

## Coop Work Permits for International MAPS Students (Practicum Stream)

September 29, 2023

This memo is for international students in the practicum stream of the Master of Arts in Policy Studies (MAPS) program.

**Work Permit for Practicums:** Whenever international students engage in work activities for academic credit, they must obtain a work permit. This is a blanket policy – whenever international students are working for credit, they need a work permit, regardless of the general work rights specified in their visas.

**Work Rights During Full-Time Studies:** As part of the international student study permit, generally speaking<sup>1</sup>, MAPS students can work unlimited hours on campus or 20 hours/week off campus during periods where they maintain full-time enrollment. There are two exceptions to this.

**Scheduled Break Times:** The first exception concerns what Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) considers to be “scheduled break times”. Generally speaking<sup>1</sup>, international students enrolled in the MAPS program are permitted to work full-time off-campus during these times. This is the case for all non-credit activities (i.e., non-practicum periods).

**Determining Scheduled Break Times:** To qualify as a “scheduled break time”, a student must have this potential period directly in between semesters of full-time studies. During this “regularly scheduled break,” students are not required to take any courses by the program, even if many choose to do so. In other words, the student must be enrolled in full-time studies (9 credits per semester) in both the semester before and after the break.

For example, if students are enrolled full-time from January-April of 2024 and September-December of 2024, the Spring/Summer in between can be considered a scheduled break time. By contrast, a student cannot consider Fall term to be a scheduled break if they are full time in Spring/Summer and full time in Winter, because students are expected to be in classes in the Fall.

**Last Term Exception:** The second exception is if the semester in question is the last semester of their program. During the last semester of their program, international MAPS students can (generally speaking<sup>1</sup>) work up to 20-hours per week off campus, even if they are not registered in their programs full-time (i.e., one course, such as the capstone course, is sufficient).

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<sup>1</sup> Whenever the words “generally speaking” appear in this memo, the sentence pertains to most international students in the MAPS program. International students are responsible for verifying that their own personal visa conditions match those described above, since these are set individually by IRCC.

## Options

With these factors in mind, we recommend two “paths” for international MAPS students to choose from.

### Option 1: POL S 803 and 804 in the Spring/Summer

On this path, students take POL S 803 in the Spring and POL S 804 in the Summer after their first two full-time semesters of study. They are matched to practicums through the Alberta Policy Internship Program (APIP), but instead of a six-month APIP placement, they do a four-month placement. This is because they will no longer have full-time, off-campus work rights in the Fall Semester when they finish their practicums. Then, in the Fall semester, they only take POL S 902 (Capstone Seminar). There would be nothing preventing students from continuing to work with their employer part-time in that semester, if their employer was interested in hiring them.

### Option 2: POL S 803 and 804 in the Second Fall Semester

On this path, students take POL S 803 and 804 concurrently in the second Fall semester of their degree, along with POL S 902 (Capstone Seminar), and take the summer off from study. If students are enrolled in full-time studies in Winter and the subsequent Fall, the Spring/Summer period in between can be considered a scheduled break time. As a result, they would have full-time work rights in the Spring/Summer, in addition to taking their practicum courses in the Fall/Winter. Thus, students would have the option of starting an APIP placement sometime in the Spring/Summer with the rest of their cohort as a summer job, but the formal “practicum” component would only begin in the Fall.

**Application Process:** In all cases, students will need to apply for a coop work permit to complete POL S 803 and 804. Students seeking work permits should contact [UA International](#), who will guide them through the application process. This application is on top of the visa they need to enter the country and study in Canada.