

NEW CANADIAN IMMIGRATION ROUTE

The Canadian government has announced details of a new immigration avenue for foreign students and temporary workers, called Canadian Experience Class. The new avenue was first announced in October last year as a key element of the government's long-term immigration plan.

Under the new regulations, which came into force on September 17, international students with at least two years post-secondary education in Canada and one year of recent full-time skilled work experience in Canada in management, professional, skilled and

technical occupations, and temporary foreign workers with a secondary school diploma, trade certificate or apprenticeship and two years full-time skilled work experience in Canada, will be able to apply for permanent residence. Applicants will be able to apply for residency from within Canada and also from their home country, providing they do so within one year of leaving their employment within Canada.

The new rules were introduced in a bid to encourage skilled immigration in Canada from temporary residents living in less populated regions of the country. Diane Finley, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in Canada, said, "In-

ternational students and skilled workers would be more likely to choose Canada if they know their time in Canada and contribution to Canadian society would assist in their eligibility to apply to stay permanently."

Janice Rudkowski, Director of Marketing and Communications at Career Edge Organization in Canada, said that the new visa pathway might encourage more applicants to consider their range of paid internship programmes. "A paid internship through our Career Edge programme for recent graduates may be a good option for gaining meaningful entry level Canadian work experience for these individuals," she said. ■

* The USA and Ireland have agreed a deal that will see 20,000 one-year work visas available for Irish and US citizens. The new J-1 visas will be available to anyone with a secondary school education or trade – rather than just students as it currently stands – and they will also be able to stay and work for 12 months rather than the current three months. It is expected that the new visa will come into force in the New Year.

* Kalypso Adventure, an adventure and eco travel company based in India, is expanding its product range to include volunteer programmes. The company has teamed up with UK-based Raleigh International, who will help with promotion. Potential projects currently awaiting approval from the relevant authorities in India include cleaning up the rivers in Kerala and reforestation projects.

* The National Trade Academy, a vocational training provider in Canterbury, New Zealand, has won an Innovation in International Programme award from Education New Zealand (ENZ). The award, which was presented during the ENZ conference earlier in the year, was awarded for the company's work with Immigration New Zealand on a Study to Work visa pilot programme for Chilean citizens. The pilot project will allow a smoother transition for students to gain work experience for one or two years.

AUSTRALIA-INDONESIA WORK VISA INTRODUCED

The governments of Australia and Indonesia have agreed a memorandum of understanding over reciprocal work and holiday visas that will see citizens of either country between the ages of 18 and 30 years be able to work in each other's countries for up to 18 months.

The memorandum is due to be signed later this year and differs from a working holiday visa in that applicants will have to prove that they can speak functional English or Indonesian, hold or be studying towards tertiary

qualifications and have the support of their government. Senator Chris Evans, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship in Australia, said, "This new arrangement is an investment in future relations with Indonesia, and will help to develop links between both countries."

Currently 100 visas will be available for both countries although this figure will be reviewed annually. Other countries with work and holiday visa arrangements include the USA, Thailand, Chile, Bangladesh and Turkey. ■

REAL GAP AMONG COMPANIES TAKEN OVER

There has been acquisitional activity in the experiential travel sector, with Real Gap Experience and Word Challenge being sold this year to TUI, which last year also acquired i-to-i (see *Work Wise*, Dec 2007, page 46).

German giant TUI was estimated to have paid up to UK£43.8 million (US\$77.7 million) for the two companies in April; Real Gap is a market leader specialising in gap year placements and

World Challenge offers niche school expeditions.

Meanwhile, FutureSense, owner of GapGuru in the UK, has acquired MondoChallenge, a UK specialist in career breaks.

Arvind Malhotra of FutureSense said, "Under our two brands, we will offer specialist programmes [for] different categories and ages. We work with over 100 partners abroad, focusing on education, business development and medical programmes." ■

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