

Country and Education Guide : Canada



Content

Country guide

General country information	p.2
Time zones and climate	p.3
Telecommunications	p.5
Transportation	p.6
Cost of living	p.7
Health and medical	p.8

Education guide

Education in Canada	p.10
Education system overview	p.11
Tuition fees	p.13
Student accommodation	p.14
Secondary education	p.15
Higher education	p.16
Applying to schools	
• General process	p.17
• Documentation	p.17
• Student visa application	p.17
• Required examinations	p.18
Frequently asked questions	p.19
Acknowledgements	p.20



Country Guide



General Country Information

Canada is the second largest country in the world. Canadians have a strong sense of national identity and in many ways they identify more with European political and social ideology than with their more conservative neighbours to the south, creating subtle cultural challenges for global travellers.

Name of country: Canada

Capital city: Ottawa

Key cities: Montréal, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver

Population: 33,476,688 (2011 Census)

Official languages: English and French

Currency: Canadian dollar (CAD)

Time zones and climate

Time zones

Newfoundland Standard Time (NST; UTC* -3.5 hours):	Newfoundland
Atlantic Standard Time (AST; UTC -4 hours):	Québec (eastern tip), Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island
Eastern Standard Time (EST; UTC -5 hours):	Nunavut (Southampton Island only), parts of Ontario, most of Québec
Central Standard Time (CST; UTC -6 hours):	most of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, parts of Nunavut, Ontario (northwestern only)
Mountain Standard Time (MST; UTC -7 hours):	British Columbia (southeastern only), Northwest Territories, Alberta, Nunavut (western tip)
Pacific Standard Time (PST; UTC -8 hours):	most of British Columbia, Yukon
Daylight Saving Time (DST) is observed in all provinces except Saskatchewan. It typically starts on the second Sunday in March and ends on the first Sunday in November each year.	

* UTC = Coordinated Universal Time



Climate

Temperatures between seasons across Canada vary according to the location. The average temperature of major cities ranges from -26 to 20°C. Snowfall occurs very often even in southern cities.

City	Full year	Summer (Average temp.)	Winter (Average temp.)
Vancouver	0-21°C	22°C	4°C
Toronto	-11-26°C	23°C	-5°C
Montréal	-15-26°C	23°C	-6°C

Telecommunications

Calling Canada

IDD	Major cities' code
country code : 1	Vancouver (604,778)
	Toronto (416,647,905)
	Montréal (450,514)
	Calgary (403)

EMERGENCY NUMBER: 911



Transportation

Getting around

Canada is known for its fast, clean and efficient public transportation system.

Air

The country has a dense network of domestic flights. There are also many small operators flying within the provinces or to remote areas that have no other means of transportation.

Driving

Driving is on the right side of the road. In larger metropolitan areas, traffic is often congested and parking is difficult. Yet, it's a pleasure once you are out on the open road. Canada has a comprehensive and well-maintained network of highways.

The major car rental companies have outlets at airports, as well as in towns and cities across the country. You will need your passport, credit card, and in some cases your return plane ticket. Most cars come with a radio and air conditioning and most are automatic transmission.

Train

Canada's rail system, VIA Rail, is government owned and operated. Train service was significantly reduced in the late 1980s, but you can still travel on a single train from Vancouver to Edmonton, Saskatoon and Toronto, and then make a connection to continue on to Montréal, Québec and Halifax.

VIA Rail also runs the intercity train lines through the Ontario Corridor, which extends from Windsor to Québec City and includes Niagara Falls, Toronto, Ottawa and Montréal.

Aside from VIA Rail, there are also commuter lines serving Canada's larger cities, like Vancouver's West Coast Express and Toronto's Go Transit.

Bus

Most bus routes of Toronto are run by Greyhound Canada, which offers fast service in comfortable air-conditioned buses. In western and eastern Canada, Greyhound links up with regional carriers. Reservations are usually unnecessary, but you should arrive at the station at least an hour before boarding time.

Cost of living

The cost of living in Canada varies with location, with costs usually higher in the big cities.

Average cost of living

	CAD	USD*
Daily transport	4 – 7	4 – 7
Newspaper	1 – 1.25	1 – 1.25
Fast food set meal	4 – 8	4 – 8
Fresh milk per litre	1.50	1.50
Movie ticket per person	11 – 13	11 – 13
Museum entry fee	9.– 15	9 – 15

* Exchange rate CAD1 = USD1

Above costs are indicative only and current.



Health and medical



Healthcare overview

Canada has a publicly financed health care system that is delivered by private health care professionals. The federal government sets and administers national principles or standards for the health care system.

The private health care sector is limited to those services not completely covered by provincial health programmes such as prescription medications, vision care, dental care and allied health professionals such as chiropractors and podiatrists.

General Practitioners (GPs) provide most of the primary health care. They make referrals to Specialist Physicians and hospitals. Patients are free to choose their own GP. Many Specialist Physicians have private practices in addition to an affiliation with a hospital out-patient clinic. Canadian hospitals operate as private not-for-profit institutions. The Canadian Council for Health Facility Accreditation monitors hospital quality.

The national health system is known as Medicare. Private health insurance or supplemental insurance has become quite popular with Canadians as cost containment within Medicare has increased deductibles and co-payments and reduced coverage for prescription medications.

Health care and medical facilities are good. However, as there are no reciprocal health agreements between Canada and other countries and medical care is expensive, health insurance is mandatory for visitors. Some provinces add a surcharge of up to 30% for non-residents utilizing local health facilities.



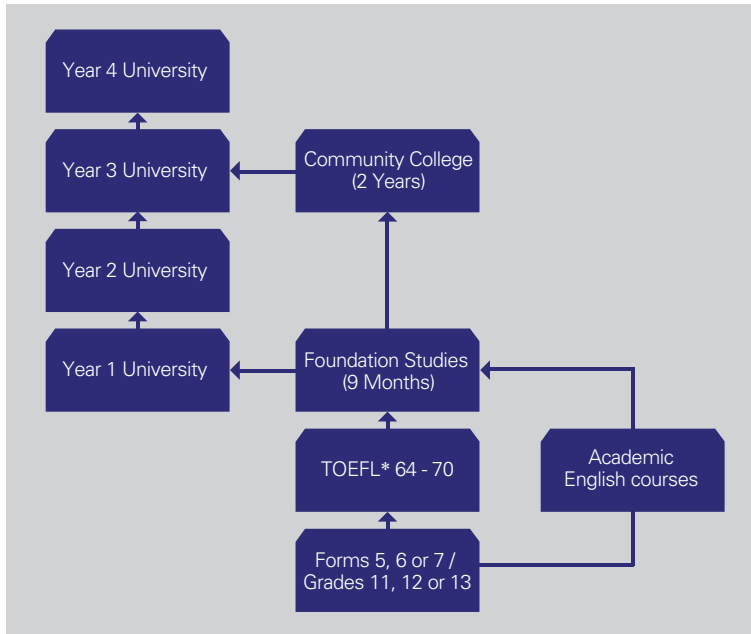


Education Guide

Education in Canada

With over 200 degree-granting institutions in Canada, higher education consists of public and private universities, university colleges, colleges, institutions of technology and specialised institutions. Certain universities may be associated with other colleges and universities for support and affiliation. Over half of the universities are concentrated in Ontario and Québec due to the population density. Although Québec is a French speaking region, there are also a number of English universities. Provinces located outside of Québec also have at least one French-language university or college.

Education system overview



* Test of English as a Foreign Language





Education system overview

To qualify for higher education, Canadian students must first finish 12 years of primary and secondary education to obtain a high school diploma. International students wishing to study in Canada must demonstrate the ability for academic success and are required to have completed coursework that is equivalent to Canadian standards.

During undergraduate study (the first four years of college or university), students must indicate their subject of interest and official majors are declared by the second year.

There are two types of postgraduate education in Canada: a master's degree and a doctorate degree. A master's degree is a specialised study in a specific field that typically lasts 2 years. The second type is a doctorate (PhD) degree, which is more research oriented and typically takes three to six years to complete.

Law, dentistry, and medicine are professional fields of study that are only available at the graduate school level in Canada.

Tuition fees

Fees vary widely according to the institution and the course. Tuition costs at top universities can be considerably higher.

Average tuition fees per annum (for reference only)

Institution	CAD	USD*
Private Secondary School	10,000 – 17,000	10,000 – 17,000
Public Secondary School	10,000 – 17,000	10,000 – 17,000
Community College	12,000 – 15,000	12,000 – 15,000
University	12,000 – 22,000	12,000 – 22,000
University Foundation Programme	10,000 – 14,000	10,000 – 14,000
Cost of Living	11,000 – 16,000	11,000 – 16,000

* Exchange rate CAD1 = USD1

Above fees are indicative only and current.



Student accommodation

Accommodation Types	Description	Price Range
On-campus	Living on campus is probably the best option as it offers easy access to all school facilities, such as libraries, laboratories and sports centres. On-campus housing, usually in “residence halls” (single or shared rooms), is usually cheaper and helps build friendships, making the transition a great deal easier. There is also increased safety as campuses are patrolled by security guards. Another key convenience is the school cafeteria, as cooking facilities are not always available in residence halls. Some universities offer a range of living options and it is advisable that you find out what is available before making your decision.	Public Institution: CAD7,692 per annum You should note that residence halls will often close during the summer. If you will not be returning to your home country during that time, you will have to find alternate housing.
Off-campus	Off-campus living offers greater independence, the benefit of being able to cook your own meals and convenient access to shops and restaurants. Students usually share an apartment (flat) or a house and share the costs of utilities such as electricity. Phone and transportation costs should also be factored in when considering this option. The off-campus option is favoured by postgraduate students.	Living costs vary widely and depend on individual lifestyles. If you are considering living off campus, the annual cost of transportation, medical insurance and expenses will be around CAD 14,000 – CAD 17,000.

Secondary education

There are different secondary education options available in Canada. They include public, private, religious and language schools.

Public schools

Public schools often serve the neighbourhood, offering students close proximity to their network of friends and family in the area. Some public schools concentrate in arts and sports programmes or internationally recognised IB and AP high school courses. There are also charter schools which are less bound to local policies and regulations and therefore more flexible in terms of curriculum.

Private schools

Private schools are subdivided into two main streams, religious and secular schools. Both provide boarding facilities and aim to prepare students for higher education. Some private schools have religious affiliations, such as Baptist, Catholic, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Protestant and more. Secular schools have an established reputation and can be costly in terms of tuition and boarding.

French language schools

As one of Canada's two national languages and the official language of the province of Québec, French is an important medium of instruction and education. Students who study the language benefit not only within Canada but also internationally. Many French immersion schools offer programmes to pick up and further develop French skills in grammar, writing, reading and conversation.





Higher education

Admission to the top universities in Canada is highly valued and can be very competitive. Students can choose to complete their higher education in colleges or universities.

Colleges

In Canada, colleges focus more on hands-on career training and have different curriculums than universities. Generally, a certificate programme is one year or less, and a diploma programme is two or three years.

Universities

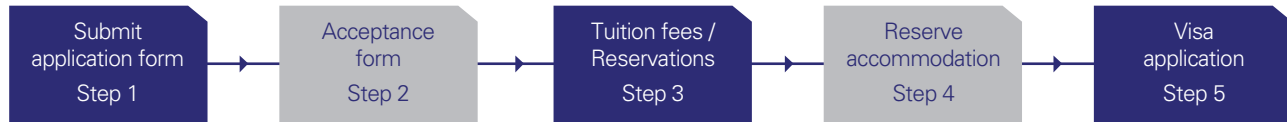
Universities in Canada are usually research-oriented with a range of disciplines - from engineering to business to the arts and humanities. Classes are taught with full-time faculty members and teacher-student interaction is encouraged. Undergraduate programmes lead to a bachelor's degree while graduate programmes lead to a master's degree or doctorate.

Applying to schools

Canadian schools adopt an academic credit system where students graduate when they have accumulated a certain amount of required credits (usually around 30 credits). There is no time limit for accumulating credits, but a minimum of three years is required to obtain the credits.

General process

Applicants may go through the following process:



Documentation

- 1 College/university application form
- 2 Application fee
- 3 Public English exam results or the institution's own English exam results (original/certified copy)
- 4 School report (recent 2 years)/Form 5 or Form 7 public exam results/
Resume (original/certified copy)
- 5 Passport (original/certified copy)
- 6 One recent photo

Student visa application

International students need to obtain a student visa. The application process for a Canadian Student Visa generally takes 8 weeks but can take up to 4 months. Applicants must provide:

- Completed application forms in the Application Kit and IMM 1294 for the study permit
- An original passport valid for at least twelve months from the date you intend to depart for Canada
- Two passport-sized photographs
- An original and a copy of the letter of acceptance from schools
- A study plan in English, explaining the study proposed in Canada and intentions after completing the courses to which you have been accepted
- Evidence of education qualification
- Proof of funds e.g. a bank draft of min CAD 10,000 in your own name, passbook or bank statement
- Other relevant information

Applying to schools

Required examinations (requirements vary by institution)

Undergraduate

- GED – High School Diploma Equivalent
- TOEFL/IELTS – Test of English as a Foreign Language/International English Language Test (if English is not first language)
- GCE – General Certificate of Education
- GAO KAO – Chinese National University Entrance Examination
- AP – Advance Placement Courses
- IB – International Baccalaureate
- IFP – International Foundation Program

Postgraduate/Professional schools

- Graduate Record Examination (GRE)
- Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT)
- Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)
- Dental Admission Test (DAT)
- Optometry Admission Test (OAT)
- Pharmacy College Admission Test (PCAT)
- Veterinary College Admission Test (VCAT)
- Allied Health Professions Admission Test (AHPAT)
- Law School Admission Test (LSAT)
- TOEFL/IELTS – Test of English as a Foreign Language/International English Language Test (if English is not first language)



Frequently asked questions

1. Can overseas students studying in the Canada work part-time?

Yes. Job opportunities are available on and off campus, but students must apply for a visa.

2. Do I need to get medical insurance if I study in Canada?

Yes, international students staying in Canada are required to have medical insurance before they leave home and must prove their insurance coverage before they start school. Students should be aware of the coverage and know how much they need to pay if certain medical situations arise.

3. What are the differences between colleges and universities?

Universities focus on academic and professional programmes. Colleges focus more on career training and trades. In Canada, colleges and universities are different institutions - usually, colleges have different kinds of programmes than universities do. Colleges tend to be more directly career-oriented than universities. This means they offer practical or hands-on training. Generally, colleges offer certificate programme which are 1 year or less, and diploma program that is 2 or 3 years. Undergraduate degrees typically take 3-4 years to complete for full-time students. It is common for universities to allow students to combine subject areas (e.g., a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and Biology) into a "double major."

Acknowledgements

The content and information in this guide is largely provided by EF Education First, a world leader in international education.

About EF Education First



Founded in 1965 in Sweden, EF Education First operates 400 schools and offices in over 50 countries and has a network of more than 35,000 teachers and staff. To date, EF Education First has helped over 15 million people to learn a new language, discover the world, or earn an academic degree.

As part of their mission to break down barriers in language, geography, and culture, EF Education First works with renowned organisations and educational partners on a global scale. Some of their collaborations include University of Cambridge ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and being named the official learning provider for the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

Besides the diverse range of overseas academic education programmes EF Education First offers, including escorted language tours for young students to cultural exchange and university connection courses with guaranteed placement, the institution also provides tailor-made career courses for working professionals.

For more information, please visit their website at www.ef.com.

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