students is September – August each year (Fall, Winter, and Summer terms). The Summer term is not considered to be a scheduled break for graduate students. This means that they are only eligible to work up to 24 hours/week off-campus during the Summer term.

5) Provincial Attestation Letter (PAL) & Study Permit Extension:

When is a PAL required:

- Extension of Study Permit at the same DLI and Level of study: If you are applying for a study permit extension at the same Designated Learning Institution (DLI) and level of study, you do not need a PAL when applying to extend your study permit, as you [meet an exception listed on IRCC website](#).
 - Instead, you must upload a “Proof of Provincial or Territorial Attestation Letter (PAL or TAL) Exception” to your extension application.

NOTE: For UM students, you will need to write a letter of explaining how you [meet the exception](#) of studying at the same DLI and at the same level of study as your current study permit. We also suggest that you include your UM transcript as a supporting document with this explanation and save it as one file to upload in your document checklist.

- Changing Levels of Study:
 - If you are changing levels of study at the same DLI (for example, moving from the Master’s to PhD level at the UM), you don’t need to apply for a new study permit. You can continue to study with your current study permit as long as it’s still valid and you are meeting the conditions.
 - However, you will need to submit a PAL when you need to extend your study permit, as you wouldn’t be meeting the previously discussed exemption for study permit extension applications.

When to apply for a study permit extension:

- You must maintain valid study permit for the entire duration of your program, including the time that it takes to write your thesis, defend it, and submit it to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through the M-Space platform, along with the other required forms at the very end your program.
- Recommendation: Apply for a study permit extension around 90 days before the expiry of your current study permit to avoid interruptions in your status. Be sure to account for [current processing times](#) with IRCC.

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For additional information and a full overview of the application process to extend your study permit, please refer to the information on the [International Centre's website](#)

6) *Permanent Residency (PR):*

- Scope of UM International Student Advisors (RISIA) services: Questions related to permanent residency (PR) are outside of the scope of practice of our Regulated International Student Immigration Advisors (RISIA).
 - Updating residency status: If you obtain permanent residency status, you must update this information with the Registrar's Office: <https://umanitoba.ca/registrar/change-your-personal-information#updating-your-residency-status>
 - PR pathways Information sessions:
 - Students are encouraged to attend the [virtual information sessions for international students \(pathways to permanent residence\)](#) offered by IRCC representatives to learn more about how they might qualify for PR through a program with the federal government.
 - Students are also encouraged to attend one of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program (MPNP) information sessions that are organized by the International Centre and are facilitated by representatives from the Province of Manitoba. These sessions are offered each Fall, Winter, and Summer term.
 - Students can check the [Events section](#) of our website for more information about upcoming immigration information sessions, including this one offered by the MPNP.
- 7) ***Making an appointment with an International Student Advisor (ISA):*** If you have additional questions about your individual situation after reviewing the information in this document, you can book an in-person or virtual appointment with an ISA. Please use our [WaitWell booking system](#) to reserve a timeslot. You can also call the International Centre front desk at 204-474-8501 to confirm the drop-in availability of the ISAs for a particular day or week.