

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

### 1. Is there any dedicated biometrics appointment queue and how will it help study permit applicants?

Starting 30 July 2021, VACs across India opened a dedicated biometrics appointment queue for study permit applicants. Students should cancel their existing appointments if they are able to book an earlier date using this dedicated queue on the Appointment Management System (AMS) <https://bit.ly/3ikzD7n>. Appointments booked under the student-dedicated queue by anyone other than the students will be cancelled by the VAC.

### 2. I have read that travel restrictions and requirements for travellers are applicable for all Temporary Resident Visa (TRV) holders planning to travel to Canada. Are these also applicable for study permit holders and who are exempt from these restrictions?

Yes, travel restrictions are applicable to all TRV holders, including study permit holders.

Starting September 7, 2021 at 12:01 am EDT, fully vaccinated foreign nationals will be eligible to enter Canada for discretionary (non-essential) reasons, such as tourism. However, these individuals must:

1. be fully vaccinated - received the full series of a vaccine, or combination of vaccines, accepted by the Government of Canada) at least 14 days prior to entering Canada;
2. have a valid pre-arrival COVID-19 molecular test;
3. be asymptomatic;
4. submit their mandatory information via ArriveCan app;
5. be admissible under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act; and
6. take a test on arrival, if selected.

For students, to be exempt from the current travel restrictions, the Designated Learning Institution (DLI) they will be attending must have a COVID-19 readiness plan approved by their province or territory. The list of such DLIs can be accessed [here](#).

To travel, a student must be in possession of a valid travel document (e.g. passport) and:

- an approved study permit and visa; AND/OR
- a Port of Entry letter of introduction.

Students should not travel to Canada until, at most, four weeks before the start date of their classes.

Additionally, all travellers, including students, are subject to mandatory requirements, such as:

- mandatory quarantine or isolation;
- hotel stopover for all air travellers;
- COVID-19 testing prior to arrival and after arrival; AND
- the use of the ArriveCAN app before and after arrival.

Note that direct flights from India to Canada remain suspended until **September 21st**. Students and all travellers who fly to Canada from India via an indirect route need to obtain a pre-departure negative COVID-19 molecular test result from the last country through which they transit before arriving in Canada ([https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid/travel-restrictions/flying-canada-checklist/covid-19-testing-travellers-coming-into-canada?utm\\_campaign=gac-amc-covid-20-21&utm\\_source=travel-covid\\_travel-restrictions\\_flying\\_&utm\\_medium=redirect&utm\\_content=en#types](https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid/travel-restrictions/flying-canada-checklist/covid-19-testing-travellers-coming-into-canada?utm_campaign=gac-amc-covid-20-21&utm_source=travel-covid_travel-restrictions_flying_&utm_medium=redirect&utm_content=en#types)).

We strongly recommend that all travelers check if they are exempt from Canada’s COVID-related travel restrictions, quarantine requirements, and COVID testing by clicking on the following link: [Find out if you can enter Canada - Travel restrictions in Canada – Canada.ca](#)

### 3. Who are exempted from the current travel restrictions and how can one qualify for the same?

Starting September 7, 2021 at 12:01 am EDT, fully vaccinated foreign nationals will be eligible to enter Canada for discretionary (non-essential) reasons, such as tourism.

Those who meet the requirements may be exempt from quarantine, hotel stopover (for air travellers) and Day 8 testing requirements. Pre-entry and arrival tests are still required. One must use ArriveCAN to enter proof of vaccination, quarantine and travel information

You may qualify for certain exemptions to quarantine and testing requirements if you:

1. are fully vaccinated;
2. have valid pre-arrival COVID-19 molecular test (antigen tests, often called “rapid tests” are not accepted);
3. are eligible to enter Canada under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act;
4. are asymptomatic;
5. meet the [Government of Canada requirements of fully vaccinated travellers; AND](#)
6. meet all other [entry requirements](#), including entering your information in ArriveCAN before arrival.

To be considered fully vaccinated, you must:

- have received the full series of an accepted COVID-19 vaccine or a combination of accepted vaccines;
- have received your last dose at least 14 days prior to the day you enter Canada; AND
- upload your proof of vaccination in ArriveCAN.

There are four accepted vaccines:

- Pfizer-BioNTech
- Moderna COVID-19 vaccine
- AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD
- Janssen (Johnson & Johnson)

Vaccines not currently accepted for fully vaccinated status in Canada include Bharat Biotech, Sputnik, Sinovac, etc.

### 4. When will direct flights from India to Canada resume?

Despite the relaxation of certain measures for vaccinated travellers, direct flights from India to Canada remain suspended until **September 21st**.

We strongly recommend that students use the [Entering Canada Requirements Checklist \(QR Code\)](#) to determine if they are exempt from travel restrictions, as well as information regarding quarantine and COVID-19 testing rules.



**5. What are the options for students destined to a DLI which does not have a COVID-19 readiness plan (not on the approved list)?**

At this time, only students destined to an approved [DLI](#) will be issued visas. Applications for students destined to DLI that does not have an approved COVID-19 readiness plan will remain in process until either the DLI is added to the approved list, or until the travel restrictions are amended or lifted. Applications will not be refused because the DLI does not have an approved COVID-19 readiness plan.

Students in this situation cannot travel to Canada to study at this time. This includes students that may have previously been in Canada and were in the midst of their study program. If they try to travel to Canada, they may not be allowed to board their flight or they may be turned away at the Port of Entry at their own expense. Such students should not attempt to travel to Canada as their student visa will have been deactivated.

**6. If a DLI is not currently on the approved list, is it possible for more DLIs to be added?**

Yes. The approved list of DLIs will be reviewed regularly and updated every two weeks. In order to keep updated on the most recent list, please visit the [IRCC website](#).

**7. How do students demonstrate to an airline that their travel to Canada is essential?**

Students do not need to demonstrate to the airline that their travel is essential. As long as their DLI is on the approved list, their visas should be valid for travel. Students should provide the following documentation to board their flight:

- a) valid passport;
- b) student visa and/or Port of Entry letter of introduction; and
- c) letter confirming the start date of classes from the DLI.

In addition to the documentation required to board your flight, you should also bring the following documents to facilitate your entry into Canada once you arrive at a Port of Entry:

- evidence to demonstrate that you have adequate funds to support yourself while in Canada;
- language test results;
- proof of completion of a valid medical exam (these are valid for one year from the assessment of the exam);
- if applicable, evidence that have already begun your study program online;
- evidence of where you will be residing, both during your quarantine period and after; and
- how you intend to abide by the quarantine rules – this applies to all travellers in case you test positive for COVID-19 in your arrival test.

Students should also ensure that their DLI has a COVID-19 readiness plan that has been approved by their respective provincial or territorial government. Additionally, students should confirm on their IRCC secure account that their visa remains valid before travelling.

**8. If a student is missing a documentary requirement such as valid medical results (but all other documents are available), will they be considered to qualify for SDS?**

No - if a student is not able to submit all the required documents under SDS, their application will be assessed as a non-SDS application. Once an application drops out of the SDS stream, it cannot be returned back.

**9. Can an application be changed from non-SDS to SDS?**

Applications must qualify under the SDS stream at the time of submission. For applications that do not meet the SDS requirements upfront, they will no longer have the opportunity to switch to that stream at a later date.

**10. Will students receive a refund of their tuition fees if their application is refused even if they are already studying on-line in India with a DLI in Canada?**

DLIs are responsible for setting their refund policies. IRCC has no jurisdiction over payment or refund of student fees. Please contact your DLI to determine your options.

**11. Will the students receive final decision on their application before the Fall 2021 semester begins?**

We cannot guarantee that students will receive a final decision on their application or be able to arrive in Canada before the fall 2021 semester begins. Even if final approval has recently been granted, the steps around submission of passports and visa printing at the Canadian High Commission take at least two weeks. This process cannot be expedited given the high volumes of passports we are currently receiving each week. Students whose applications are still in process will not have their visas in hand in time to make travel arrangements before the start of the fall semester.

Students who do not receive their study permit approval in time or who are not able to arrive in Canada before the fall semester should contact their DLIs about possible options for online studies until such a time that the student can travel to Canada for in-person classes. Continuing to study online up until December 31, 2021 will not affect eligibility for a post-graduation work permit (PGWP).

Students should continue to monitor the IRCC website [for the latest developments](#), and follow the guidance of their school, the province/territory in which their DLI located, and local authorities once they have arrived.

**12. When should students expect a decision on their application?**

There have been many service disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic so our published processing times are no longer accurate. IRCC is working hard to return to normal service delivery standards.

At this time, only students destined to an approved [DLI](#) will be issued visas. Applications for students destined to DLI that does not have an approved COVID-19 readiness plan will remain in process until either the DLI is added to the approved list, or until the travel restrictions are amended or lifted. Applications will not be refused because the DLI does not have an approved COVID-19 readiness plan.

**13. When should a student submit a passport for visa issuance?**

The Visa Application Centres (VACs) in India have resumed operations. For all passport transmission, the VAC 2-way courier service must be used; you are not permitted to visit a VAC in person to submit it yourself. Students are advised **NOT** to submit their passport unless they receive a passport request letter; otherwise it may be returned to you at your own expense. The passports will be picked up and returned via the 2-way

courier service. Please allow a minimum of 14 business days for the return of your passport after it has been collected by the courier service.

Please note that passports sent directly to the High Commission will be returned at a later date without a visa. Please wait for your courier service booking to be confirmed.

**14. Will my DLI be required to provide supporting documents to facilitate my travel even if they are on the list of province/territory approved institutes with a COVID-19 readiness plan?**

DLIs are not required to provide any documentation to facilitate student travel other than the letter of acceptance.

**15. Should a DLI provide an updated Letter of Acceptance stating that they are on the government's list of approved institutes?**

No, this is not required since the list has been published and will be updated regularly. In case your DLI is not on the list, you may want to contact them to find out at what stage they are regarding approval. You only need to provide an updated LOA if you are deferring your studies.

**16. Will a student be able to work in Canada once they arrive even if their classes are online?**

Yes. Once a student arrives in Canada, they are eligible to work for up to 20 hours a week during the academic session, and full-time during regular academic breaks. School closure, part-time studies or semester cancellation due to Covid-19 do not count as regularly scheduled academic break. Students may work unlimited hours in their home country should they choose to continue to study online from abroad, however we recommend that students focus on their studies as a priority.

**17. If a DLI accepted online language proficiency test results for admission, can I also use this for my visa application?**

No, IRCC does not accept results from online language tests. There are no changes to the language proficiency assessment requirement. The recommended tests are IELTS (for English) and TEF/TCF (for French). We also accept TOEFL and PTE Academic scores. Test scores from Duolingo or any other online language test are not accepted for any immigration application purpose, including for study permits.

**18. What if the IELTS score is expired or about to expire?**

We accept IELTS results which were valid on the day the application was submitted. You cannot use test scores that were already expired at the time of your application submission.

**19. Does IRCC accept PTE language scores as proof of language ability for a study permit application?**

Yes, PTE Academic language test scores are acceptable. However, a student must submit their scores to IRCC using the [PTE portal](#). Do not provide your user name or password because this is not the correct method for

“pushing” your results to IRCC.

**20. What happens if a student decides to defer their studies to a later semester?**

A new letter of acceptance (LOA) must be submitted using the [webform](#) as soon as possible so that applications are kept up to date.

**21. What happens if a student decides to go to a different DLI?**

If a student already has a visa but has not yet travelled to Canada, and chooses to study at a DLI other than the one listed on their study permit application, they must submit a new study permit application.

If a student has not yet been issued a visa and chooses to study at a DLI other than the one listed on their study permit application, they should submit that new LOA using the [webform](#) as soon as possible. Note that the eligibility assessment of their application may be reassessed based on this new information.

**22. If a student has already been issued a visa and defers their studies, how do they extend their visa?**

To obtain a visa with a longer validity date, the student has two options:

- a) submit a new study permit application with the updated information and new processing fees; or
- b) travel to Canada and submit a study permit extension application once there is four months remaining on their current visa. Study permit extensions are only granted to students already in Canada.

**23. If a student switches from full-time to part-time studies, will this affect the duration of their PGWP?**

For the winter, spring and summer 2020 semesters, when a student’s status changed from full-time to part-time due to changes in course delivery at a DLI as a result of public health measures and COVID-19, their eligibility for a post-graduation work permit (PGWP) will not be impacted. Starting in fall 2020, students who do not maintain a full-time status may not be eligible for the PGWP.

**24. Will the applications for dependents submitted along with the study permit applications be processed at the same time?**

Yes, applications for spouses and children of prospective students will be processed at the same time as the study permit. Applicants must provide proof of relationship and financial documentation to show how the student will be able to support their dependents without working in Canada.

**25. Will dependents of students be eligible to travel with them to Canada if they have temporary resident visas (and the student has a study permit)?**

With the amended travel restrictions, immediate family members may be able to accompany an international student to Canada if their reason for travel is non-discretionary, or they are fully vaccinated and intend to travel on or after September 7, 2021. Family members may include a spouse or common-law partner, a dependent, or in the case of a minor child who will be studying in Canada, a parent or legal guardian.

Accompanying family members will have to apply for their own visas and meet eligibility requirements for that type of visa. That they are travelling with a family member who is a study permit holder will not guarantee them a visa.

A dependent may meet the travel restriction requirement in their own right, such as:

- a minor child with an approved study permit going to school in Canada; or
- an accompanying spouse with a work permit visa and has an employment offer in Canada to start working right after their quarantine period.

These immediate family members will not require an authorization letter. Only family members who do not meet the travel exemptions requirements themselves (discretionary travel and not fully vaccinated) will require an authorization letter.

**26. If a student's parents have valid Canadian visas, can they travel to Canada before the student to help make the necessary arrangements?**

As of September 7, 2021, fully vaccinated TRV holders may travel to Canada under the amended travel restriction exemptions regardless of the reason for travel. If they do not meet the travel restriction exemptions for fully vaccinated travellers, the parent will be required to demonstrate that their travel is non-discretionary, they must travel with the student, and they must obtain a travel authorization letter in advance.

**27. If a student has plans to apply for a study permit, can their spouse who is still in their home country apply for an open work permit at the same time? Is it possible for a student's spouse to apply for an open work permit if the student's study permit is approved and the student has received a letter of introduction, but not yet entered Canada?**

Yes, the spouse of a study permit applicant or a study permit holder, regardless of their travel status to Canada, is eligible to apply for an open work permit at any time.

**28. How does a student book a biometric appointment?**

All applicants who hold a biometric instruction letter (BIL) may book a biometrics appointment at a VAC in India using the online booking tool on the VFS Global website. VAC appointments for biometric submission are being released each week. Biometric appointments are free and the only way to request and confirm an appointment is through the VAC Contact Center. Applicants must have a unique Biometric Instruction Letter (BIL) issued directly by IRCC in order to request an appointment.

Do not use a local agent unless they are recognized by IRCC as an authorized agent; otherwise, applicants may be at risk of fraud. To find out if the representative is authorized, click [here](#). You can also download the Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council (ICCRC) App.



It is important that applicants provide IRCC with their email contact information and link their application to their online IRCC secure account so that IRCC can share important information and updates directly with them. To update the contact info, click on [IRCC secure account](#)

### **29. Can a student submit biometrics in another country?**

An applicant may submit biometrics at any VAC in the world, however travel is not recommended during a global pandemic since many countries have travel and quarantine restrictions. Applicants may also encounter challenges if they try to courier their passport across country borders, so it is recommended that applicants enroll their biometrics and submit passport from within the same country. Consult the VFS website for country-specific information. Note that we will not facilitate or expedite a biometrics appointment outside of India or Nepal.

### **30. Can an applicant travel to Canada if the medicals have expired but the visa is still valid?**

The visa remains valid even if the medical exam has expired and the applicant has not yet entered Canada. However, your visa will be deactivated if your medicals have expired – these are only valid for one year from the date of assessment. You can check your IRCC secure account to determine the validity of your medicals and the status of your visa.

For applicants with expired medicals, they must undergo a new medical exam if they lived in a designated country (includes India, Nepal and Bhutan) for at least six months within the past year. When making an appointment with a Panel Physician for a new medical exam, please request an “Upfront Medical Exam”. Applicants should not make travel plans or attempt to travel to Canada until they have received email confirmation that their new medical has been linked to their client profile and their visas have been reactivated.

Note that your new medicals cannot be associated to your application since it is technically closed. Instead, IRCC will associate it to your client profile in the background; however, you will not be able to see this update in your IRCC online secure account. Instead, please wait for at least four weeks after completing your new medicals before attempting to travel to Canada. You should also check your IRCC online secure account to ensure your visa remains activated.

Furthermore, applicants should ensure that they bring the document they receive confirming that they have completed this exam while travelling. This document is titled “eMedical” and has the following information: a “UMI” barcode, applicant’s photo, personal details and the date of the visit. Applicants should not send this document to IRCC as the Panel Physician who conducted the medical exam will send us the results electronically.

### **31. Is the statement of purpose mandatory for the SDS category?**

While not mandatory, we strongly recommend that you submit a statement of purpose to explain why you have chosen that program of study, why Canada, and explain your financial plan to pay for all your years of study.

### **32. Does the receipt of the Biometric Validity Letter (BVL) means that the file is approved?**

The BVL only provides the validity period of the biometrics submitted. Although valid biometrics is essential, there are also other factors that are considered before finalizing an application.

### **33. What is POE letter? How can that be obtained?**

The Port of Entry (POE) letter of introduction is a document provided to the applicant once their application has been approved and their visa has been issued. This letter will only be sent to the applicant via their online IRCC secure account or email address. Ensure that you bring this document with you when travelling to Canada.

### **34. Does a returning student with a valid multiple-entry TRV need to apply for a new study permit visa (S-1 / SW-1) to return to Canada?**

No. A returning student with a valid study permit and TRV, including V-1 or B-1 visa, does not need to apply for a new study permit visa. They can travel to Canada using both their TRV and study permit Port of Entry (POE) letter of introduction.

If the student's study permit was extended in Canada, or they have since received a Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) while in Canada, this usually means that the visa issued with respect to their initial study permit has expired. Should the student choose to leave Canada for any reason but requires to return to resume their studies and/or work, they must also apply for a returning student or worker visa before travelling - this is usually in the form of a TRV.

### **35. I received a POE letter of introduction, but I have not yet received a passport request letter for my visa to be issued. What do I do?**

If you only received a POE letter, but have not yet received a passport request letter for your visa, this usually means that you have a TRV that is still valid for the duration of your studies. You can use both that TRV and your POE letter to travel to Canada. You will not be issued a new visa specifically for that study permit because you have all the documentation you need to travel to Canada. Receiving your POE letter of introduction is the last step of your application process; no further action will be taken on your file.

### **36. Do I have to inform IRCC if I am changing my course in the same DLI?**

Before you change your school or program, you must meet all the conditions of your study permit. This means that you must be enrolled at a DLI and actively studying while you are in Canada.

If you already have a visa but have not yet travelled to Canada, and you change your program of study, you must submit a new study permit application.

If you have not yet been issued a visa and change your program of study, you should submit an updated Letter of Acceptance (LOA) for that new program using the webform as soon as possible. Note that the eligibility assessment of their application may be reassessed based on this new information.