



November 12, 2024

## **STATEMENT REGARDING RECENT CHANGES MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO THE POST-GRADUATION WORK PERMIT PROGRAM**

Over the past year, Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has announced numerous changes to the Government of Canada's [Post-Graduation Work Permit \(PGWP\) Program](#).

ACIFA is particularly concerned about changes in September and October of 2024 that tie the issuance of PGWP's to new *Field of Study* requirements. While these announced changes were made under the auspices of strengthening the connections between Canada's immigration and post-secondary sectors and our federal labour market, the effects of these changes might have the exact opposite effect.

Although the five new *Field of Study* categories announced by IRCC are broad and would cover a large number of post-secondary programs across the country, there are numerous other programs of study that attract large numbers of international students that would no longer be eligible under these changes. For example, the federal government's own analysis demonstrates that there will be strong demand for qualified practitioners in the fields of [Early Childhood Education](#) and [Social Work](#) for the medium and long term (in Alberta and other jurisdictions), yet international students who graduate from these in-demand programs will no longer be eligible for PGWP's on a go-forward basis. This will create a dearth of qualified, professional staff qualified to work in child care facilities in a social/human service capacity, and contradicts the Government of Canada's stated goal of tying PGWP's to labour market considerations.

Moreover, successive federal governments over the past thirty years have [reduced funding](#) to Canada's post-secondary institutions via the [Canada Social Transfer](#) (CST) Program, and provincial governments [have subsequently responded](#) by instituting [their own cuts](#) to post-secondary funding. To offset the effects of these cuts, post-secondary institutions have been instructed to diversify their funding streams. With the active [encouragement of provincial and federal governments](#), recruitment of international students in Canada skyrocketed, and the positive contributions of international students to the Canadian economy became [widely recognized](#).

Reductions in the number of international students enrolled in Canada's colleges, universities, and polytechnic institutes will thus have substantial impacts that could lead to the closure of entire programs, and the elimination of a substantial number of jobs in our post-secondary sector. The loss of such jobs would have a cascading (and harmful) effect on local economies at a time of great economic uncertainty (and anxiety) for large numbers of people currently living and working in our country.

The Alberta Colleges & Institutes Faculties Association (ACIFA) represents approximately 7,000 Faculty who teach in foundational and post-secondary programs at community colleges and



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polytechnic institutions from across Alberta, and thus calls on the Government of Canada to revisit and expand the eligibility criteria for post-secondary programs eligible for post-graduation work permits. Doing so would demonstrate a commitment to protecting the vitality of our post-secondary and immigration sectors, and the economic well-being of vulnerable Albertans willing to do their part to ensure the long-term prosperity of our province.

Respectfully Submitted,  
The Presidents' Council and Executive Council of ACIFA