



CANADA

IEC VISA GUIDE



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Looking to apply for a working holiday visa for Canada? If you wish to work a ski season or you've applied for a SIA Internship in Canada then The **International Experience Canada** program is what you need. It is the easiest way for young people to live and work in Canada temporarily.

This guide is intended to help applicants prepare and apply for the IEC, specifically the working holiday stream. It explains everything you need to know about successfully getting a working holiday visa for Canada.

What is the IEC Program?

International Experience Canada (IEC) is Canada's youth mobility scheme. Within it, there are three programs – Working Holiday, Young Professionals and International Co-Op.

Participating IEC countries have at least one of these programs available, with some countries having more than one.

The most popular IEC stream is the **working holiday program**. The length of the included work permit varies from country to country. Check out the chart below for more info.

Each year there are a limited number of places available to IEC applicants and each country has a different number of permits allocated to them. The UK, for example, has roughly 5000 places each year. The work permit release date changes each year, but generally they are released in November / December for people wishing to go to Canada the following year.

You need to be aged between 18 and 30 (18-35 for some) to apply. Following these easy steps will take you about 20 minutes; you'll need your passport to hand.

Australia: 24 mths (18 - 35)

Belgium: 12 mths (18-30)

Costa Rica: 12 mths (18-35)

Czech Republic: 12 mths (18-35)

Estonia: 12 mths (18-35)

Germany: 12 mths (18-35)

Hong Kong: 12 mths (18-30)

Italy: 12 mths (18-35)

Latvia: 12 mths (18-35)

Luxembourg: 12 mths (18-30)

New Zealand: 23 mths (18-35)

Poland: 12 mths (18-35)

San Marino: 12 mths (18-35)

Slovenia: 12 mths (18-35)

Sweden: 12 mths (18-30)

Taiwan: 12 mths (18-35)

Austria: 12 mths (18-30)

Chile: 12 mths (18-30)

Croatia: 12 mths (18-35)

Denmark: 12 mths (18-35)

France: 24 mths (18-35)

Greece: 12 mths (18-35)

Ireland: 24 mths (18-35)

Japan: 12 mths (18-30)

Lithuania: 12 mths (18-35)

Netherlands: 12 mths (18-30)

Norway: 12 mths (18-35)

Portugal: 24 mths (18-35)

Slovakia: 12 mths (18-35)

South Korea: 12 mths (18-30)

Switzerland: 18 mths (18-35)

United Kingdom: 24 mths (18-30)

Participation in Canada's working holiday visa program is usually a one-time deal unless you have dual citizenship. So the moral of this story is: **use it or lose it!**

How Much Does A Working Holiday Visa For Canada Cost?

The following are the total costs for a working holiday visa for Canada (in Canadian dollars). Please note that none of these fees need to be paid until you have received and accepted an invite to the working holiday program.

- Participation fee – \$156
- Open Work Permit Holder fee – \$100
- Biometrics fee – \$85
- Police certificate(s) – country dependent
- Medical, if applicable –country dependent, \$300–500 average
- Travel insurance policy for length of intended stay in Canada
- Flights/travel expenses to Canada
- \$2,500 proof of funds to show on arrival in Canada
- Return flight or proof of additional funds to purchase a return flight (credit card is acceptable)

IEC Canada Application Process

The application process for applying for a working holiday visa for Canada is as follows:

1. IEC working holiday applicants must first complete the 'Come to Canada' questionnaire to **check their eligibility** for the IEC program.
2. Eligible candidates then **create a profile** (with identity details, citizenship, current residence etc) which is put in a pool for the category they wish to participate.
3. CIC will **regularly invite candidates from each pool** to participate in the program throughout the next year unless the quota runs out sooner. It is a random selection. An invite may take a week, a month, six months to arrive, or in the case of countries with more demand than places (such as the UK) not at all.
4. Once an invite is received, the applicant has to decide whether to accept or decline within 10 days.
After the invite has been accepted, **applicants will then need to apply for a work permit** submitting completed forms, documents (such as police certificates) and payment within 20 days.
6. Up to 8 weeks after submitting the work permit application, a decision will be made.

How To Apply

Read on for a step by step guide to the IEC working holiday application process.

Step One: Check Eligibility For The IEC Program

The first step to apply for your IEC working holiday in Canada is to check eligibility using the **'Come to Canada' tool**. Note that the first question is 'What would you like to do in Canada.' To participate in the IEC program, the answer would be 'IEC – Travel and Work.'

Entering the rest of your personal information is straightforward from here.

If eligible, you should see a confirmation of eligibility for the IEC working holiday program and then a reference code (e.g. JM1234567890). There will also be a link lower on the page to **MyCIC**, the next step of the process.

Step Two: Create Profile To Submit Into IEC Canada Pool

To create and submit an IEC profile for a working holiday visa in Canada, you will first need a MyCIC account.

If you already have MyCIC account from a previous application, you can use it for this IEC application too. If you do not have a MyCIC account, you will need to use the 'Continue to GCKey' link to open one.

1. Once signed up/logged in, select **'International Experience Canada'** under the **'what would you like to do today'** title.
2. On the next screen, you will need to enter that **personal reference code** you got at the end of the Come to Canada questionnaire. Entering the correct code will take you to the e-service application.
3. On the e-service application, there are **four categories of information to validate and submit**. Some information that you supplied in the Come to Canada questionnaire has already been entered automatically for you. **Only basic contact and personal details are required for this section**, along with information from your passport.
4. Each section must be **validated and then saved**.
5. Once each section is complete, you can **submit your profile into the pool**.

The profile must be submitted within 60 days of starting it. Once entered, the profile will remain in the pool for a year. Submitting your profile is free and you do not have to accept a place and continue on in the process if invited.

Step Three: Wait For An Invite

All eligible applicants in each IEC pool have an equal chance of being picked randomly. This does, however, mean that if you are applying for a program that has high demand, there is sadly no guarantee you will receive an invite to the Canada working holiday program. **The good news for 2021 is there will be far fewer eligible people in the pool!**

While waiting, consider what police certificate(s) you may need to apply for and whether you need to perform a medical exam.

Police certificate(s)

These are required from any country or territory that you have spent six months or more since the age of 18. **This six month period is not cumulative** (doesn't accumulate), so even if you live in another country (other than your home country) for four months every year, you still wouldn't need a police certificate for that country unless asked.

Medical

An exam is required if you have lived/travelled in **certain countries** for 6+ months **OR** if you plan to work closely with children/health-related services in Canada.

The exam must be performed by an **approved Panel Physician**. If you do not complete a medical before arriving for Canada working holiday, your IEC work permit will state that you are unable to work in these sectors.

Step Four: Receiving An Invite For The IEC Program

If you are randomly selected, an invite to apply for a work permit will be sent to your MyCIC inbox. Applicants have 10 days to decide whether to accept or decline the invite.

- Clicking 'Start Application' accepts the invite, waiving whatever is left of the 10 day period. As soon as the application is 'started,' the next stage begins.
- If you have multiple/complex police certificates to apply for and/or a medical (or just need more time in general) consider holding off clicking the 'Start application' button for 7-8 days. Whatever you do, **do not** wait until the 9th or 10th day! Technical issues sometimes cause the CIC website to fail.

Step Five: Apply For IEC Work Permit

After accepting your IEC invite, you will 20 days to complete a work permit application via MyCIC.

1. First, you must submit more information regarding your work/education history, citizenship info, communication details (email address, phone numbers etc).
2. A fair amount of this info is pre-loaded from stage one (profile) and is not possible to change.
3. Your answers to the work permit application questions will determine a list of required documents that also need to be uploaded. MyCIC will guide you through the process to download/complete/upload the forms and complete payment.

For most people the required list of documents will include:

- Family Information Form IMM5707
- CV/Resume
- Digital Photo
- Police Certificate (multiple) – don't worry if you only have one!
- Passport/Travel document (scan of photo page plus all stamps)
- Participation fee of \$156 plus \$100 for an Open Work Permit Holder fee if taking part in the working holiday program

There is an optional 'Client Information' slot (under 'Optional Documents') which is useful if you need to provide any extra information about your application. If you are having trouble submitting your application without something in this section, upload a document and then delete it. You should now be able to submit your work permit application.

Important! If you do not have the required documents within the time you need to submit them (police checks, medical proof if applicable) you should upload a 'Letter of Explanation' (self-created) to explain why. You will then be given a time extension for this section of the application.

- **Provide as much proof as you can** regarding the missing documentation (receipts, medical or biometrics appointment email, a copy of request sent to police)
- **If you do not** upload any receipts/appointment proof/Letter of Explanation and the 20 days runs out, **your application will be cancelled** and you will have to wait for an invite again.

Stage Six: Submitting Biometrics

Since 2019, IEC applicants have been required to submit biometrics – fingerprints and a photo to complete their working holiday visa application.

These biometrics can only be submitted at Visa Application Centres (VAC), Application Support Centres (ASCs, USA only) and some Service Canada locations (in Canada only).

After submitting your work permit application, you'll be sent a request to submit biometrics, usually within 24 hours. **You must submit your biometrics within 30 days.**

Here is what you need to know about IEC biometrics:

- **Biometrics can be given at any VAC in the world** – applicants do not have to go to the one in their home country
- As of Dec 3rd 2019, IEC applicants can now give biometrics at **selected Service Canada locations** in Canada.
- It is only possible to submit biometrics with a request letter. This is sent to the applicant after submitting the work permit application (stage five in this guide)
- Submitting biometrics costs \$85. Applicants also have to make their own way at their own expense to the nearest VAC, ASC or designated Service Canada location.
- IEC applicants from Europe and Asia have been required to submit biometrics since 31st July 2018. From 31st Dec 2018, IEC applicants from Asia, Asia Pacific and the Americas also had to do so.

Stage Seven: Receiving Your POE (Final Approval)

Once your biometrics have been submitted, **you should receive an assessment within 56 days (8 weeks)**. If not, follow your application up with the **IRCC web form**

If successful with your IEC working holiday application, you will find a 'Correspondence Letter' in your MyCIC inbox. This is your Port of Entry Letter of Introduction (referred to as a POE or LOI). Here is a **POE letter example** for the Canada working holiday program.

Congratulations! Be sure to print and save your IEC POE Letter, so you have both electronic and paper copies.

Arriving In Canada For Your Working Holiday

With your POE approved, you can now move to Canada anytime within the next calendar year. We would not recommend waiting until just before expiry to activate in case of flight or other travel delays.

On arrival at the Canadian border (land or airport), you will need:

- Passport
- Valid POE letter
- Proof of \$2500 in funds – bank statement or online banking print-out, dated within last 7 days
- Proof of a return flight OR additional funds that would be used for a return flight (credit card is acceptable)
- Proof of insurance for the full length of your intended working holiday in Canada

We also recommend bringing printed copies of the following documents, to avoid any potential expiry date mistakes on the work permit:

1. POE validity
2. IEC bilateral agreements (showing maximum work permit validity for your country)

When issued your work permit, triple check all details before leaving immigration.

If there are any issues, it is much more difficult to fix after leaving the airport or border. In particular, be sure to check the expiry date and work location (it should read 'open').

Working Holiday Application Advice and Tips

After years of helping others with the working holiday visa application process, We've picked up a few bits of crucial advice that may be helpful along the way.

- Be sure to **fill in all form fields** when completing the IEC application. If a question does not relate to you, enter 'n/a' or 'not applicable.'
- **Some countries have a residency requirement** e.g. Sweden, the Netherlands. If you are from one of these countries it is mandatory to list a permanent mailing address in your home country to be eligible for the IEC. If you don't, you will be automatically refused.
- **Always answer as truthfully and completely as you can.** If there is not enough space in a field to you to fully answer the question, upload an additional Word document with more information under the 'Letter of Explanation' section.

- **Don't leave time gaps in the resume.** The resume is NOT designed to be used in Canada to look for work, it is a document required by IRCC to understand your movements (employment, education, travel) prior to the application. The immigration team are not evaluating work/education skills, but are looking for gaps in the resume that may suggest travelling/working in other countries (and hence a police certificate may be required). If you leave gaps, it is very possible IRCC may request more information and this will delay your application.
- If you have more than one document for a category (i.e. two police certificates) **combine documents into a multi-page PDF** using an online converter.
As per a recent update from IRCC, when submitting the Family Form, **you must print, sign, scan** and then upload.
- The question '**What is your current country/territory of residence?**' refers to where you physically are at the time of application. If this has changed since you completed your IEC profile, add a Letter of Explanation in your application and explain where you currently are.
- Keep in mind that **CIC may contact you** and request more documentation, depending on your circumstances. This does not necessarily mean you will not get your IEC work permit, but it will prolong the process.
- **Police certificates** are required from each country or territory where you have lived for six months or more. The certificate(s) must be no more than 12 months old unless they are from a country you no longer live in and not returned to. If not in English or French, the certificate must be translated.
- **IRCC have confirmed that this six month period is NO LONGER cumulative**, meaning that you could live in another country for four months every year but would not need to provide a police cert from that country unless asked).
- It is generally **easier to complete a medical** before entering Canada to activate your IEC. It is possible to do a medical in Canada after you have arrived but you will have to go to a border to have your work permit details changed after the medical has been processed. This loses you time on your work permit and may cost extra money.
- Before submitting your IEC work permit application, make sure you have uploaded each document in the right category.
- **Don't leave it until the last minute to submit.** Although you have 20 days to submit the documents, do not wait to submit until the 20th day. Anything can happen – computer failure, server issues...both at your end and with CIC. Don't risk it! If you don't have a document (e.g. police certificate) by the time you need to upload it, submit the details in a 'Letter of Explanation' in this slot instead.
- Once you have your POE, **print it at least once** and then save it onto your computer and keep a backup via the cloud/email/USB storage. Don't let your only copy of your all-important POE be an online version. You never know when websites are going to be down for maintenance or have other technical issues!