

FAQs – Working as Co-op or Practicum Students

1) Do I need a separate co-op work permit for my practicum or co-op placement?

Under the new Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) rules effective April 1, 2026, you no longer require a separate co-op work permit to participate in mandatory student work placements (such as co-op placements, internships, or practicums) if you meet **ALL** the following conditions:

- You are a full-time student at the Designated Learning Institution (DLI), i.e., Okanagan College (OC).
- You hold a valid study permit, or you applied to extend your study permit before it expired and have a [maintained status](#).
- Your current study permit includes printed conditions explicitly allowing you to work on campus. Specifically, your study permit must state one of the following two conditions:
 - *"May accept employment on or off campus if meeting eligibility criteria as per R186(f), (v) or (w). Must cease working if no longer meeting these criteria."*
 - *"This permit does not authorize the holder to engage in off campus employment in Canada. May accept employment only on campus if meeting eligibility criteria as per R186(f). Must cease working if no longer meeting these criteria."*
- Your study program is at a post-secondary level, is at least 6 months long, and leads to a degree, diploma, or certificate.
- The work placement (such as co-op placements, internships, or practicums) totals 50% or less of your study program.
- You have a letter from your DLI/Okanagan College confirming that the work placement is a requirement of your study program. Depending on your specific program, this will be **one** of the following:
 - *For a practicum:* Your Letter of Acceptance (LOA) that mentions the practicum component.
 - *For a co-op placement:* Co-op Letter issued by the OC Careers Hub Office.

Important: In addition to meeting the eligibility conditions above, please be sure to review Question 2 below to ensure your study permit does not contain specific restrictions regarding your work placement setting.

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2) Where can I work, and who can I work for?

You can work for any employer that's accepted by Okanagan College's student work placement program, even if they're off campus; however, **please note**: if you did not complete an Immigration Medical Exam (IME) when you first applied to come to Canada, your study permit will likely have printed restrictions prohibiting you from working in certain occupations. In this case, you are prevented from participating in student work placements in settings that bring you into close contact with people, such as:

- Workers in health care settings (e.g., hospitals, clinics, clinical laboratories)
- Patient attendants in nursing and geriatric homes
- Workers in primary or secondary schools, child care settings, or day nurseries
- Workers who provide in-home care to children, the elderly, or people with disabilities

If your practicum, co-op, or internship is in these settings and your study permit mentions restrictions, you cannot begin your practicum/co-op/internship until these restrictions are removed.

To remove the restrictions, you must:

1. Complete an Immigration Medical Exam (IME) with an IRCC-approved Panel Physician.
2. Obtain your "eMedical information sheet" from the physician.
3. Apply online from within Canada by referring to the [IRCC Guide 5552 - Applying to Change Conditions or Extend Your Stay in Canada – Student](#), to request the removal of the conditions.

Important: You must wait until your application is approved and you receive your study permit without the restrictions before you start your student work placements (such as co-op placements, internships, or practicums).

3) What must I do if my study permit does not include either of the conditions required to participate in work placements (such as co-op placements, internships, or practicums)?

To be authorized to participate in your student work placement (such as a co-op, internship, or practicum), your study permit must include **one** of the following conditions printed on it:

- *"May accept employment on or off campus if meeting eligibility criteria as per R186(f), (v) or (w). Must cease working if no longer meeting these criteria."*

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- *"This permit does not authorize the holder to engage in off campus employment in Canada. May accept employment only on campus if meeting eligibility criteria as per R186(f). Must cease working if no longer meeting these criteria."*

If your study permit is missing this condition(s), you are not authorized to participate in your student work placement (such as co-op placements, internships, or practicums).

You must get the condition added before you begin working. How you resolve this depends on why condition(s) is missing:

- **If it was a clerical error:** If you were admitted to Okanagan College as an academic or vocational student (i.e., not as an English as a Second Language student) but your study permit does not state condition(s) by mistake, you may request an amendment to your study permit. To do so, please review the Info Sheet [How to Amend or Correct a Study Permit](#) and the [IRCC Instruction Guide \(IMM 5218\)](#).
- **If your academic situation changed:** If your study permit was originally issued for an English as a Second Language (ESL) /English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program and you have been admitted into an academic or vocational program, you cannot use the amendment process. Instead, you may apply for a renewed study permit. To do so, please review the Info Sheet [Applying for a Study Permit Extension](#) and the [IRCC Instruction Guide 5552](#).

Important: You cannot begin your student work placements (such as co-op placements, internships, or practicums) while waiting for your application to be processed; you must wait until you receive your study permit bearing the correct printed conditions.

4) I already applied for a co-op work permit before the April 1, 2026 update. What happens to my application?

IRCC may withdraw your application on their end and may issue you a letter stating that a co-op work permit is no longer necessary for your student work placements (such as co-ops, internships, or practicums). Students with pending decisions on their co-op work permit applications do not need to take any action.

If you've further questions regarding the same, you may reach out to the IRCC Client Support Center using **1-888-242-2100** (Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.).

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5) Is there a limit to how many hours I can work per week during my practicum or co-op placement?

There is no weekly hour limit for your student work placements (such as co-op placements, internships, or practicums).

6) Can I request a Co-op Letter from the OC Careers Hub Office?

First, check the "What programs have co-op?" FAQ at <https://www.okanagacollege.ca/careers-hub/co-op>. If your program is listed, you may apply to the OC Co-op Program. If your application is approved, you may request your Co-op Letter from the Careers Hub Office.

7) Where can I learn more about this IRCC policy?

Please review the IRCC webpage at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/work/intern.html>.

Queries: For further queries, please reach out to an Advisor at intedimmigration@okanagan.bc.ca