IMMIGRATION GUIDELINES FOR GRT REGISTRATION FORM

The following is a short summary of the different immigration categories for Research Trainees. Please make sure to indicate your immigration status in your Graduate Research Trainee Registration Form.

Note: As a foreign national coming to Canada to conduct research, you must qualify for one of the below immigration categories.

I) Work Permit

As a research trainee you may be eligible to apply for a work permit through the International Mobility Program (IMP). Applying for a work permit through the IMP exempts you from the requirement of having a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA).

There are two different types of LMIA exempt work permits: employer specific work permits and open work permits.

NOTE: On the registration form, please make sure to include the LMIA exemption code for the employer specific work permit you will be applying for. If you are applying for an open work permit, you do not need to indicate the LMIA exemption code, instead please indicate N/A (not applicable) in the box.

A) Employer Specific Work permits

i) International Experience Canada (IEC) program (Code C21):

You may only use Code C21 if you have been accepted under one of the IEC programs. In order to be accepted, you must first submit your profile into an IEC pool of candidates. It is only once you receive an Invitation to Apply from Immigration Canada that you will be allowed to apply for your work permit.

There are two different ways to apply to an IEC programs.

You may apply to an IEC program through a Bilateral Youth Agreement (BYA), if your country of citizenship has a BYA with Canada. Note that only 32 countries have a BYA with Canada and each country has a quota on the number of applications received. Depending on your country of citizenship, you may be eligible for the IEC program: International Co-op Internship (internships for students only). Participants in the internship category are eligible to apply for an employer-specific work permit to help them gain targeted experience in their field of study to fulfill part of their academic curriculum in the home country.

If the quota has been reached through one of the above BYA or in cases where a BYA does not exist, you may be eligible to apply to an IEC program through a number of recognized organizations. The two most popular recognized organizations are GO International and SWAP. Under these two organizations you
could qualify for an Open Work Permit – “working holiday program”. However, there are quotas and deadlines for each recognized organization and country.

For more information on the eligibility requirements and the different IEC programs (International Co-op, Young Professionals, Working Holiday), please see:

ii) Award recipient (Code C44)

This category would be appropriate if you were granted an award due to academic or research excellence and this award is used to pay for your research training in Canada. For more information please see

iii) Work related to research program (Code C31)

Use this code only if you qualify under one of the following specific research programs:

a. are coming to Canada to work temporarily for the International Development Research Centre of Canada (IDRC);
b. are sponsored by Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., as distinguished scientists or post-doctoral fellows;
c. are sponsored by the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) as distinguished scientists or scholars coming to participate in research for the NRC and the NSERC; or
d. are holders of research chair positions at a Canadian university, nominated for their research excellence, and partially or wholly funded by federal or provincial governments.

If the research that you will be performing does not fall under one of the above programs then you should not use this code to apply for your work permit.

For more information please see:

Note: The Co-op Work permits (Code C32 and Code C33) are only for international students registered as a student in Canada that have a study permit in Canada, and need to complete a mandatory internship as part of their academic program in Canada. If you are not a registered student in Canada, the code C32 and Code C33 may not be used.

iv) Reciprocal employment agreement (Code C20)

This code can be used if a reciprocal employment agreement exists between McGill and your home institution allowing for reciprocity and exchange of research trainees between the two institutions.

For more information please see:

Note: a student exchange agreement is not the same as a reciprocal employment agreement.
B) Open work permits

i) Working Holiday work permit under IEC (please see information above under LMIA exemption code C21).

ii) Spousal Open work permit

If your spouse or common-law partner is already in Canada or will be accompanying you to Canada and they have a Canadian work permit or study permit that is valid for the duration of your traineeship at McGill, you may be eligible to apply for a spousal open work permit.

In order to be eligible for the spousal open work permit, your spouse or common-law partner must meet certain criteria. If they are a work permit holder, they will need to meet the criteria as per Immigration Canada’s website. If they are a study permit holder, they will need to meet the criteria as per Immigration Canada’s website.

II) Study Permit

This category should only be chosen, if you are completing your graduate studies at a Canadian university and you would like to complete part of your thesis research at McGill. If this category applies to you, you may complete your traineeship under the off-campus work regulations if you meet the eligibility requirements.

NOTE: If you are completing your studies at a University located in Quebec, you must also have a CAQ issued by Immigration Quebec, in addition to your study permit.

III) Visitor: Self-funded Researcher - Work permit exemption

You may be exempt for the requirement of having a work permit, if you meet the eligibility requirements to come to Canada as a Self-funded Researcher. As such, your status will be that of a business visitor.

The conditions that must be met in order to qualify as a Self-funded Researcher are:

i. There should be no displacement of Canadian or permanent resident workers;
ii. There should be no employer-employee relationship created with McGill;
iii. You must not receive any remuneration from McGill and must be coming to McGill with your own funds;
iv. McGill must not receive compensation for the training period, nor benefit from the research; and
v. The maximum duration of your stay is 6 months.

In other words, the graduate research trainee must be coming to Canada with their own funds to work on research that will only benefit their studies back home and not to contribute to a McGill research project.

As such, the Self-funded Researcher comes to Canada to acquire knowledge and conduct research at their own expense. Each file is assessed on a case-by-case basis by CIC.

If you qualify under this category, please check “visitor” on the registration form.
Foreign nationals who require a visitor visa (see http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/visas.asp) will still need to obtain one before entering Canada.

Note: If you will be requesting this work permit exemption, your hosting professor should provide you with an invitation letter. When entering Canada or applying for a visitor visa, you should provide a copy of this invitation letter in addition to the letter from Enrolment Services.

In order to facilitate the request for this work permit exemption upon entry to Canada (for visitor visa exempt foreign nationals only) or the application for a visitor visa under this work permit exemption, it is recommended that the following be demonstrated with the supporting documents listed below:

1) the purpose of your stay:
   - Letter of invitation from hosting professor
   - Letter from Enrolment Services
   - Outline of research project

2) that you are a student at your home university:
   - Proof of enrolment
   - Transcripts
   - Letter from home university confirming research project at McGill

3) that you are self-funded:
   - Proof of funds: e.g.: bank letter, employment letter from home country, letter of support from family members and bank letter.
   - Funds should be sufficient to cover duration of stay (i.e. less than 6 months)

SOURCES:


Citizenship and Immigration Canada:

Prepared by Leyda Melissa Paulmier, LL.B., Member of the Quebec Bar and Immigration Advisor at the International Student Services of McGill University.