

Beyond the Headlines

Why Canada Remains a Top Destination for Higher Education



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Welcome!

Before we begin....

- Ask yourself: What is on my mind that is not about this session?
- Ask someone at your table: Are there any to-dos or distractions that are keeping you from being fully present today?



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Introductions



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Presentation Focus

- Understanding the Canadian Higher Education Landscape
- Student Pathways & Strategic Decision-Making
- Career Readiness & Cooperative Education
- From Study Permit to Post-Graduation Work (PGWP)



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Let's get a pulse!

What are your students typically curious about when considering Canada as a study destination?



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Understanding the Canadian Higher Education Landscape



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A Snapshot of Canada

- 2nd largest country in the world: 10 provinces, 3 territories. Largest cities: Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver
- Differences in landscape; size of cities and towns
- Multicultural: bilingual English and French
- Some cities rank among the best in the world to live, study and work
- Diverse, beautiful, safe, welcoming
- Provincial responsibility (no centralized system)



Why Canada?

High Quality Education

- Approximately 100 universities, almost all public, funded by provincial governments
- Provincial accrediting bodies – consistent, high-quality education across the country
- Canadian education recognized globally
- Highest proportion of population with a post-secondary credential in the G7



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Why Canada?



High Value Education

- Merit and need-scholarships (Renewable vs. non-renewable)
- Co-op earnings (CAD100,000+)
- Part-time work
- Volunteering (community aspect)
- Flexibility – create your own adventure



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Why Canada?

Post study work opportunities

- **Opportunities to study and stay**
- Three-year open post-graduate work permit (PGWP)
- Part-time work during academic terms (24hours/week)
- Co-op, internships, work integrated learning



Understanding Institutional Differences

College – 2-year diploma, 1-year certificate, post-graduate diploma

- Focus on applied, technical learning
- Articulation agreements to university

University – 4-year bachelor degrees, 2-year master's degrees, PhD

- Depth *and* breadth
- Broad-based and specialized degrees
- Professional programs (e.g. law, medicine, pharmacy, veterinary medicine)
- Work-integrated learning *and* research opportunities



Understanding Institutional Differences

Finding the right fit!

Primarily Undergraduate

- Small class sizes
- Town = university community
- Emphasis on bachelor degree programs, student experience
- Liberal Arts institutions

Medical Doctoral

- Broad range of PhD programs, research opportunities and medical schools

Comprehensive

- Significant research activity
- Wide range of undergraduate, graduate and progressional programs



Canada: How to Apply



Before Applying

- Different timelines and requirements: domestic vs international
- Different high school curricula are well-recognized
- Language proficiency requirements
- Know what supplemental items are required – auditions, personal statement, video response, portfolio



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Canada: How to Apply



Applying

- Some provinces have centralized application systems (e.g. OUAC, ApplyBC) or apply directly
- Apply to a faculty – in some cases a program
- Possibility for more than one program choice on an application
- Online application + upload supporting documents into portal

Review Process

- Primary merit-based (grades) – some universities/programs require more than a transcript (e.g. video submission, profile questions, etc.)
- Supplemental requirements: Commerce, Creative Arts, Health Sciences, Engineering



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Canada: How to Apply



Important Considerations

Admissions decisions are not tied to financial need (no need to include financial documents for the admission review process)

Scholarship opportunities may be limited at some universities

Know what is available to international students – merit scholarships, financial aid, bursaries

On-campus housing (residence) options and applications – apply early to avoid disappointment!



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Student Pathways & Strategic Decision-Making



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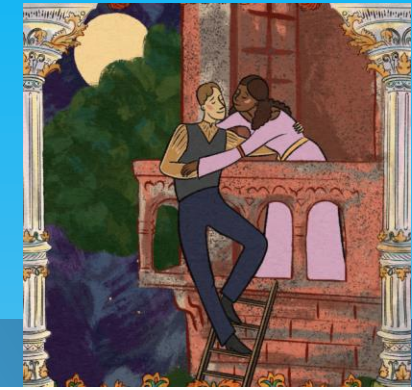
Let's get a pulse!

How do you advise on studying in Canada? What strategies or resources do you use?



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What's in a Name?



Institutions may have varying nomenclature for their programs.

Encourage students to search beyond the name for their best fit program!

Four-year bachelor degrees are standard

Three-year degrees available (at some institutions)

BA = Bachelor of Arts

BComm = Bachelor of Commerce

BBA = Bachelor of Business Administration

BSc = Bachelor of Science

BEd = Bachelor of Education

BEng = Bachelor of Engineering

BAPSc = Bachelor of Applied Science

BFA = Bachelor of Fine Arts

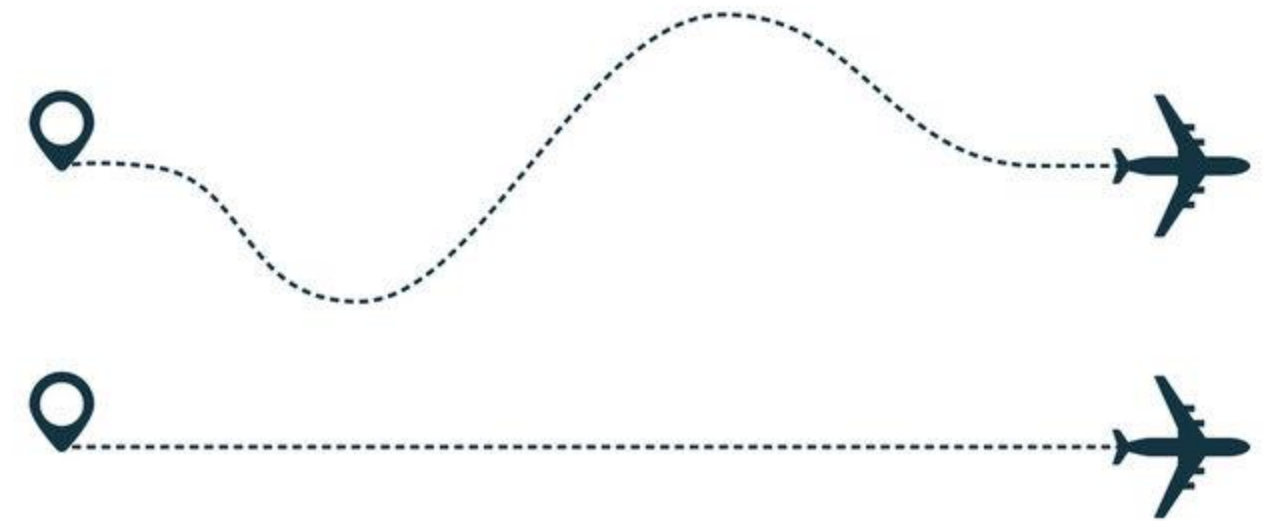
Bcomp = Bachelors of Computer Science

Understanding Canadian Pathways

Flexibility is a feature of the system

There are multiple entry points to Canadian Higher Education

- Direct entry from high school → university
- College → university transfer
- College diploma → workforce → later degree
- Bridging and pathway programs
(i.e. English Language Programs → Undergrad)



Student Pathways

Major	Minor	Specialization
Primary academic area of study	Additional academic focus	Concentrated area of study within chosen major
Minimum 1/3 of degree credits	Specific number of credits	Specific courses within the major



Major Selection is not Permanent

Choosing a major is choosing a **starting point**, not a lifetime commitment!

Students can:

- Switch majors
- Combine majors/minors
- Transfer institutions
- Change programs
- Apply undeclared and declare a major during or after year one



Strategic Decision-Making Framework

- P Program** – courses, flexibility, class size, access to professors
- L Location & Language** - distance from home, urban, rural, climate, English vs. French
- A Admission requirements** – program/major prerequisites, curriculum prerequisites, external exam reqs
- C Cost** – for duration of degree, living expenses, merit based vs. need based aid, earning potential
- E Extras** – internships, co-op, study abroad, ECAs, work study, part-time/full-time positions, community
- S Services** – facilities, counselling, career services, academic advising, tutoring, accessibility services, mentorship programs



How Students Make Decisions

What students and parents *say* matters:

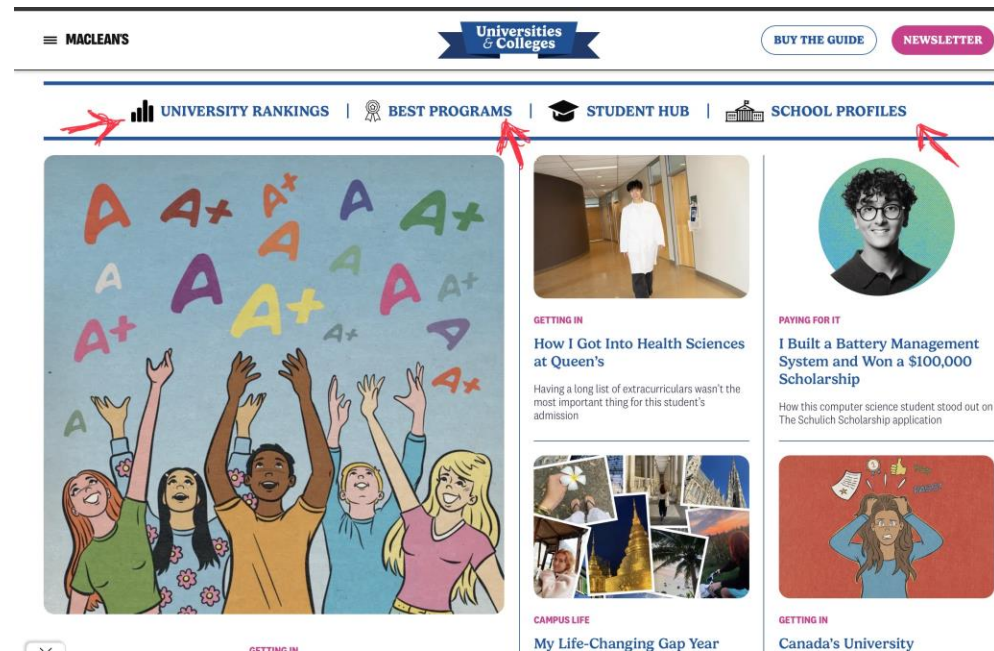
Ranking
Reputation
“Good job prospects”

What also drives decisions:

Peer influence
Parent influence
Family expectations
Fear of missing out
Experiential Learning

Limited understanding of majors/careers

What would you **ADD** or **REMOVE**?



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Career Readiness & Cooperative Education



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Let's get a pulse!

How important is work
experience/experiential learning to
the students and families you
support?



Experiential Learning

Co-operative Education (Co-op)

Full-time, paid work experience in the student's field of study

Alternating periods of study and work

Internships

Full-time/part-time, paid work experience in the student's field of study

Longer than one semester

Part-time Work

Part-time, paid work experience, no need to be related to the student's field of study



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Experiential Learning

Volunteering

One of the best ways to connect with people and to understand the Canadian context. A great introduction to your field of studies and meeting people in general.

International Student Undergraduate Research Assistantships

Competitive programs that offer paid research positions to international undergraduate students. Attractive to students interested in research.



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What is Cooperative Education (Co-op)?

Co-operative education (co-op) is a structured program that combines academic study with periods of full-time, paid work experience related to a student's field of study.

Typically, students alternate between classroom learning and work terms (3-6 WT), gaining practical skills, industry knowledge, and professional connections before graduating.

Co-op programs help students apply theoretical concepts in real-world settings, develop career clarity, and enhance their employability by the time they complete their degree.



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Cooperative Education (Co-op)

Sample co-op sequence

YEAR	FALL	WINTER	SUMMER
ONE	Academic	Academic	Off
TWO	Academic	Academic	Work
THREE	Work	Academic	Work
FOUR	Academic	Work	Work
FIVE	Academic	Academic	



Co-Op Earnings

Co-Op Program	Junior Co-Op Work Term (1-2)	Senior Co-Op Work Term (3-5)
	Per Work Term	Per Work Term
	Range	Range
Bachelor of Arts	\$7,417 - \$11,760	\$7,417 - \$13,650
Bachelor of Applied Science	\$7,417 - \$9,225	\$7,417 - \$12,680
Bachelor of Bio-Resource Management	\$7,417 - \$10,718	\$8,400 - \$13,402
Bachelor of Computing	\$7,417 - \$14,133	\$7,417 - \$21,202
Bachelor of Commerce <i>(Includes Economics Program)</i>	\$7,417 - \$16,199	\$7,417 - \$18,173
Bachelor of Commerce <i>(Hospitality & Tourism Management)</i>	\$7,417 - \$8,400	\$7,560 - \$10,500
Bachelor of Engineering	\$7,417 - \$17,039	\$7,417 - \$17,884
Bachelor of Science	\$7,417 - \$13,440	\$7,417 - \$16,628
Bachelor of Science <i>(Environmental Sciences)</i>	\$7,417 - \$15,078	\$7,417 - \$14,592
Bachelor of Indigenous Science in Practice	\$7,560 - \$8,875	N/A





From Study Permit to Post-Graduation Work (PGWP)



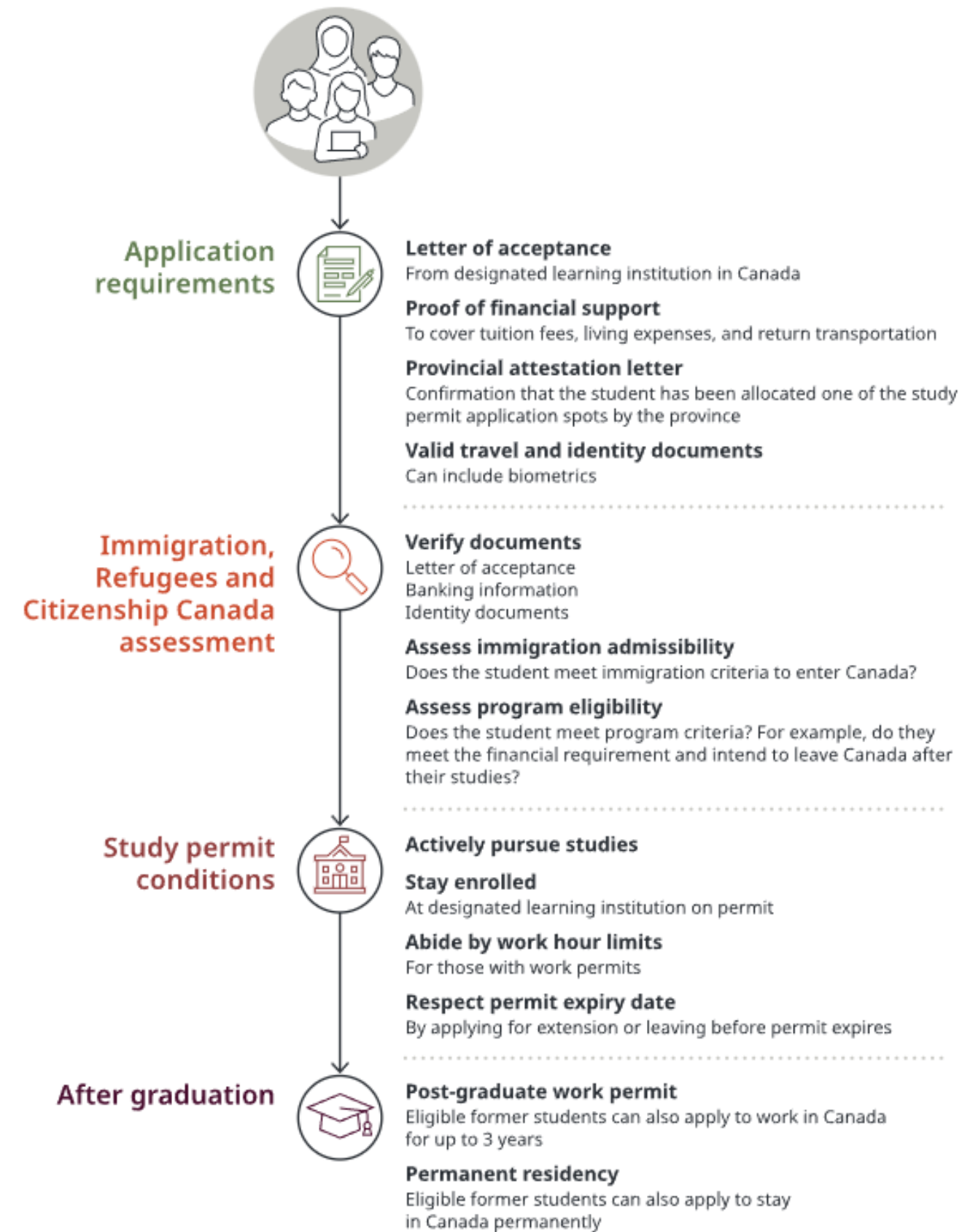
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Let's get a pulse!

What misconceptions do you hear from parents and students about studying in Canada?



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Immigration Policy Changes – what has happened so far:

2023- Letter Of Acceptance verification

- Increased financial requirement for study permit applications to align with the low-income cut-off (LICO)

2024- intake CAP and Provincial Attestation Letter/Territorial Attestation Letter introduction

- Private-Public College licensing agreement programs not eligible for PGWP
- Master's students eligible for 3-year work permit
- Limitation on spousal work permit eligibility tied to program of study
- Off Campus Work Hours increased to 24 hours in fall
- Creation of suspension list
- Link of Designated Learning Institution to study permit
- End of student direct stream

2025 – Level of study requirement

- High School students to Post-Secondary
- Most students require a PAL/TAL
- Further increase in financial requirements

2026 – Exemption from PAL/TAL for master's and doctoral students

- Co-op work permits



How have Universities Adapted?

- Education amongst the institutions and prospective/current students
- Counsellor connection
- More immigration support in helping navigate those misconceptions
 - Example: Queen's University hiring International Student Advisor strictly for recruitment only; UofG has implemented a Global Pre-Arrival Support Team (GPS-Team) to support prospective students with study permit applications
 - Use of BorderPass



How have universities adapted?

- Education amongst the institutions and prospective/current students
- Counsellor information sessions
- Adjustments to international recruitment strategies
- More immigration support in helping navigate those misconceptions
 - Example: Queen's University hiring International Student Advisor strictly for recruitment only; SMU Admissions team hiring Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC) to provide study permit application support; Guelph University comprehensive pre-arrival support;
 - Use of BorderPass



Key Takeaways



- The introduction of ‘caps’ on Canadian study permits has not reduced capacity for undergraduate programming at Canadian universities;
- Post-Graduate Work Permit (PGWP) still available for graduates of bachelor degree programs in all fields of study and work;
- Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) remains committed to issuing study permits to qualified applicants and Canada remains ‘open for business’ as a welcoming destination for international students.





Questions?



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Let's Keep in Touch!



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THANK YOU!



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