Minister
of Immigration,
Refugees and Citizenship

Ministre
de l'Immigration,
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Dear Walt Judas:

Thank you for your correspondence dated March 28, 2024, regarding the recently announced changes to the International Student Program (ISP), including the cap on most study permit applications.

Over the past year, IRCC has been reviewing the ISP to strengthen the integrity of the program, rein in unsustainable growth, and enhance protections to address student vulnerability, unethical recruitment, and fraud. The goal of the review is to protect international students and Canada's interests, and to help modernize the Program. To ensure international students who arrive in Canada are set up for success, we must tackle issues that have made some students vulnerable and have challenged the integrity of the ISP. This includes making sure we can manage the number of international students coming to Canada in a sustainable manner.

In this respect, further to the changes announced in October and December 2023, on January 22, 2024, I announced that the Government of Canada is moving forward with measures to stabilize the number of international students in Canada. For a period of two years, the Government will set an intake cap on international student permit applications. At the end of 2024, IRCC will re-assess the number of new study permit applications that will be accepted in 2025.

There are several exceptions to the cap on study permit applications: K-12 (primary and secondary) students, master's and doctoral degree students, current study permit and work permit holders in Canada, and in-Canada family members of current study and work permit holders, among others.

As education and the designation of learning institutions approved for hosting international students falls within provincial and territorial jurisdiction, the national cap has been distributed among each province and territory. As such, provinces and territories are responsible for distributing their allocations in a way that meets their individual economic and regional needs. Through the distribution of their allocation, provinces and territories can also target institutions that pose a risk to international students.

As of January 22, 2024, most study permit applications require an attestation letter from a province or territory. IRCC worked closely with the provinces and territories to ensure that each jurisdiction had a process in place by March 31, and I am pleased to share that this objective was successfully met.

The attestation process, in combination with other reforms, such as the updated financial requirements and the upcoming Recognized Institutions Framework, will improve program integrity, uphold Canada's reputation as a global leader in education, and better preserve Canada's temporary residency to permanent residency pathways.

Regarding the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) Program, as part of the Government's review of this program, two initial reforms have been announced.

First, as of May 15, 2024, international students who begin a study program that is part of a curriculum licensing arrangement will no longer be eligible for a PGWP upon graduation. Under curriculum licensing agreements, students physically attend a private college that has been licensed to deliver the curriculum of an associated public college. These programs have seen significant growth in attracting international students in recent years, but they have less oversight than public colleges and they act as a loophole with regard to PGWP eligibility. To see whether an institution is PGWP-eligible, please refer to this web page.

Further changes to the PGWP include the duration of the work permit for graduates of master's degree granting programs, who are now eligible to apply for a 3-year work permit, even if the program is less than 2 years in length. Previously, the length of a PGWP was tied to the length of a study program, hindering select master's degree graduates by limiting the amount of time they had to gain skilled work experience. This change recognizes that graduates of master's degree programs are excellent candidates to succeed in Canada's labour market and to potentially transition to permanent residence.

IRCC is also continuing to assess the PGWP so that it serves as a better conduit to fill labour market needs and ensures that graduates end up working in jobs that match their skills and education. I look forward to sharing more information on this soon.

With respect to your comment about part-time work for students, the principal objective of the International Student Program is to enable foreign nationals to study in Canada. Under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*, certain study permit holders are authorized to work off campus for up to 20-hours-per-week while class is in session without a work permit. However, students are still able to work unlimited hours during scheduled academic breaks. For example, a student whose program follows the standard September to April school year would still be able to work unlimited hours during their summer study break. They would only need to go down to 20 hours per week when classes start again for the fall semester.

I would also note that, this fall, IRCC intends to change the number of hours students are able to work off campus to 24 hours per week.

Ultimately, the main purpose for an international student to come to Canada, i.e., to study, must be balanced with measures that prevent student vulnerability and exploitation, and with measures that continue to provide international students with opportunities to gain valuable workplace experience while in Canada.

Please be assured that IRCC continues to examine future options for the off-campus work hours policy, and I would like to thank you for providing your feedback on this important topic. All information will be taken into consideration as the Department continues to work with provinces and territories, designated learning institutions, and national education stakeholders on developing a sustainable path forward.

In this spirit, there is much work that still needs to be done with the provinces and territories with respect to temporary and permanent resident admissions and demographics. To that end, I was pleased to hold a meeting with my provincial and territorial counterparts in May. This was a positive step to ensuring close collaboration and understanding between all levels of government regarding the commitment to better calibrate the number of temporary residents in Canada.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,



The Honourable Marc Miller, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship