Student Employment

Expires: April 30, 2025

Facts

1. At least 50% of students studying in Canada work during their post-secondary studies[1].
2. There are opportunities for the federal, provincial and municipal governments to implement and improve student employment programs.
   - International students who may require work experience as part of their degree requirements may apply for a work permit upon meeting the following criteria:
     - must have a valid study permit
     - work is required to complete their study program in Canada
     - must have a letter from their institution that confirms all students in their program need to complete work placements to get their degree, and
     - co-op placement or internship totals 50% or less of your study program[2].
       This process for protected persons can be considerably more complex due to a variety of intersecting factors.
3. Citizenship and Immigration Canada allows for international students to work 20 hours per week while studying and up to 40 hours per week during regular breaks[3].
   However, in certain cases bureaucratic processes between Canada Border Services Agency and Service Canada, international students are not always guaranteed to have a work permit attached to their study permit[4].
4. Fairly compensated employment opportunities are a means of ensuring access to post-secondary education.
   In contrast, unpaid internships may result in additional barriers to access. “Many of these positions have replaced entry-level jobs and are often exploitative in nature, resulting in higher youth unemployment and lower wages[5].”
5. Paid and unpaid student interns have inherent workplace rights, protected under the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Employment Equity Act and the Canadian Labour Code. These rights apply to all students in the workforce, and, include (but are not limited to) ensuring employment standards, discrimination prevention, and workplace health and safety[6].
6. Students deserve to be compensated fairly from companies and not-for-profits that receive student wage subsidies.
7. Pre-graduation, program-relevant employment resources and opportunities lead students to greater career success post-graduation.
8. From 1993 to 2013, private company spending on employee training and development fell 40%[7].
9. Soft, transferable skills are acquired through internship and employment opportunities, which are essential towards most careers and landing post-graduate employment.
10. In April 2019, the federal government is introducing a new Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program to replace the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy[8].

Resolutions

1. The Students’ Union shall advocate for provincial and federal student employment programs to be in operation throughout the entire year.
2. The Students’ Union shall advocate for increased government funding towards federal student employment programs, specifically the Canada Summer Jobs Program or equivalent, and the First Nations and Inuit Summer Work Experience Program[7]or equivalent.
   The Students’ Union shall advocate for government employment subsidization programs to increase the amount they subsidize to align with minimum wage increases and inflation.

3. The Students' Union shall advocate that municipalities that are proximate to University of Alberta campuses create more job opportunities for students throughout the year.
4. The Students' Union shall advocate to the federal government to raise or abolish the cap on hours per week for international students to be able to work during the academic year.
5. The Students' Union shall advocate that the government review the criteria for funding student employment wage subsidy recipients to ensure that positions funded provide degree relevant experience.
6. The Students' Union shall advocate for improved coordination between the Canada Border Services Agency and Service Canada to ensure that all international students can obtain work permits and Social Insurance Numbers when they receive study permits.
7. The Students' Union shall advocate to all levels of government for fair compensation and financial support to be provided for all internships, paid or unpaid, in the public and private sectors.
   Fair compensation for unpaid internships includes but is not limited to:
   - Cost of living expenses
   - Travel expenses
   - Credentialing
   - Acceptable working hours
8. The Students' Union shall advocate for an increase in funding to existing employment training programs and the creation of new employment training programs to address insufficient training and professional development delivered by employers.
9. The Students' Union shall advocate that the federal government provide consistent and stable funding to the University of Alberta Career Centre to connect students with resources and opportunities to adequately aid in fostering and developing their post-graduate careers.
10. The Students' Union shall advocate to all levels of government against discrimination faced by students based on protected grounds by job recruiters or their employer.
11. The Students' Union shall advocate for employment opportunities in both English and French that are geographically accessible to students.
12. The Students' Union shall advocate to the federal government that the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program include equitable and accessible opportunities for all post-secondary Indigenous students.

References

1. https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/casaacae/pages/1275/attachments/original/1526062386/Student_%28Un%29Employment_in_Canada.pdf?1526062386
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3. https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/casaacae/pages/1275/attachments/original/1526062386/Student_%28Un%29Employment_in_Canada.pdf?1526062386
4. https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/work/work-off-campus.html
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6. https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/indigenous/asets.html
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