

## CANADA – Applying to Canada (use with *Canada - Making Applications*)

Canada has a relatively small number of universities and most are publicly funded. The overall quality of Canadian institutions is high, even for schools with different rankings. Students considering Canada should investigate schools nationwide; there is no need to study at the very few universities with big names in Pakistan in order to get a good education, and it may be harder to have a truly Canadian experience when surrounded by large numbers of other students from your city and country.

Most Canadian universities are large to very large, but there are some small universities as well. There are advantages to both; large schools offer a wide range of subjects and opportunities, while small schools give more personal attention and it is easier for students to develop relationships with professors.

### Understanding Rankings

There is an overall high standard in the primarily public Canadian universities. Rankings like the one by *McLean's Magazine* have some factual information, but remember that the ranking system is far from perfect. It is based only on the information that can be quantified, and the ranks assigned can vary significantly depending on how that information is weighted and calculated. There is a vast amount of information about schools that will not be represented by these rankings. (And publishing rankings is big business.) Subject-wise rankings are not available.

### Undergraduate and Graduate Programs

Undergraduate Normal duration of an undergraduate degree is 4 years. Universities are divided into divisions, and students must usually specify the division for which they are applying. Divisions include those for business, engineering, fine arts and physical sciences. Social sciences and humanities (arts) are sometimes in a single division and sometimes separated. Where undergraduate programs are divided into divisions, there is usually limited cross-registration between schools and there may be restrictions on transferring from one undergraduate school to another. Some courses prefer or require students to have significant high school preparation.

Pre-professional programs such as architecture, business and engineering are usually more rigid than those in the arts and sciences. Students will follow a more structured sequence of required courses and may have few elective courses. *The professional degrees of medicine and law are not offered as first degree programs in Canada.*

Graduate Programs After completing a 3-4 year undergraduate degree, students can apply to be accepted into a program leading to a graduate degree. Rarely, exceptional students can enter certain graduate programs after 2 or 3 years of undergraduate study (admission and costs are separate). For Arts and Sciences subjects, a Master's Degree (MA) is followed by a Doctoral Degree (PhD). Law school is a 3-year program leading to an LLB or JD degree. Business school is a 2 year program leading to an MBA. Medical School is a 4-year program that is followed by 3-4 years of residency and 2-3 years of fellowship leading to an MD. Some medical schools do not accept international students, and the others have restricted spaces available.

### Canadian Colleges

Colleges in Canada also offer 4 year undergraduate degrees, and some also have cooperative arrangements for transfer to nearby universities or offer degrees jointly with them. Degrees offered by colleges are less theoretical and more focused towards career preparation. Shorter certificate and diploma program are offered for students who do not wish to obtain a bachelors level degree or who wish to obtain job skills after having completed their first degree.

### Understanding Costs

For international students, it is critical to know how much money will be available for your education. Tuition fees and living expenses can vary widely. Expect tuition and expenses to increase each year. **Student visas are also contingent on you being able to provide evidence of funding.**

#### Scholarship and Aid

- Need based aid, or bursary, is not usually available to international students.
- A number of universities offer moderate **entrance scholarships** for which all applicants are automatically considered. You will be notified if you have won an entrance scholarship when you are accepted. Entrance scholarships are usually one time only (that is, not renewable for subsequent years).
- Only a few universities offer **large renewable scholarships**. A separate application is usually required,
- A few scholarships require that the student be nominated by The Lyceum, which can usually only nominate one student to compete. Students must fill out the Nominated Scholarship Application form to be considered for Lyceum nomination. This application is due in September with the College Counselling Forms.
- **Co-op programs** are offered in selected disciplines at many universities. In addition to offsetting costs to some extent, they also provide valuable work experience and in some cases may lead to permanent job offers

- Students wishing to receive scholarship in subsequent years usually become eligible for **in-course awards**, for which they must apply each year. Even if you have won a non-renewable entrance scholarship, you may not win awards for all of your subsequent years of university, so plan accordingly.

- Work** International students may work on campus without a work permit. They may apply for a permit to work off campus after the first 6 months of their program; off campus work is limited to a maximum of 20 hours per week while school is in session. There is no guarantee that you will find work or earn any specific wage.
- 20 hours a week is a LOT. Imagine adding three hours of work every day (and 2 on Sunday) to your current academic and activities load, and then imagine that that load will be heavier in college. Most students do not work the maximum number of hours, and may not work at all during exam periods.
  - The amount of work you do should not interfere with your ability to get a good education. Being short of money and/or time is a huge stress for a student; it is not advisable to be too heavily dependent on working to meet your basic expenses.

## Visa

Information about obtaining a visa can be obtained from Citizenship and Immigration Canada - [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca).

Leave three months for visa processing – current visa processing times are available on the above website.

- Obtain the visa form well in advance so you have plenty of time to gather your supporting documentation.
- Carefully follow all of the instructions for completing and submitting your visa application.
  - You must show the official acceptance letter from your school in Canada
  - You must show that you have sufficient funds to cover the expenses of your program and maintenance.
  - You will need to have a medical exam.
- Applicants to Quebec must also apply for the Certificat d'acceptation du Québec (CAQ)

## Canadian Citizens/Permanent Residents/Landed Immigrants

- If you fall in any of the above categories, you will be able to pay tuition fees that are significantly less than the tuition fees for international students. French citizens can usually take advantage of the special fees for Quebec residents at universities in the province. Living expenses, of course, will remain the same.
- You will be eligible for Canadian government aid/bursary programmes.
- You will not automatically be exempted from TOEFL/IELTS, and must follow the advice given for international students. You will not face any restrictions with where or how much you work, but must remember that even so you will not be able to work enough to pay a significant portion of your expenses.

## How To Prepare For Your Canadian Applications.

### Academics

O Level, AS Level and projected A Level grades are very important, as well as a good Lyceum transcript. **Canadian universities require submission of school reports from grade 9 onwards therefore your regular class performance impacts your admission.**

- SAT scores are NOT required for students completing their A Levels.
- Your June AS results should be strong – do not rely on November re-exams, as the results come late, and the poor June grade has already made a bad impression. They will also disrupt your fall AII studies.
- You must have a strong Lyceum transcript. Schools will notice any discrepancy between good projected grades and weak school performance.
- Consistent effort and good grades also result in strong teacher recommendations.
- Schools often require a final transcript, so maintain your grades through the mocks at the end of AII year.
- Many schools give conditional offers which are contingent on final A Level results.

### Extra-curricular activities

Canadian universities are increasingly asking for students to fill out personal information forms that describe activities, and some seem especially interested in recent ones that are related to what you want to study. Some schools still do not take activities into consideration. **Activities and leadership are usually important factors for major scholarship awards.**

- Participate actively in a few extra-curriculars, in or outside of school, and seek positions of responsibility.
- Pursue quality over quantity, and do not let your studies suffer.