

# ALLEVIATING THE LABOUR SHORTAGE: LIMIT ON STUDENT WORK HOURS TEMPORARILY LIFTED

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As businesses continuously search for new labour pools to tap into during the severe labour shortage, Canada has announced a new temporary measure aimed at partially filling the gap with international students already in Canada. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (“**IRCC**”) announced that from November 15, 2022 until December 31, 2023, full-time international students in Canada who are authorized under their study permit to work off-campus will no longer be restricted to the 20-hour-per-week limit on off-campus work. Study permit applicants who have already submitted their applications as of October 7, 2022 and who receive approval of their application for a study permit will also be able to benefit from this temporary measure.

Canada is one of the top global destinations for international students, a fact demonstrated by newly released information that IRCC processed a record 452,000 study permit applications from January to August of this year alone. This new measure will provide many international students with a greater opportunity to gain valuable work experience in Canada, and will increase the availability of workers to sustain Canada’s post-pandemic growth.

Under the new measures, international students are still obligated to maintain full-time student status to be eligible to work more than 20 hours a week. This new measure gives some international students the opportunity to work more than 20 hours a week and to work as many hours as they are able to concurrently with their studies. International students have the liberty to work for any employer of their choice. However, an international student who transitions from a full-time status to a part-time status in order to be able to juggle full time work will not be eligible to work full time by virtue of this new measure.

## **What this Means for Employers**

Employers in all industries are seeing increased applications from international students and were having to juggle the need for full-time work with a student workforce that could only work limited hours.

As of November 15, employers can take comfort that they can have full-time hours for employees who have a study permit for off-campus work. Employers will have to ensure that the employee remains in full-time status, and should ensure that they are doing their due diligence to confirm the employee’s status with the school.

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### **A Cautionary Note**

The foregoing provides only an overview and does not constitute legal advice. Readers are cautioned against making any decisions based on this material alone. Rather, specific legal advice should be obtained.

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