

Navigating Canadian University Admission for African Students

25th of October, 2025

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Agenda

- Understanding the Canadian Application Process
- Application Platforms
- Application Timeline
- Academic and Language Proficiency Criteria
- Funding Opportunities
- Challenges and Tips
- Clarifying misconceptions
- Case study



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Understanding the Canadian Application System

- No country-wide application system
- Some provincial application portals: ex. OUAC for Ontario and EPBC for BC
- Each university sets its own admission requirements
- Undergraduate vs. college pathways
- English and French language institutions
- National Curriculum vs Canadian vs International curriculum
- Second Entry Programs: Medicine and Law



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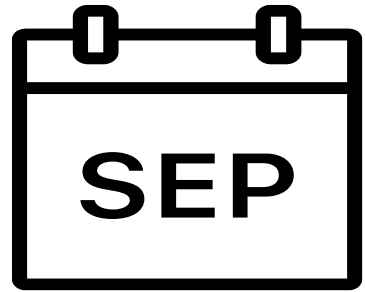
Application Platforms

- OUAC: Ontario Universities Application Centre
- EPBC: EducationPlannerBC
- Individual University Portals – ex. McGill, University of Alberta
- ApplyBoard / SchoolApply: third-party platforms (optional)

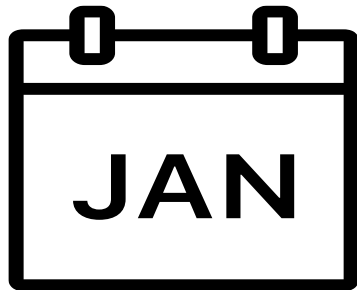


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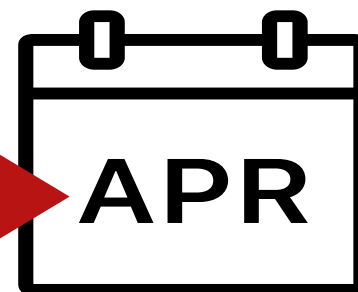
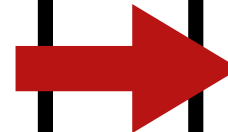
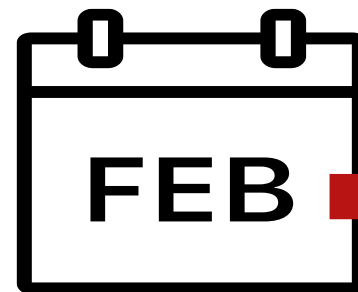
Application Timeline



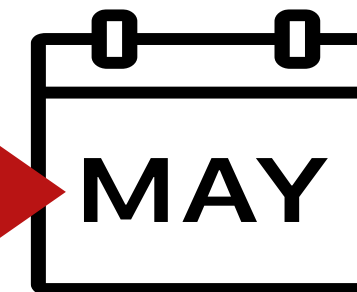
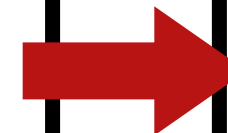
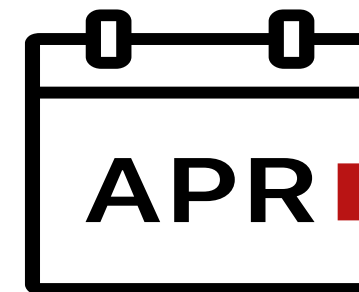
Applications open throughout the autumn!



Deadlines for some universities
and scholarships



Submit documents and grades



Accept Offer



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Academic and Language Proficiency Criteria

Academic Prerequisites: Required courses, transcripts, predicted grades, midterm reports, or report cards. If students lack specific prerequisites, universities may consider accredited alternatives such as transcripts from Ontario Virtual School or TVO ILC.

Standardized Tests: Some institutions may require SAT or ACT scores, but it's not common among Canadian institutions.

Additional Application Components: Universities often request recommendation letters, personal statement and evidence of extracurricular involvement to evaluate the applicant's overall profile.

Language Proficiency: Applicants may need to demonstrate English or French proficiency through tests like IELTS, TOEFL, or TEF, depending on the language of instruction. In some cases, institutions may accept a waiver for their requirement.



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Scholarships

- Each Canadian university will have its own scholarship portfolio, these may include:
 - **Entrance Scholarships and Merit-Based Scholarships**
 - **Black Student Scholarships**
 - **Program-Specific Scholarships**
 - **Need-Based Financial Support**
 - Some awards may have automatic consideration, while others require applications.
- **External Scholarship Programs:** Funded by governments, NGOs, and foundations. Examples include the Commonwealth Scholarship and Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program, which offer full funding and mentorship.



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Common Challenges for African Students

- **Meeting English Language Requirements:** Students may struggle to meet minimum scores on tests like IELTS or TOEFL, which are essential for admission and visa approval.
- **Misunderstanding Deadlines and Application Procedures:** Varying timelines and requirements across universities can lead to missed opportunities or incomplete applications
- **Relying on Unverified Information Sources:** Misinformation from unofficial websites or social media can mislead students and result in costly mistakes.
- **Financial Planning and Proof of Funds:** Many students underestimate the financial documentation needed for both admission and study permit applications.
- **Study Permit Refusals:** Common reasons include incomplete applications, insufficient proof of funds, or unclear academic intentions.



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Tips for a Successful Application Journey

- **Start Early, Ideally 2+ Years in Advance:** Early planning allows time for research, test preparation, and gathering documents.
- **Apply to a Range of Institutions:** Encourage students to consider a mix of competitive and accessible universities to increase their chances.
- **Craft Authentic Essays & Secure Strong Recommendations:** Personal statements should reflect the student's voice and goals; recommenders should know the student well.
- **Add University Emails to Safe Senders:** Prevent important messages from going to spam by whitelisting university domains.
- **Follow the Checklist, Don't Assume:** If a requirement is unclear, students should reach out to the admissions office for clarification.
- **If a Document Is Missing, Ask for Alternatives:** Students can provide a letter of explanation or request substitutions when documents are unavailable.
- **Plan Finances Thoroughly:** Include tuition, living expenses, travel, and emergency costs in financial planning.
- **Prepare for the Study Permit Early:** Early applications reduce stress and delays.
- **Use Official Resources:** Recommend watching OUAC / EPBC tutorials and university "how-to" videos for accurate guidance.
- **Keep Students on Track with Deadlines:** Regular reminders help students stay organized and avoid last-minute issues.



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Clarifying the Facts

Some Myths We'd Like to Bust!

- Canada doesn't want international students
- Universities offer alternatives when students are not accepted
- Meeting minimum entry requirements guarantees admission
- Enrolling in an OSSD school is an advantage for admission
- PGWP is automatic
- Unconditional offer required for study permit application
- You can't get in without the SAT or ACT



Case study- One

Kwame from Ghana

- Interested in Engineering in studying at Western, McMaster, or UBC
- Takes Math, Physics and Computer Science at A Level
- Does not take Chemistry A level

Challenge: Does not meet entry requirements as Chemistry is a required subject for Engineering for some of these universities

Question: How do we support this student?



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Case study- Two

Sarah from Uganda

- Received a conditional offer
- Has a partial scholarship
- Has good command of English, had an A in her IGCSE English

Challenges: The University requires English language proficiency, but the student is unwilling to take any ELP test.

Question: How do we support this student?



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Questions?

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