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Study in Canada

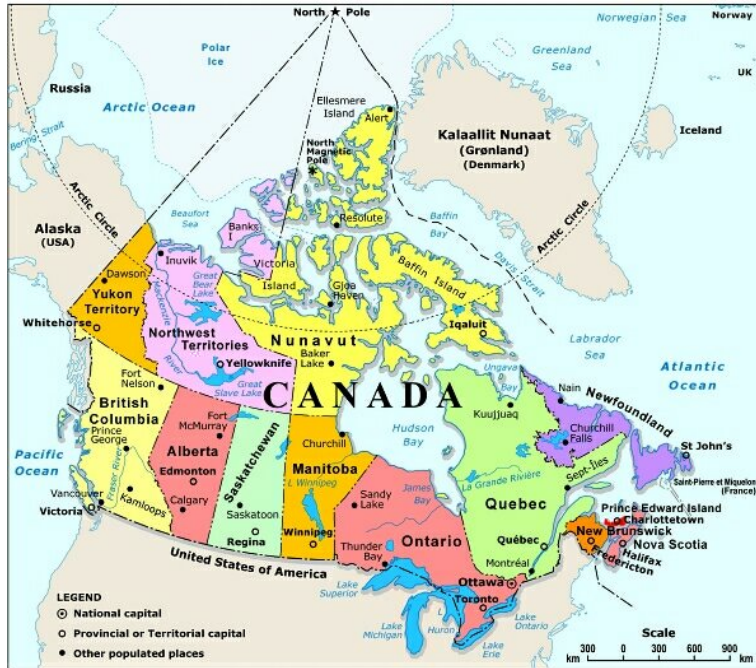


Pre-departure guide for Australian students

Canadian Education Centre – Australia

www.canada.org.au

Map of Canada



Disclaimer

The Canadian Education Centre at the Canadian High Commission, Canberra, advises you that this Guide is meant to serve as a general reference tool only. The Centre and the Canadian High Commission will accept no responsibility or liability stemming from the use of the information contained within.

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2. Can I work during my stay in Canada?

Provided you hold a Study Permit, you can work on the campus of any publicly funded, degree granting institution that you are attending (no separate work permit is required). The employer can be the institution, the faculty, a student organisation, a private business or a private contractor providing services to the campus. This provision also allows for working as a graduate, research or teaching assistant at an 'off campus site' that has a formal affiliation with the institution (e.g. teaching hospitals, clinics or research institutes). Part-time students, however, do not qualify for this provision.

If you are a full-time student at a secondary school, you are also allowed to work if the intended employment is an integral part of your course of study, yet you should check with Immigration officials first.

3. Can I leave Canada and return?

Yes. However, should your Study Permit expire while you are out of Canada, you may not be allowed to return to study. We suggest that you check with Immigration Canada before leaving the country.

4. Can I change schools?

You can change institutions and/or programs of study to others of the same level. Applications for changing schools can be obtained at the nearest Canadian Immigration Centre. If, however, your Study Permit specifies approval to study at a particular institution, you will need to get a new Study Permit. This can be done in Canada.

5. Can I switch to a working holiday visa, without leaving the country, after my studies have come to an end in Canada?

Providing the Canadian Working Holiday Program (CWHP) is open and you meet the eligibility criteria, you may remain in Canada as a visitor while your application for the CWHP is processed by the Canadian Consulate General in Sydney, Australia. Yet note that correspondence for the CWHP will only be sent to a mailing address in Australia. If your CWHP application is approved, your Letter of Introduction will be sent to your mailing address in Australia and must then be forwarded on to you in Canada. You must leave Canada and re-enter at a Port of Entry to have your WHP letter activated to a Work Permit. For more information, visit www.canada.org.au.

6. If I enrol at a tertiary institution in Canada as an international student but then I become a permanent resident of Canada, will my international fees be reimbursed?

This is a private matter between you and the institution in question; hence, you must contact your institution directly.

7. How do I find out about the special requirements for studying in the province of Quebec?

You should check with the institution you plan to attend in Quebec. Students destined to this province require a Certificat d'Acceptation du Quebec (CAQ). Academic institutions in Quebec are prepared to help you apply for and obtain a CAQ. Also, you can visit: www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/anglais/immigration/students/step.html.

13. What happens if I want to participate in a “joint” or “hybrid” tertiary program (i.e. a program where I do part of my studies at one institution, and part of my studies at another)? Do I have to apply to change the conditions of my Study Permit when I change institutions?

If you are planning to participate in such a program you should obtain your Letter of Acceptance from the institution that will be granting you your degree or diploma (or, where a degree or diploma is granted jointly by more than one institution, the Letter of Acceptance should be issued by the institution at which you will begin your studies). You should also ensure that the Letter of Acceptance states that the program of study includes courses/sessions (specify which semesters and courses) given at another institution (specify institution name, location and type- university, college, technical institute, etc). If you apply for a Study Permit with the appropriate Letter of Acceptance as noted above, you will NOT need to apply to change the terms and conditions of your Permit when you do the sections of your course at the named second institution.

Insurance

1. Is it compulsory to have medical insurance? How much does it cost?

A Canadian Immigration Officer may request proof of your ability to pay for health insurance. Similarly, many Canadian educational institutions request that their foreign students have insurance coverage. That being said, most major educational institutions in Canada offer insurance plans for their international students and will help you register and pay fees on arrival. However, if you plan to buy insurance after your arrival in Canada, it is still advisable that you have travel insurance for your journey to Canada and until other coverage is obtained.

Otherwise, affordable packages can be purchased prior to departure from STA Travel or Ingle Insurance International. One year's coverage including both travel and health insurance, for example, will cost you about A\$1200.

Miscellaneous

1. What happens when I arrive in Canada?

If you have applied for a Study Permit, then when you get off the plane in Canada you should have in hand the Letter of Introduction issued to you by Immigration Canada in Sydney, your Letter of Acceptance from a Canadian institution, your passport and a bank statement showing proof of funds to cover your intended stay. You will first be met by a Customs Officer who will then direct you to Immigration. An Immigration Officer will review the documents you hold, ask you a few questions and then issue to you a Study Permit, a colourful legal document complete with security features.

Note: *it is always at the discretion of the Port of Entry officer whether or not you are allowed to enter Canada.*

If you are not travelling with a Study Permit (i.e. your Canadian course will last 6 months or less, you do not want to work while in Canada and the institution you plan to attend in Canada does not require you to hold one), you must have in hand when you get off the plane your passport and your Letter of Acceptance from a Canadian institution.

Congratulations on your decision to study in Canada!

You join a growing band of Australian students who have wisely chosen to attend Canadian educational institutions, renowned worldwide for their quality programs.

Canada is a multicultural nation with a long tradition of embracing newcomers. You will find Canada a wonderful place to live: a safe, modern and prosperous society, rich in natural beauty and in many ways quite similar to Australia.

We encourage you to look beyond the superficial to explore the uniqueness of Canadian culture, to get involved and to truly make the most of what is sure to be an enriching experience in your life.

This Guide has been designed to address the key questions asked by students going to study in Canada and, as such, we hope that you find it useful. If, however, you require further information please contact your Study Abroad Advisor or get in touch with us at:

The Canadian Education Centre

Canadian High Commission
Commonwealth Ave
Canberra ACT 2600
Telephone: (02) 6270 4051
Fax: (02) 6270 4083

Email: studyincanada@dfait-maeci.gc.ca
Website: www.canada.org.au

Also, note that we welcome any comments or suggestions about how to improve this Guide so please send us your feedback.

In the meantime, good luck with your preparations and best wishes for a wonderful trip. Bon Voyage!

Acknowledgements

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Canada: The Basics

Geography

- Canada is the second-largest country (9 970 610 km²) in the world, surpassed only by the Russian Federation.
- Canada's geography is very diverse. It includes fertile plains, vast mountain ranges, large forests, many freshwater lakes and rivers, extensive coast lines, and, in its Arctic, tundra and ice.

Political System

- Canada is a federal parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy.
- The Prime Minister is the Head of Government and the Governor General is the Queen's representative and Canada's Head of State.
- The country is made up of 10 provinces and 3 territories (capital cities are noted in brackets).

Provinces

- 1) Alberta (Edmonton)
- 2) British Columbia (Victoria)
- 3) Prince Edward Island (Charlottetown)
- 4) Manitoba (Winnipeg)
- 5) New Brunswick (Fredericton)
- 6) Nova Scotia (Halifax)
- 7) Ontario (Toronto)
- 8) Quebec (Quebec City)
- 9) Saskatchewan (Regina)
- 10) Newfoundland and Labrador (St. John's)

Territories

- 1) Nunavut (Iqaluit)
- 2) Northwest Territories (Yellowknife)
- 3) Yukon Territory (Whitehorse)

- As of 2000, the largest Canadian cities are Toronto (4.75 million), Montreal (3.48 million), Vancouver (2.05 million) and Ottawa-Hull (1.08 million).
- Ottawa, Ontario is Canada's capital city.

Climate

- There are many climatic variations in this huge country: arctic in the far north, a relatively cold and wet climate in the east, a continental climate in the centre, and a mild, wet climate on the west coast. On the whole, however, Canada has four very distinct seasons, particularly in the more populated southern regions along the US border. Daytime summer temperatures can rise to 35°C and higher, while lows of -25°C are not uncommon in winter. More moderate temperatures are the norm in spring and fall.

In exceptional circumstances, where there are local currency restrictions that could hamper the timely transfer of funds to Canada, an immigration officer might request proof of an off-shore account in the student's name or full payment of the tuition fees in advance.

7. How long will it take for me to obtain a Study Permit?

It varies. Once you submit a *complete* application it can take 4 to 6 weeks. Make *sure* to include all required documents with your application.

8. Do I need to have a medical exam to get a Study Permit?

Normally, no; though, it depends. A resident of Australia or New Zealand requires a medical exam if he/she is going to pursue Canadian studies in childcare, primary or secondary teaching or health services. Medical exams are also required for anyone who has been living in a designated "high-risk" country for 6 or more consecutive months in the year preceding the date one plans to enter Canada. Consult Canadian Immigration and visit www.canada.org.au or www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/dcl.html (shows list of designated countries) for more information.

9. Is a Study Permit required for a student going on a primary or secondary school exchange to Canada?

In general, a Study Permit is not required for such exchanges since they tend to last less than 6 months. However, certain school districts in Canada independently require foreign students to have Study Permits. Therefore, you *must* check with the Canadian academic institution in question.

10. Do I need a Study Permit if I am the dependant of a foreign national on official duty to Canada?

In most cases you do not require a Study Permit if you are the child of a foreign national who is in Canada on diplomatic, consular, official or certain other duties for the United Nations or other intergovernmental bodies of which Canada is a member. For more information and to check whether or not a Study Permit is required, visit: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/irpa/fs-study.html>.

11. Will I need to attend an interview?

After reviewing your application, a Canadian Immigration Officer will decide whether or not this is necessary. If so, the Officer will contact you directly to set an appointment.

12. Can I extend my Study Permit? How?

You can extend your Study Permit and you can do so while in Canada. Contact the nearest Canadian Immigration Centre at least 1 month before the expiry of your Permit and ask for an application to be mailed to you. All applications for student authorizations from within Canada must be mailed to and processed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada's central processing centre in Vegreville, Alberta (Fax: (403) 632-8165).

Frequently Asked Questions

Letter of Acceptance

1. How do I get accepted to a Canadian academic institution?

You must contact the institution you wish to attend. First, consult its website and take note of all relevant admission deadlines and criteria. Then submit your application and obtain a Letter of Acceptance.

Study Permits

1. What is a Study Permit (previously known as a Student Authorisation)?

A study permit is a type of visa that allows you to travel to Canada, enter and engage in studies at the primary, secondary, college or university level and temporarily remain in Canada as a resident student for the period of your course. An immigration officer needs to be satisfied that your planned stay in Canada will be temporary and that you will leave Canada on or before expiry of your study permit.

2. Do I need a Study Permit?

This question is addressed extensively in Visa and Immigration Issues section of this Guide. Generally speaking, if you are a citizen of Australia or New Zealand, you only require a Study Permit if: the course you are undertaking in Canada lasts longer than 6 months, you want to work while studying, or a Study Permit is requested by the Canadian institution you plan to attend. You should check with the Canadian institution in question to clarify whether or not you require a Permit.

3. When applying for a Study Permit, what type of evidence from the post-secondary institution in Canada is acceptable as a confirmation of enrolment?

Typically, a Letter of Acceptance from the institution concerned is sufficient.

4. How much does a Study Permit cost?

The non-refundable application fee for a Study Permit is currently C\$125 (A\$140). Visit the fee schedule/ exchange rates section of the Canadian Consulate General's website, www.canada.org.au, for more information.

5. How do I prove I have sufficient funds to support my stay in Canada?

It is sufficient to show bank statements (or that of a supporting parent or guardian) for the past six months. You must prove that you have approximately C\$833 Canadian for each month you plan to stay in Canada (C\$10,000 for a 12-month stay), plus funds to cover tuition (if applicable). Add C\$4000 per year to this amount if you are taking your spouse and C\$3000 for each dependent child being brought to Canada. The website www.xe.com/ucc is helpful for currency conversion.

6. Do I have to pay my full tuition before I am granted a Study Permit?

No, unless your institution requires you do so. In fact, many Canadian institutions are not able to accept your fees until you arrive and register. However, you must prove to Canadian immigration officials (when applying for a Study Permit) that you have sufficient funds available.

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- On Canada's west coast, particularly in Victoria and the Greater Vancouver area of British Columbia, winters are the mildest, with an average temperature of 3°C in January and snow a rarity.
 - Visit www.canada.gc.ca and click on "About Canada" for detailed weather information.

Time Zones

- Canada has six time zones. The easternmost, in Newfoundland, is three hours and 30 minutes behind Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). The other time zones are Atlantic, Eastern, Central, Mountain and, farthest west, Pacific, which is eight hours behind GMT.
- During Standard Time (November to March), there is a +/- 16 hour time difference between the Eastern Time Zone (Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa) and the east coast of Australia (excluding Queensland; where the difference is only +/- 15 hours).
- During Daylight Savings Time (April to October), there is a +/- 14 hour time difference between the Eastern Time Zone and the entire east coast of Australia.
- Figuring out time differences can be confusing at first. We suggest that you contact the institution you plan to attend and ask them what day and time it is to determine the current spread.

Population

- According to the 2001 national census, Canada has a population of approximately 30,007,000, 77% of which is concentrated in cities and towns.
- Since Canadians are spread over such a large geographic land mass, the nation has one of the smallest population density ratios in the world at 2.9 persons/km.
- The cultural composition of the country is quite varied. Most Canadians are of European ancestry: mainly descendants of the early French and British colonists, as well as later immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe. However, aboriginal peoples are also present and as patterns of immigration have shifted over the years so has the ethnic mix of the Canadian population. The second half of the 20th century saw a great influx of people from Asia, the Caribbean and Africa. In 1996, more than one third of Canadians reported multiple ethnic origins and just over 11% of Canadians classified themselves as visible minorities.
- More than 80% of Canadians are Christian (46% Catholic, 36% Protestant). Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism are all practised as well. According to the 1991 Census, 12.5% of Canadians, however, claim to have no religious affiliation whatsoever.

Standard of Living

- The United Nations has *repeatedly* chosen Canada as one of the **best** countries in the world in which to live. In fact, from 1994 to 2000 Canada earned the UN's top ranking. In 2002, Canada ranked third overall on the organisation's Human Development Index, above Australia (ranked 5th), the U.S.A. (ranked 6th) and the U.K. (ranked 13th) (United Nations, Human Development Report, 2002).
- A 2003 Survey of the world's major cities, released March 4, 2003 by Mercer Human Resource Consulting, ranks Vancouver as the second best city in the world to live in (behind only Zurich, Switzerland): "Sydneyiders would be better off by moving to Zurich, Vancouver, Vienna or Geneva" (The Sydney Morning Herald).

Language

- Canada has two official languages: **English**, the mother tongue for 69% of Canadians, and **French**, the mother tongue for 23% of Canadians. Consequently, all Federal Government institutions and many businesses, particularly those in eastern Canada, where the largest proportion of French speakers live, offer bilingual services.
- 11% of Canadians report having more than one mother tongue or a mother tongue other than English or French, such as Chinese, Italian, German, Polish, Spanish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Ukrainian, Arabic, Dutch, Tagalog, Greek, Vietnamese, Cree or Inuktitut.

Education System

- Education is provincially legislated and, therefore, systems vary slightly throughout the country.
- The typical Canadian endures 6 to 8 years elementary school and 4 to 5 years secondary school before deciding whether to enroll in a post-secondary program.
- Colleges and universities throughout Canada offer students many choices. When full-time studies are pursued, college programs usually last 1 to 2 years, while university programs are designed to last 3 to 4.
- The 1996 Census showed that, among Canadians aged 15 and over, about 23% graduated from secondary school, 9% held bachelor's degrees and about 6% held advanced degrees.
- Semesters typically run from September-December, January-April, May-August. Most students study from September to April and take May to August as a summer break.

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- The websites of the various provincial and territorial governments throughout Canada also list useful travel information.

Alberta	www.gov.ab.ca
British Columbia	www.gov.bc.ca
Manitoba	www.gov.mb.ca
New Brunswick	www.gov.nb.ca
Newfoundland & Labrador	www.gov.nf.ca
Nova Scotia	www.gov.ns.ca
Nunavut	www.gov.nu.ca
Northwest Territories	www.gov.nt.ca
Ontario	www.gov.on.ca
Prince Edward Island	www.gov.pe.ca
Quebec	www.gouv.gc.ca
Saskatchewan	www.gov.sk.ca
Yukon Territory	www.gov.yk.ca

Australian Contacts in Canada

Australian High Commission

7th Floor, Suite 710
50 O'Connor St
Ottawa, ON
K1P 6L2
Phone: (613) 236-0841
Fax: (613) 236-4376
Website: www.ahc-ottawa.org
Open: Mon-Thurs 8:30-5, Fri 8:30-4:15

Consular and Passport Info and Assistance
Phone: (613) 783-7669

Australian Consulate General

Suite 1225- 888 Dunsmuir St
Vancouver, B.C.
V6C 3K4
Phone: (604) 684-1177
Fax: (604) 684-1856

Australian Consulate General

Suite 314- 175 Bloor St East
Toronto, ON
M4W 3R8
Phone: (416) 323-1155
Fax: (416) 323-3910

Newspapers

Newspapers, particularly their entertainment sections, are a great way to find out what is going on in a city. Canada has 2 national daily papers, The Globe and Mail (www.globeandmail.ca) and The National Post (www.nationalpost.com).

Each city also has its own daily paper (or two). A quick visit to the site of the Canadian Newspapers Association (www.anc-acj.ca) will enable you to find the paper(s) for the Canadian city of interest to you.

Alternatively, many Canadian cities also have alternative newspapers that offer a somewhat unique perspective on local happenings. They are known to be an excellent resource for classified ads, inexpensive things to see and do in a city and news stories related to young people. Be on the lookout for such publications in the Canadian city in which you will be living.

Travel within Canada and to the United States

Attending a university or college in Canada is an excellent opportunity to make trips around the interesting, beautiful and diverse country of Canada and the United States.

Here we note contact information that may be useful for you as you attempt to explore North America.

- TRAVELCUTS (www.travelcuts.com), a Canadian travel agency specializing in discount student travel, has offices on and off campuses throughout Canada. It is essentially the Canadian equivalent of STA Travel (www.statravel.com.au).
- Air Canada (www.aircanada.ca) is Canada's national airline and offers both domestic and international air service. Other carriers such as West Jet (www.westjet.com) and Tango (www.flytango.com) are becoming increasingly popular for domestic travel as they often offer fares at significantly reduced prices.
- VIA Rail (www.viarail.ca) is Canada's major train operator. It offers student discounts and travel from Canada's east to west Coasts. Amtrak (www.amtrak.com) is the American equivalent.
- Numerous companies offer bus services throughout North America. Greyhound (www.greyhound.ca) and Voyageur (www.voyageur.com) are among the more established and better known coach providers.
- The **Canada Tourism Commission, Sydney** (www.travelcanada.ca) can provide information on interesting places to visit in Canada. Contact them online or at: Level 5, Quay West, 111 Harrington St., Sydney NSW 2000 Tel: (02) 9954 3377; Fax: (02) 9929 4543.

Communication

- Canada is a "connected" country with an advanced, well-developed telecommunications system.
- Contacting Australia from Canada is relatively easy to do by phone, fax, email or regular post.
- To ring/fax Australia from within Canada dial: 011+ 61 + State Code + Number you wish to reach. International calling cards offer reduced rates and can be purchased from most news agencies or postal outlets.
- Internet service is readily available at all academic institutions in Canada and you will be provided with a free university email account upon commencement of your studies. Internet cafés are also rampant, particularly in major metropolitan centres, enabling you to get on-line for typically modest fees.
- Canada Post charges C\$1.25 to send a regular size letter. Delivery to Australia typically takes one to three weeks.

Voltage

- The electric voltage and plug style used in Canada and the U.S. differs from that used in Australia and New Zealand. In Canada and the U.S., plugs with 2 or 3 straight prongs are used and the electric current is 110V (not 240V as it is in Australia and New Zealand). Therefore, if you plan to use your appliances from home while in North America, you will need to ensure you have both an adapter *and* a converter with you. These can be purchased from most major department stores or travel speciality shops.

The Maple Leaf

- The Maple Leaf has long been cherished by Canadians. In 1868, it figured in coats of arms granted to Ontario and Quebec and in both world wars, it appeared on regimental badges. Since the 1965 introduction of the Canadian flag, the Maple Leaf has become the country's national symbol.

Sports

- Ice hockey and lacrosse are Canada's national sports.
- Canada's most popular sports, however, include swimming, ice hockey, cross-country and alpine skiing, snowboarding, baseball, tennis, basketball, golf, soccer and curling.

For more detailed information about Canada and its culture, we suggest you pick up a travel book such as the Lonely Planet Guide: Canada or that you visit www.canada.gc.ca.

Visa and Immigration Issues

Precisely which documentation you require to study in Canada is dependent upon your country of origin, the length of time you plan to spend in Canada and the academic institution that you plan to attend. Here we try to clarify matters for you.

You may require a:

- Study Permit
- Temporary Resident Visa
- CAQ (Quebec Certificate of Acceptance: applies to students going to study in Quebec only)

Study Permits

An **Australian** or **New Zealand citizen** going to Canada to study in a course that lasts just six months or less can enter Canada on visitor status, meaning he/she *technically* does NOT require a visa or special permission of any kind.

On the other hand, if you are pursuing a course longer than 6 months in length or intending to work while studying, the Government of Canada requires you to obtain a special type of visa called a "Study Permit". Many tertiary institutions in Canada also require their international students to possess Study Permits (for insurance purposes and the like), even when not called for by the Government. Consequently, it is recommended that **you check with the institution you plan to attend in Canada to confirm its Study Permit policy.**

How to Obtain a Study Permit: The Steps

1. Get Letter of Acceptance from the tertiary institution in Canada that you plan to attend
2. Pick up Study Permit Application Form

Available from: **Canadian Consulate General**
Level 5, Quay West 111 Harrington St
Sydney NSW 2000
Tel: (02) 9364-3050
Fax: (02) 9364-3099
Website: www.canada.org.au (hit download link)
Email: sydney.immigration@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

*Office hours: Monday to Friday 9am-12pm
*Automated phone service available 24/7

3. Gather all the necessary documents
 - Proof of acceptance from institution in Canada
 - Students destined for Quebec also require a CAQ, as discussed below

Canadian Football League (CFL): www.cfl.ca

B.C. Lions
Calgary Stampeders
Edmonton Eskimos
Hamilton Tiger Cats
Montreal Alouettes
Ottawa Renegades
Saskatchewan Roughriders
Toronto Argonauts
Winnipeg Blue Bombers

Recreational

Throughout Canada, there are also a number of leagues organized for the benefit of people interested in *playing* sports. For information on how to get involved, contact the Sport and Recreation Office at the Canadian institution you plan to attend.

Movies

Canadian movie theatres are typically very large and modern and feature stadium seating. Given their proximity to the U.S., they tend to show new movies immediately following their release dates (earlier than they are shown in Australia and New Zealand). A standard adult admission costs approximately C\$13, though most theatres have a designated "cheap night" (often Tuesday) where tickets are sold at reduced prices (about C\$9). Alternatively, most cities also have older, smaller theatres that show second-run movies at discount prices.

Famous Players (www.famousplayers.com) and Cineplex Odeon (www.cineplex.com) are two of the larger movie chains in Canada. Visit their websites for listings, show times and specific price information.

Plays/ Theatre

Virtually all Canadian cities have wonderful playhouses showing a range of musicals and theatrical performances. Broadway shows such as Les Miserables, Cats and The Phantom of the Opera circuit through the largest cities (Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal) though tickets for such productions can be pricey. Contact the local playgroup or theatre (listed in the yellow pages) in the city you will be visiting or visit www.ticketmaster.ca for detailed information.

Television and Radio

There are a number of television and radio outlets in Canada, many of which are heavily influenced by American broadcasting. Two major all-Canadian networks are the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (www.cbc.ca) and Canadian Television (www.ctv.ca).

Full-day, half-day and night lift tickets are normally available. Prices vary at different resorts. For example, a full-day adult pass costs \$29 at Seymour Mountain near Vancouver, \$69 at Whistler, \$49 at Banff, \$57 at Lake Louise and \$50.50 at Mont-Tremblant. Equipment rentals and lessons are available at all established resorts. Contact the facilities at the mountains you plan to visit for particular information.

Lastly, if you plan to ski or snowboard during your visit to Canada, make sure you bring lots of warm clothes, as temperatures on all of Canada's mountains are very cold!

Hiking

Hiking (also known as trekking or bushwalking in Australia) is also a popular pastime in Canada, particularly in the southwest corner of British Columbia where the climate is conducive to this activity virtually year-round.

Canada offers incredibly beautiful terrain to explore on foot. We suggest that you check with the Tourist Office in the city you are visiting for help choosing areas and trails. Alternatively, local bookstores sell hiking trail guides that are wonderful sources of information. For your own safety, when hiking, let others know when and where you are heading and do *not* trek into unknown territory.

Sporting Activities

Professional

Canada has a number of top-notch sports teams competing in various leagues, some all-Canadian, others North America wide. If you enjoy sports, going to see a live event can be a lot of fun. To buy tickets or to check dates and prices, visit www.ticketmaster.ca.

Here we list the websites for the major leagues in Canada. Note that links to the teams of particular cities (listed below) can be accessed via these main sites.

National Hockey League (NHL): www.nhl.com

Calgary Flames
Edmonton Oilers
Montreal Canadiens
Ottawa Senators
Toronto Maple Leafs
Vancouver Canucks

National Basketball League (NBA): www.nba.com

Toronto Raptors

Major League Baseball (MLB): www.mlb.com

Montreal Expos
Toronto Blue Jays

-
- Proof of identity
 - A valid passport and four recent passport sized (2"x2.5") photos
 - Proof of financial support
 - The staff in Sydney need proof that you have sufficient funds to support your entire visit to Canada. Typically, they expect to see photocopies of bank statements showing you have enough money to cover tuition fees plus about \$10,000 per year to cover living expenses and miscellaneous costs.
 - Medical examination
 - Only required in certain circumstances; inquire with the Canadian Consulate General in Sydney
 - Proof of custodianship
 - Only required if you are a minor (Age of majority is 18 in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Saskatchewan; 19 in BC, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the Yukon)
 - A notarized declaration signed by your parent or guardian in your country of origin and a complementary declaration signed by a custodian in Canada (custodians must be 19 years of age or older in all provinces) agreeing to act in place of a parent in cases of emergency

4. Submit your application *and* the C\$125 (A\$140) non-refundable fee

- Ensure you have included ALL of the relevant documentation
- Payment can be made in Canadian or Australian funds but must be in the form of an Australian postal money order or bank cheque
- The officer in Sydney who reviews your application must be satisfied that you plan to be in Canada temporarily and that you will return to your country of origin upon completion of your studies
- Allow 4 weeks for Sydney to process your Study Permit application, following which time you will be mailed a *Letter of Introduction* which you will present at the Port of Entry in Canada

5. Present required documentation at Port of Entry in Canada

- When you arrive in Canada, have in hand your Letter of Introduction, your passport, your Letter of Acceptance from a Canadian institution and a photocopy of a bank statement showing proof of sufficient funds, as discussed above
- Present yourself to a Customs Officer who will direct you to Immigration Canada
- An Immigration Official will examine the documentation you have in hand, ask you a few questions and then issue to you your Study Permit, a colourful legal document complete with security features
- Note that it is at the discretion of the Port of Entry Official whether or not you are allowed to enter Canada

Further information about Study Permits is afforded in the Frequently Asked Questions section at the end of this guide and also online at www.canada.gov.au.

Temporary Resident Visas

In addition to a Study Permit, the Government of Canada requires that individuals from certain nations (not Australia or New Zealand) obtain a Temporary Resident Visa (TVR) to visit Canada. See www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/visas.html for a listing of countries whose residents require TVRs and contact Canadian Immigration for information about application procedures.

Quebec Certificate of Acceptance

If you are going to study in the province of Quebec, you will likely need a Quebec Certificate of Acceptance (CAQ), issued by Quebec Immigration. You should **consult the educational institution you plan to attend** in Quebec to confirm whether or not you require a CAQ. Also, note that **you must obtain a CAQ before you can apply for a Study Permit**; therefore, should you require a CAQ, you should apply for it soon as you receive your Letter of Acceptance.

Determining Whether a CAQ is Required

There are a variety of cases where a CAQ is **not** required. For example, a CAQ is usually unnecessary if you do not require a Study Permit, yet you must confirm this with the Quebec university or college you plan to attend.

In particular, the following categories of students do *not* need a CAQ:

- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) grant holders, particularly beneficiaries of the *Programme canadien de bourses de la Francophonie*, provided that the grant covers all of the recipient's expenses (otherwise a CAQ is required). Note though that the recipient's spouse and children must each obtain a CAQ to study in Quebec
- Individuals participating in a Canadian aid program for developing countries
- Commonwealth fellows
- Members of the families of diplomatic or consular officers or international officials living in Quebec
- Individuals undertaking a course lasting six months or less
- Minors seeking asylum or who have been granted refugee status or who are in need of protection, or children of an asylum seeker, a refugee or a person in need of protection
- Minors already in Canada who accompany either parent coming to Quebec primarily to work or study who possesses a work permit or a study permit issued according to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations
- Pre school-age children (age 4 or 5)
- Individuals who possess a valid *Certificat de sélection du Québec* (CSQ) who have been authorized by Citizenship and Immigration Canada to submit in Canada an application for permanent residence (primarily asylum seekers recognised as refugees and members of the family category).

To reiterate, it is highly recommended that you check with the institution you plan to attend to confirm whether or not you require a CAQ. Complete information about the CAQ can be viewed at <http://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/anglais/immigration/students/step.html>.

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- Sunlight reflecting off snow can be very intense. It is wise to wear sunglasses and sun cream.
 - Always take into consideration the wind chill factor. High winds blowing on a cold dry day lower the temperature further (–20C with a wind of 16 km/hr can feel like –25C).
 - Be alert of frostbite! Ears, fingers, toes, or cheeks exposed to cold temperatures for even just a short period of time can become frost bitten. Should any part of your body feel numb or become pale or slightly blue, seek medical assistance immediately.
 - Should you become stranded in the cold, do not hesitate to seek help. If, for example, you find yourself caught outdoors in a blizzard, with no transportation or public shelter in sight, knock on the closest door and ask if you can come in for a short time in order to warm up. Prolonged exposure to freezing temperatures can be life threatening!

Entertainment

Like large metropolitan areas around the world, Canadian cities offer a range of entertainment options. No matter where you plan to live in Canada, you will find that there are many many activities available to suit your personal tastes. Here we list entertainment suggestions and relevant contact information, where applicable.

Sightseeing

From the 'English' city of Victoria on Vancouver Island, through the Rocky Mountains in Alberta, across the lakes and plains of the prairies, to the breathtaking Niagara Falls in Ontario, Canada offers many incredible sights to see. Each region of the country is unique and well worth exploring.

Contact the Tourist Information Office in the city you are visiting for information regarding recommended sites to see and visit. Alternatively, contact the **Canada Tourism Commission, Sydney** (www.travelcanada.ca) at: Level 5, Quay West, 111 Harrington St., Sydney NSW 2000 Tel: (02) 9954 3377; Fax: (02) 9929 4543.

See also the following section, entitled *Travel within Canada and to the US*, which provides further details about exploring the North American continent.

Skiing/Snowboarding

Skiing and snowboarding are both popular Canadian pastimes. Hence, it is well worth your while to give at least one of these sports a try.

Canada has phenomenal ski resorts renowned worldwide for their quality and beauty. Best of all, they are often easily accessible from major cities. From Vancouver, for example, you can visit 3 local mountains (Cypress, Grouse and Seymour) in approximately a half-hour, while world-famous Whistler is just a little over an hour away.

Ski season tends to last from early November to April, though this is dependent on weather conditions.

- When you buy something, ask for a receipt. If you pay by credit or bank card, make sure that your card is returned to you promptly. Never give out your credit card information unless you are ready to buy something.
- Do not share your credit or bank card PIN numbers with others.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash and avoid showing off cash in public.

Responding to Emergencies and Calling the Police

- **Call 911** in any emergency situation, if you are in trouble or if you are a witness to a crime. This is a central number for Police, Fire and Ambulance throughout Canada.
- If English is your second language, do not panic. Interpreters can be made available.
- If you are robbed, don't argue or fight. If you are assaulted, shout or blow a whistle to draw attention to your situation. Try to protect your body and distract the attacker so that you can escape. Call 911 immediately.
- If you are a victim of a crime, no matter how small, report it to the police.
- If you have a non-emergency issue or question for the police, you can visit or call the police department in the city in which you live. Police in Canada are very willing to help you.

Weather

In most areas of Canada, there are four distinct seasons: spring (March-May), summer (June-August), fall (September-October) and winter (November-February).

Temperatures vary significantly throughout the country. Winter, for example, brings freezing temperatures throughout central and eastern Canada while the south-west corner of British Columbia, the nation's western-most province, rarely experiences sub-zero weather. Typically, in the east temperatures range from 35°C and higher in the summer to as low as -25°C in the winter. In contrast, in Vancouver and Victoria in British Columbia's south-west, summer temperatures in the mid to upper twenties are the norm; while in winter, temperatures rarely fall below 0°C and snow is uncommon. Throughout Canada, moderate temperatures are typical in fall and spring.

See the website <http://www.theweathernetwork.com> for more detailed weather information.

Winter Survival Tips

Here we list a number of tips that may prove useful if you are destined for a colder part of Canada.

- Develop a habit of listening to weather forecasts so that you are not caught out in a blizzard, or other active weather system.
- Do not consider warm winter clothing a luxury. You will need it to stay warm and enjoy your stay in Canada. It is wise to take a good winter jacket, gloves, earmuffs or a warm hat, a scarf and even boots with you for your stay in Canada.
- Be sure to eat a nutritious breakfast: you will be warmer if your body has "fuel to burn."
- Should your skin and scalp become dry and flaky because of the contrast between cold weather and dry indoor heat, try using a moisturising cream. Also, be sure to drink water regularly to prevent dehydration.

Custodianship

CAQ rules require individuals under the age of 18 (at the time studies commence) to have a guardian living in the Province of Quebec. In such cases, the following documentation must be submitted with one's CAQ application:

1. A sworn declaration (certified by a notary or lawyer) by one's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) authorising one to stay and study in Quebec, and delegating parental responsibilities to a resident of Quebec for the length of one's stay in Quebec or until one turns 18
2. A declaration by the Quebec resident confirming that he/she accepts legal guardianship.

The Application Process

Should you require a CAQ, you should be aware that Australia is *not* served by Quebec Immigration Services. Therefore, you must submit an application to the regional office in Quebec responsible for the territory in which your intended educational institution is situated. For the Montreal area, for example, all CAQ applications are processed by the "Direction des services de l'immigration sociale et humanitaire". Particular offices and their contact information are available at: www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/anglais/immigration/students/step.html

Quebec Immigration offices require the following to process a CAQ for you:

1. CAQ application form
-Available from the tertiary institution in Quebec that you plan to attend
2. Photocopy of your Letter of Acceptance
-Note: Keep the original for *Canadian* Immigration
3. \$100 Processing fee
-In Canadian funds, or the equivalent in US dollars
-**Only bank drafts and money orders** (payable to the "Ministre des Finances du Québec") are accepted. Note: these instruments *must* be purchased at a bank that deals with a corresponding financial institution in Canada

You are required to submit **only** these 3 items. You do **not** need to send proof of funds despite the fact that question 35 of the CAQ application requests such evidence. Proof of funds will be sent with your Study Permit application.

Upon receipt by Quebec Immigration, your application will be processed (normally within two weeks), following which confirmation of your approved CAQ will be sent by fax to the Canadian Consulate General, Sydney, where you should apply for a Study Permit. A copy of your approved CAQ will also be mailed to you.

For more information about CAQs, visit:

www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/anglais/immigration/students/step.html

Summary

Contact the Canadian educational institution you plan to attend to clarify what documentation you will require to study in Canada. When in doubt, ask questions!

Also, *regardless of whether or not you require a Study Permit*, ensure that when travelling to Canada you carry on your person your Letter of Acceptance from a Canadian institution. Such documentation can be useful if you are questioned by an Immigration Officer at a Canadian port of entry.

Tips for Travellers

- Keep all important items, including your passport, airline tickets, Letter of Acceptance, key addresses and phone numbers and, if relevant a Letter of Introduction and a photocopy of a bank statement showing proof of funds, with you at all times while travelling. Do NOT pack these in your luggage.
- Make photocopies of all important documentation and pack these away.
- Clearly tag ALL of your baggage noting your name and the complete address of your destination in Canada (your home or the international office of the educational institution you will be attending). Also, pack a card *inside* your luggage denoting your Canadian contact details.
- In your carry-on luggage pack toiletries, medications, photocopies of prescriptions, some Canadian currency and a complete change of clothes.
- Having some local currency on hand while in transit is useful because you may have to pay airline tax (that has not been included in your ticket cost) or you may want to pick up a snack or magazine along the way.
- For international flights, make sure to be at the airport *at least 2 hours* before your flight is scheduled to depart.
- When you check your luggage at your airline's counter, ask whether it will be checked through to your final destination in Canada or whether you must claim and transfer it yourself via a connecting flight en route.
- After you receive your boarding pass, make note of your departure gate and boarding time. Ask for instructions on how to make your way to the gate.

In Your Home-stay, Residence or Apartment

- If you rent an apartment, deal directly with the landlord and pay the damage deposit directly to him or her.
- Always ask for a receipt when you pay your rent. Pay your rent with a cheque when possible, as this is further proof of payment.
- Don't let people into apartment buildings or "buzz" them in if you don't know them. If a repairman, delivery person or salesperson wants into the building, refer them to the manager.
- Meet and know your neighbours.

With Tutors

- Only use tutors authorized by a Canadian educational institution. Some people who claim to be tutors or conversation partners may not be qualified or may seek inappropriate relationships.
- Never pay tutors in advance.
- Do not hesitate to report any inappropriate behaviour to your institution's harassment office.

With Other Relationships

- If you want to stop a friendship, be clear that you don't want to see the person anymore. If they continue to bother you, tell a teacher or friend.
- Do not worry about hurting someone's feelings or being nice. You must be clear. If they continue to bother you, tell somebody nearby.
- BE SAFE. Always use a condom when having sex.
- Assault is illegal in Canada. A husband cannot hit a wife, a boyfriend cannot hit a girlfriend, and a roommate cannot hit you (nor can you hit him or her).
- Sexual assault (or rape) is when someone forces or pressures you to have sex or touches you in a sexual way when you do not want to be touched.
- Most sexual assaults occur with **someone we know** rather than a stranger. You may feel embarrassed or ashamed, but rape is **never** your fault. Get medical treatment immediately and call the police or a rape counsellor.
- You have the right to say NO to any unwanted sexual advance or behaviour that makes you uncomfortable, no matter what. Be direct and assertive, clear and firm.

Prevention

Pre-departure for Canada

- Purchase comprehensive medical insurance for the duration of your stay in Canada. STA Travel (www.statravel.com.au) or Ingle International Insurance (www.ingleinternational.com) both offer affordable packages.
- Keep your passport and other documents in a safe place, ideally somewhere at home.

When Shopping

- **Never** give or loan money to anyone who approaches you on the street. People will take advantage of your trust.

On Buses/Subways or in Taxis

- Know your bus route and schedule before you leave. Choose busy, well-lit bus stops after dark. If the bus doesn't come and you are in a hurry, do not hitchhike, rather call a friend or hail a taxi.
- Taxis are a good way to get home when it's late and dark. Know the number of a taxi company so you can easily phone one if necessary.
- Sit at the front of the bus near the driver.
- On the train, use the emergency phones on the platform or emergency button if you are ever harassed.

On the Road

- Be aware that North Americans drive on the right hand side of the road (the opposite to in Australia!).
- At a 4 way stop, come to a complete stop before advancing through the intersection. Yield (give way) to your right.
- Prior to leaving Australia, visit a local NRMA for information about international road rules.

On a Bicycle

- It is mandatory that you wear a helmet when riding a bike in Canada. At night, use front and rear lights and wear reflective clothing.
- Traffic rules for bikes are the same as those for cars -- stop signs, red lights, etc.
- Lock your bike when leaving it unattended.

With Alcohol and Other Drugs

- The legal age for drinking varies in each province (typically 18 or 19 years).
- If you go to a bar, go with friends: you'll have help if you need it and it's more fun.
- Arrange a ride home beforehand if you plan to drink alcohol. Don't let someone in a bar give you a ride. NEVER drink and drive.
- Know your drinking limit - do not drink too much alcohol.
- Do not accept drinks from strangers or let your drink out of your sight. If you do leave it unattended, order a new drink. Like in your home country, drugs can be put into drinks when you are not paying attention.
- Drugs such as cocaine, heroin, marijuana, ecstasy and GHB are illegal. Do not use or possess drugs at any time.

With Street People

- Street people who ask for money are called "panhandlers" or "beggars".
- If you want to help them, contribute to a charity: do not hand out money on the street as this encourages them to approach others.
- There are many community agencies throughout Canada that help panhandlers with free meals, shelter, and counseling.

Residence/Dormitory

Many post-secondary institutions have accommodation conveniently located on or near to their campus(es). Rooms tend to vary in size, quality and cost. Dorms generally have shared kitchen, bathroom, and laundry facilities. Some dorm accommodation offer optional cafeteria meal plans whereby students, having paid a set price up-front, are issued 2 or 3 meal tickets per day.

If you are going to Canada for just a single semester, university residence may prove to be the simplest way to arrange your accommodation, as it is often less time consuming and simpler than finding your own private, off-campus housing. If you will be staying in Canada for a longer period of time, you may want to rent university accommodation for your first semester and then make other living arrangements for future semesters.

For more information please contact the housing or residence office at the academic institution you plan to attend in Canada.

Private Accommodation

A current listing of private accommodation for rent near the institution you plan to attend is often available at the housing office or the student union office on-campus. Note that tertiary institutions do not normally inspect any of the accommodation that is listed; therefore, it is up to you to decide the type of place you want and then to contact the landlord, inspect the premises and determine their suitability.

When examining private rental housing, you will find that price, quality and availability vary greatly. Rents may be especially high in some cities. Expect to pay anywhere from C\$300 to C\$1000 per month, depending on the city and the particular area in which you choose to live. Note that it is typical for the landlord to collect one month's rent up-front as a damage deposit. This money will be returned to you assuming that the place is left in good condition when you move out.

If you decide to rent privately you can be required to sign a lease, a legal document that states your responsibilities as a tenant. For example, as a tenant you are required to pay the rent on time, keep the premises clean, repair any damages caused by yourself or your guests and not disturb other tenants.

Landlords are in the position to add all types of rules to the lease; therefore you should read the document very carefully before signing. Ask your landlord to provide you with a copy of the document.

Note that the landlord also has responsibilities, particularly with respect to keeping the premises in good repair. In emergency situations, the landlord may enter the dwelling, otherwise he or she must give you notice of his or her intention to enter. The landlord must also provide notice (generally 60 days) if he or she wishes you to vacate the residence. If you, the tenant, refuse to move, the landlord can go to court and obtain an eviction notice. Lastly, note that it is illegal for the landlord to discriminate on the basis of race, religion, nationality, sex or sexual orientation.

Money Matters

Canadian Currency

The most common paper currency in Canada comes in \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100 denominations. Coins appear in 1c (penny), 5c (nickel), 10c (dime), 25c (quarter), \$1 (loonie), \$2 (twoonie) form.

For further information about:

- Canadian bank notes, visit the Bank of Canada website: www.bankofcanada.ca
- Canadian Coins, visit the Royal Canadian Mint website: www.rcmint.ca

Consult a bank or a website, such as www.xe.com/ucc for up to date conversion rates.

Banking

Whether or not you choose to open a bank account in Canada is up to you. You should check with your Australian bank to find out which system it uses (CIRRUS, PLUS, etc) and what kind of international withdrawal fees it charges *before* attempting to use your bank card to withdraw from Canadian automatic bank machines (ABMs). Note that when shopping in stores it is unlikely that you will be able to use INTERAC, the North American equivalent of EFTPOS, with your Australian bank card.

Here we list the websites of Canada's big banks, many of which offer great accounts and services for students. It is worth your while to consider opening a Canadian bank account as it may help you save on international transaction charges.

- Royal Bank of Canada: www.royalbank.com
- Scotia Bank: www.scotiabank.com
- Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce: www.cibc.com
- Bank of Montreal: www.bmo.com
- TD Canada Trust: www.tdcanadatrust.com

Sample Budget

You may find it useful to observe the following sample budget **based on one year's stay** in Canada. However, it is important to note that costs vary *significantly* depending on the Canadian city you plan to visit and the tertiary institution you plan to attend.

Item	\$A
Study permit (visa) application fee	140
Airfare	2000
Tuition	10000
Living expenses (food, lodging, etc.)	10000
Travel and health insurance	1200
	\$23340

Health Care and Insurance

Canadian Health policies and programs have developed as a result of joint Federal and Provincial Government efforts. Universal hospital care was introduced in 1958 and 10 years later a universal medical insurance program was launched to fund physicians' services.

Each province has its own health insurance provider. Furthermore, virtually all Canadian post-secondary institutions have medical insurance plans available to international students. Note that certain institutions require their foreign students to have Study Permits in order to access coverage. **You must contact the Canadian institution you plan to attend for information about insurance coverage.**

Whether you plan to obtain coverage from a Canadian institution or not, it is highly recommended that you purchase travel insurance for your voyage to Canada. STA Travel (www.statravel.com.au) or Ingle International Insurance (www.ingleinternational.com) each provide affordable packages deals. Please contact them for more information.

Personal Safety

Worldwide surveys show that Canada is a peaceful, safe and orderly country (Mercer Human Resource Consulting, 2003). Despite this fact, international students should follow the same common sense safety precautions in Canada as they would anywhere in the world.

Below we list a number of tips for keeping you and your belongings safe.

If you *ever* need to call for emergency help in Canada, the telephone number for Police, Fire or Ambulance is **911**. You do *not* need coins to dial 911 from a pay phone.

Furthermore, police detachments are located in all Canadian cities and are very willing to help students with police-related issues. For non-emergency issues, contact these offices directly (numbers are listed in city telephone books). Note that police in Canada are very professional and you should feel very comfortable approaching them for help.

In the Community and on the Street

- Be cautious with strangers, just as you would in your home country. Be aware of who and what is around you. Trust your instincts and leave uncomfortable situations. Some areas of cities may have higher crime rates than others. Ask advice for the best routes to events, restaurants or shopping. Always tell a friend, home-stay parent or roommate where you are going and when you will return.
- At night, walk on well-lit, busy streets. Travel with a friend if possible. Avoid isolated areas, such as parks or alleys.