

# LOYALiST COLLEGE

## AN EMPLOYER'S GUIDE TO HIRING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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# An Employer's Guide to Hiring International Students

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## **BENEFITS OF HIRING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Internationally trained workers (ITWs) provide Canada's employers with valuable skills and talent as they:

- ✎ are often highly motivated, dedicated, hard-working employees,
- ✎ often have international education or work experience which contributes to a wide range of skills that local employees may not have,
- ✎ provide a global perspective,
- ✎ make your organization culturally diverse,
- ✎ have the ability to communicate in multiple languages,
- ✎ have the ability to adapt to new environments and cultures, and
- ✎ connect you with other valuable workers and organizations.

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Employers can hire **eligible** students while they study or after they graduate (students may be eligible for a Post-Graduation Work Permit). Students can work as soon as they begin their study period in Canada.

To be eligible, students must:

- ☒ have a valid study permit,
- ☒ be enrolled as a **full-time** student at a designated learning institution at the post-secondary level, and
- ☒ be studying in a program that is:
  - academic, vocational or professional training,
  - leads to a degree, diploma or certificate, or
  - is at least six months long.

**Students** are responsible for making sure they meet the eligibility criteria and apply for a SIN.

**Employers** are responsible for ensuring that the student has a valid study permit. Employers cannot take international employees' passports or study/work permits.

Students can work up to **20 hours a week** while class is in session and full-time during scheduled breaks (i.e. reading week, in-between semesters, and during summer and winter breaks).

### ***What if the student's study permit has expired?***

If the student has applied to renew their study permit **before** it has expired, they are considered to have implied status, and can continue to work while in Canada.

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## **WORKERS' RIGHTS**

International workers have the same rights as domestic workers do. As an employer, you must:

- ✎ follow Ontario's labour and employment laws regarding fair pay, hours of work, rest periods, working conditions, health and safety standards,
- ✎ follow human rights laws that protect employees from unfair treatment based on many factors, including sex, age, race, religion, or a disability, and
- ✎ make sure that the workplace is safe.

## **CREATING AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE**

- ✎ Employ workers with different backgrounds.
- ✎ To put newcomers at ease, pair them with existing staff members.
- ✎ Provide a formal orientation program that makes new workers feel valued and included.
- ✎ Provide diversity and cross-cultural training to all staff; ensuring that all employees put in their best efforts to create an inclusive environment.
- ✎ Participate in and support initiatives related to hiring, mentoring, promoting and retaining ITWs. Encourage everyone in your organization to participate.
- ✎ Ensure that higher-level opportunities are accessible to ITWs.
- ✎ Demonstrate your organizations' cultural diversity through posters, newsletters, social events, and other communications.

## **HOW TO BREAK DOWN PERCEIVED BARRIERS**

- ✎ When advertising jobs, let everyone involved in hiring, as well as employees and other organizations know that you value international skills and credentials.
- ✎ Focus on the candidate's skills and job experience rather than on where they come from or where they gained their education and experience.
- ✎ Have health, safety and employment standards available in multiple languages.

## **HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY HIRE, TRAIN AND RETAIN INTERNATIONAL WORKERS**

### ***Assessing International Credentials and Qualifications***

Foreign certificates, diplomas and degrees may be equivalent to Canadian education credentials.

- ✎ Don't underestimate international credentials and experience because you are unfamiliar with them.
- ✎ Use available tools and services to help you assess international qualifications, such as *The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (cicic.ca)*.
- ✎ You can ask potential employees to have their credentials assessed as part of their job applications. Put this request in your job postings and include a link to these assessments on your organization's website.
- ✎ Be aware of the time it takes to have credentials assessed.

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## **Workplace Policies**

- ✍ Write effective job descriptions by:
  - Defining essential skills, duties, and responsibilities of the job.
  - Clearly stating the licensing or certification requirements.
  - Asking for **relevant** work experience instead of Canadian work experience.
  - Ensuring that your recruitment process is barrier-free.
- ✍ Prepare your workplace to embrace diversity. An inclusive workplace benefits everyone as it creates equal opportunities.
- ✍ Use a consistent, equitable set of criteria when hiring for similar positions. An evaluation table is helpful when comparing candidates.
- ✍ Invite a human resources advisor (or hire a consultant) to assist in the interview process.

## **Language Barriers**

- ✍ Determine the importance of language skills in the workplace by assessing what language skills are really needed for the job.
- ✍ Focus on the content. Any good candidates' language skills can be improved through language training or on-the-job experience.
- ✍ Use plain language, free of jargon and slang, in your job postings and advertisements. Consider advertising in languages other than English for jobs that do not require a high language skill level.
- ✍ A candidate's nervousness may make their language skills appear worse than they are; allow time for candidates to prepare for interviews.
- ✍ Don't be fooled by accents.
- ✍ Get involved in language, job, and skills training. Research: *Tools, Assessments and Training Support (canada.ca)*.

## **Workplace Assessments**

Focus on what it takes to do the job:

- ✍ Your assessment and selection process should be designed to help you determine if the worker can do the job regardless of cultural background.
- ✍ You may have the employee demonstrate their skills in a practical test or written assessment. Research: *Welcome to the essential skills indicator! (canada.ca)*.

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## **CULTURAL AWARENESS**

Cultural awareness is crucial in the workplace in order to have a successful organization. Everyone has different values that shape how we perceive the world. Misunderstanding (or being unaware of) cultural differences can lead to friction and unproductiveness in the workplace. Take the time to show interest in your employees' cultures.

Cross-cultural training:

- ↳ Helps us understand the impact of cultural rules and behaviours, and therefore enhances our cultural sensitivity.
- ↳ Informs us on the challenges multicultural workplaces face.
- ↳ Teaches us strategies as to how we should react to cultural differences, and how to encourage positive work relationships.
- ↳ Helps us gain genuine respect for others and strengthens our ability to work with people from different cultures.

## ***Embracing a Multicultural Community***

A large majority of Loyalist's international students come from India. Therefore, it may be beneficial to research some of the differences found in Western and Indian culture. Religion and the hierarchy are very important in India. Keep in mind that some students may request certain times or days off for religious accommodation.

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