

Get In Canada Warns International Students: 10 Hidden Pitfalls That Can Jeopardize Your PGWP in 2025

Get In Canada shares 10 PGWP risks—CIP codes, full-time status, language tests, and deadlines—with a simple checklist to prevent refusals.

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“

PGWP success isn't luck—it's planning. Choose an eligible program, stay full-time, test early, and file within 180 days.”

Luai Walid El Haj, Senior Immigration Consultant

Immigration and Business Consulting today issued a practical advisory to international students and recent graduates on the most common—and most costly—mistakes that can lead to Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) refusals. Drawing on recent IRCC updates and front-line case experience, the firm outlines 10 risk factors and offers a step-by-step prevention checklist to keep graduates work-eligible in Canada.

“The PGWP is a one-time opportunity that can open a pathway to permanent residence,” said Luai Walid El Haj, Senior Immigration Consultant at Get In Canada. “But small errors—choosing an ineligible program, slipping below full-time, missing the 180-day deadline—are the exact reasons files get refused.”

What's new—and what puts your PGWP at risk

Program eligibility (CIP codes). Not every program leads to a PGWP. Outside of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, non-degree programs must match IRCC-approved fields of study (CIP codes).

Full-time status every term. Part-time study is only tolerated in the final semester; earlier part-time terms can be disqualifying.

Working only when authorized. Off-campus/on-campus work is allowed only under the exact conditions printed on your study permit; violations risk status loss and refusal.

In-Canada, in-person completion. Temporary online-study flexibilities no longer apply to

students who began programs on/after Sept 1, 2024.

Mandatory language test. From Nov 1, 2024, applicants must submit valid English/French test results (e.g., CELPIP, IELTS General, PTE Core; TEF/TCF for French) meeting the required CLB for their program level.

The 180-day clock. Apply within 180 days of official program completion (e.g., letter of completion or final transcript). Late applications are typically refused.

Complete documentation. Include proof of completion, full-time status, eligible field of study, language results, and upfront medicals if required.

Passport validity. Your PGWP cannot exceed your passport expiry; renew early to avoid a shortened permit and a second paper application.

Genuine temporary intent. Dual intent is allowed, but you must show you'll respect PGWP terms and won't overstay.

Inadmissibility screens. Medical, financial, misrepresentation, criminality, security, or inadmissible family members can bar entry or lead to removal.

Action checklist for graduates (and future applicants)

Confirm your program's PGWP eligibility (and CIP code) before you enroll or switch.

Stay full-time every term (except the last). Keep proof from your DLI.

Follow your permit's work conditions precisely; keep a record of hours and employer(s).

Study primarily in Canada; plan to finish in person if you started after Sept 1, 2024.

Book your language test early and meet the CLB needed for your credential level.

Start a 180-day countdown the day you receive official completion proof.

Assemble a complete file: completion letter/diploma, transcripts, full-time proof, test results, medical (if needed).



Luai Walid El Haj

Renew your passport to cover the full PGWP length you're eligible for.

Document dual intent properly: ties to home country + compliance plan in Canada.

Assess inadmissibility risks early and get counsel if any issues may apply.

"PGWP success isn't luck—it's planning. Choose an eligible program, stay full-time, respect work rules, test early, and file within 180 days."

— Luai Walid El Haj, Senior Immigration Consultant, Get In Canada

Expert Q&A Highlights with Luai Walid El Haj

Q: What's the #1 reason you see PGWP refusals?

A: Incomplete or late applications. Graduates underestimate how fast the 180-day window closes and how exact IRCC is about proof of completion and full-time status.

Q: What's your advice for students still choosing a program?

A: Treat the CIP code like a gating requirement. If it's not clearly PGWP-eligible for your credential level, keep looking. Eligibility first—then tuition, location, and co-op.

Q: How can applicants show genuine temporary intent while planning PR?

A: That's dual intent done right: show explicit ties and a compliance plan (role, employer type, province, and how you'll respect the permit's end date), while explaining your long-term pathway lawfully.

Who is eligible for a PGWP (at a glance)

Graduated from a PGWP-eligible program at a Designated Learning Institution (DLI)

Program length $\geq$ 8 months (or 900 hours in Quebec)

Maintained full-time status in each semester (except the final)

Applied within 180 days of completion; study permit valid at some point within that window

Students and graduates can request a 15-minute PGWP readiness review with Get In Canada's team to check program eligibility, status history, documentation, and timing—before submitting to IRCC.

Book now: booking.getincanada.ca

About Get In Canada Immigration and Business Consulting

Get In Canada is a Canada-based immigration consultancy serving students, workers, families, and entrepreneurs across all major pathways, including study-to-work transitions, Express Entry/PNPs, H&C, PRRA, and business programs (C11/ICT). With offices in Montreal and Brampton, the firm is led by Senior Immigration Consultant Luai Walid El Haj (RCIC R-513208) and a multilingual team supporting clients across the Middle East, Africa, and beyond.

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