



# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE



Bureau de  
l'éducation  
internationale

Conseil des  
écoles publiques  
de l'Est de l'Ontario





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*\*The use of the masculine gender is for ease of reading only*



## WELCOME TO CANADA

Each year, Canada welcomes thousands of students for their elementary or secondary education. Still others participate in an exchange program or take a language course. More than 500,000 international students continue their education at colleges and universities across the country. Canada is a great place to grow and flourish (emancipate) as a student.

In Canada, high school offers you unique opportunities to learn, grow and reach your full potential. Our teachers are dedicated and want to optimize each student's learning. The lessons are alive, drawing on innovative approaches and technologies, and real-life situations.

Student life is another important aspect of high school in Canada. In each school, there are clubs focused on sports and other disciplines. They organize activities before, during and after school hours. These include, for example, music, theater, chess, math, board games, team or individual sports, and student councils clubs.

Source: [EduCanada website](http://EduCanada.website)

## GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

Canada is the second largest country in the world, occupying an area of 10 million square kilometers (3.9 million square miles). It is bordered by three oceans: the Pacific, to the west; the Atlantic to the east and the Arctic to the north. Canada has a total of over 200,000 kilometers (125,000 miles) of coastline. It shares two borders with the United States: a very long border in the south and another long border in the northwest.

Due to its vast surface, Canada offers a great diversity of landscapes. Thus, it has regions of high mountains, different types of forests, grasslands as far as the eye can see and an arctic tundra, where the ground is permanently frozen. Rivers and lakes are also countless.

The climate, like the landscapes, varies from region to region. In the areas where most Canadians live, there are four distinct seasons: spring (March 20 to June 20), summer (June 21 to September 21), fall (September 22 to December 20) and I winter (December 21 to March 19).

The weather is hot in summer, with daytime temperatures ranging between 20 and 30 degrees Celsius (68 and 86 degrees Fahrenheit), or higher. In southern Ontario and Quebec, the weather can be very humid.

Autumn and spring are transitional seasons when the weather cools down or, conversely, warms up gradually, and precipitation is higher.

Winter is very cold in most areas, with temperatures remaining well below the freezing point, which is zero degrees Celsius (32 degrees Fahrenheit). The ground becomes covered with snow around December and remains snowy until March or April.

Depending on what region of the world you are from, during your first winter in Canada, you might be very surprised at the cold and the snow. Buy a winter coat, boots, gloves and a hat that can keep you warm. Well dressed to face the cold, you'll be able to enjoy the joys of Canadian winter.  
Source: Site Web Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté





## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

English and French are the two official languages of Canada. Today, there are approximately 18 million Anglophones (people for whom English is their first language) and 7 million Francophones (people for whom French is their first language). Most Francophones live in Quebec. However, one million Francophones live in Ontario, New Brunswick and Manitoba, with a lower presence in the other provinces. Likewise, there are about a million anglophones living in Quebec. A large number of other non-official languages are also spoken in Canada. They include indigenous languages and a variety of other languages spoken in immigrant communities.

Source: [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada website](#)

## CURRENCY

Canada is a virtually cashless society. The currency is the Canadian dollar which is accepted almost everywhere in Canada. It is possible to pay in cash as much as by Interac or credit card. Most major credit cards are accepted.

Some retailers will also accept US dollars, but not at a favorable exchange rate.

For the most recent exchange rates, please consult the [Bank of Canada website](#).

## THE CITY OF OTTAWA

Ottawa, the capital of Canada, is located along the Ottawa River, on the border between Ontario and Quebec. It is the fourth largest city in the country. It has a population of 1.4 million, 66% of whom live in Ottawa and the remainder in surrounding municipalities, including Gatineau (located in Quebec, across the Ottawa River). One of the peculiarities of the region is that English and French are spoken fluently there, in all of the city's cultural and commercial activities.

Economically, Ottawa is a major economic engine, providing jobs and opportunities in high-tech, government, and important sectors of health, tourism and education. The City has several world-class research centers, top-quality educational institutions and a number of large international companies.



## SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Ottawa is a safe place to live with a low crime rate. In fact, in 2011, Ottawa's violent crime rate of 821 per 100,000 population was well below the Canadian average of 1,231 per 100,000 population, making it a safer city to live in than other cities like Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. In general, Canada has a lower rate of violent crime than the United States. Can anyone find a better place to raise a family and enjoy life than in the very safe city of Ottawa?

## MULTICULTURAL AND COSMOPOLITAN CITY

Due to its ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity, and its strong talent base, Ottawa has become a very vibrant cosmopolitan center. The city is the second largest destination in Ontario for immigration and attracts many French-speaking newcomers.

In addition, Ottawa is a young city (the median age is relatively young) that is rapidly diversifying. In fact, one in four Ottawa residents is an immigrant, a population that is growing twice as fast as the rest of the city's citizens. All parts of the world are represented, 53% of new arrivals are from Asia and the Middle East, 17% from Africa and 15% from Europe. All of this diversity is reflected in the variety of languages spoken in Ottawa, including Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, Italian and German.

Ottawa's diversity is also seen in some of the city's very charming ethnic neighborhoods. Chinatown, located near downtown Ottawa, is the destination for Chinese and Asian restaurants and grocery stores.

Source : [Ottawa City website](#)

## BILINGUAL

According to the most recent population census, approximately half of the population of Ottawa and the surrounding area is English-speaking, while a third is French-speaking. Almost half of the residents of the Ottawa and Gatineau area combined speak English and French. In fact, the number of bilingual residents increased by 50,000 between 2006 and 2011.

The primary language for doing business in Ottawa is English, and it matters a lot to economic success. Both the City of Ottawa and the federal government actively encourage bilingualism and strive to provide services in both languages.

Ottawa residents consider the presence of a Francophone community in their city and in the neighboring city across the river to be an important asset, and appreciate the cultural richness that results from it: music, restaurants, bars and bakeries. (French bakeries). In Ottawa, Vanier is an older predominantly French-speaking neighborhood, bordered by the Rideau Canal.

Ottawa also has a fully bilingual university, the University of Ottawa (link is external), which according to various rankings ranks among the top 250 schools in the world.

Source : [Ottawa City website](#)



## LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

The PRESTO bus card is accepted on OC Transpo and O-Train buses. It is valid from the first to the last day of school. All international students will have a Presto card offered free by CEPEO even if they are not eligible with the Ottawa School Transportation Consortium.

Presto cards must be registered before first use. To do this, you must create an online Presto account.

## ACTIVITIES

The city of Ottawa offers a wide range of activities both outdoors and indoors. Check the City of Ottawa website for all the activities available.

## ► PRE-DEPARTURE

### NECESSARY DOCUMENTS

You must obtain some or all of the following documents before you leave for Canada.

### VALID PASSPORT

All students must have a valid passport. Your passport must be valid for at least six months or longer. Always keep a copy of your passport's identification page and any other important documents so that they can be replaced more easily if they are lost or stolen.

### LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE FROM CEPEO

You must have an official offer of admission from the Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario CEPEO before requesting immigration documents. The official offer of admission is sent by email in PDF format to the site where your file is assessed.

Note: Always keep your admission letter in a safe place. You must take it with you when you leave for Canada. When you arrive in Canada, a customs official may ask to see it to confirm that you will be studying at the Eastern Ontario Public School Board.



## PROOF OF FINANCIAL CAPACITY

You must prove that you can support yourself. You must show that you have the financial ability to pay tuition fees and living expenses for at least one year.

## LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

To study in Canada for more than six months, you will need to apply for a study permit. You will need a letter of introduction issued by IRCC.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada will issue you a Study Permit when you enter Canada. The letter of introduction is not your study permit. You must keep this letter and other supporting documents. You will need to show the Letter of Introduction to officials at the port of entry when you arrive in Canada. You will then be issued a Study Permit.

## STUDY PERMIT

You do not need a study permit if your program is six months or less and you complete it within your authorized period of stay in Canada. Check the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship website to see if you need a study permit.

## TEMPORARY RESIDENT VISA

Most people need a visa OR an electronic travel authorization (ETA) to come to Canada (but not both). Some only need a valid passport.

Some countries require a Temporary Resident Visa (TRV or entry visa) to enter Canada. Check with the Canadian authorities in your country to find out what is required. Check the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship website for more information.

Visa-exempt foreign nationals flying to or through Canada will need an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA). Exempt from this requirement are U.S. citizens and foreign nationals who hold a valid Temporary Resident Visa (TRV). Visit the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship website for more information.

## BIOMETRIC INFORMATION

Some foreign nationals are required to provide biometric data when submitting their application for immigration documents. For more information, please visit the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship website.





## HOST FAMILY AND LEGAL CUSTODY DOCUMENT

Most of our students are minors and must have a legal guardian. We work with two trusted accommodation partners, Canada Homestay Network and Canadian Accommodation Services. They are organizations that specialize in providing homestay accommodation. Families are carefully screened and undergo reference checks, criminal record checks and interviews. This process is reflected in the standards and best practices recommended by educators and professional associations across Canada.

You also have the option of choosing a family member or a trusted individual to provide you with accommodation and legal custody. This person must live in the Ottawa area.

## PHONE AND SIM CARD

You can get a Sim card before your departure that you can use as soon as you arrive in Canada. The PhoneBox company will send you the sim card by mail a few weeks before you leave for Canada. If you want more information about this, please visit their [webpage](#).

## IMMUNIZATION

Ottawa Public Health requires that all students be immunized according to the laws of Canada. Most students have already received their vaccinations prior to arrival. A list of required vaccines will be provided to you. If you were not able to get these vaccines before you arrived in Canada, you will receive a letter from Public Health naming the missing vaccines. You will then need to make an appointment to complete your immunization record. If the immunization record is not always complete, a suspension order is automatically generated when the information is not received by the deadline.

## INSURANCE - STUDY INSURED

The Office of International Education works in partnership with Study Insured Health Insurance. While studying in Canada, international students are fully covered by the Comprehensive + Policy.

However, families are free to choose other insurance.





## ► UPON ARRIVAL IN CANADA

### CUSTOMS AND VALIDATION OF YOUR STUDY PERMIT

As soon as you arrive in Canada, when you go through customs, an officer will :

- check your passport
- Check your visa to enter Canada (if required);
- Review your letter of introduction;
- Ask you a few questions about the purpose of your stay in Canada.
- ask for a hard copy of your acceptance letter to the OEYC
- ask for proof that you have sufficient funds to cover the cost of your studies in Canada.

After verifying these documents, the immigration officer will complete and issue your study permit if necessary. Make sure that the information on your study permit is correct, i.e. your name, date of birth, etc.

If you notice any typographical errors, ask the officers to correct them before you leave the immigration office.

### GOING TO YOUR HOST FAMILY

Once you arrive in Ottawa, your host family or legal guardian will pick you up at the airport, bus station or other.

### OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT

It is not necessary to open a bank account in Canada while studying here. However, Canadian banks offer accounts and services for students that may be advantageous. For example, if you open an account here, international transfers may cost you less than if you did not have an account. Other benefits include:

- A bank account could help you manage your money;
- If you have a bank account, the bank staff can give you financial advice.

Find out about student accounts at a Canadian bank or ask about partnerships between Canadian banks and banks in your country. You should also know this:

- All Canadian banks offer online banking. You can pay bills and transfer money online;
- Most businesses accept several forms of payment: cash, credit and debit cards. They do not usually accept bank cheques;
- Cheques are usually used to pay large amounts of money, such as rent or regular bills. Your bank



will give you personalized cheques when you open an account.

Debit and credit cards are common methods of payment as Canada moves towards a cashless society. To open an account, bring your passport, study permit and letter of acceptance to the bank.

### **HERE IS A LIST OF THE MAJOR BANKS IN CANADA:**

Royal Bank of Canada (RBC)

Toronto-Dominion Bank (TD)

Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC)

Bank of Montreal (BMO)

The Bank of Nova Scotia (BNS)

National Bank of Canada (NBC)

Laurentian Bank of Canada (LBC)

Caisses Populaires Desjardins

Source: [EduCanada website](http://EduCanada.website)

## **EDUCATION PROGRAM IN ONTARIO**

In Ontario, school attendance is compulsory for children aged 6 to 18. Elementary schools offer kindergarten programs (for children aged 4 and 5), and grades 1 to 8 (for children aged 6 to 13). High schools offer grades 9-12 (for ages 13-18).

## **CONSEIL DES ÉCOLES PUBLIQUES DE L'EST DE L'ONTARIO - CEPEO**

The Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario (CEPEO) is one of the most forward-thinking boards in the world. CEPEO serves 44 elementary and secondary schools.

Together, they are committed to ensuring the inclusive well-being of learners, to embracing the world in a dynamic way, to implementing innovative teaching approaches, to being visionary about sustainability and to building a vibrant identity.

CEPEO and the schools are surrounded by complementary community partners to collectively achieve the best in francophone education in the region.



## MISSION

The Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario (CEPEO) welcomes all students seeking a high quality French language education. To meet the needs of these students, CEPEO provides :

- a dynamic, warm, francophone learning environment conducive to personal, academic and social success
- a learning environment where diversity is recognized, valued and sought after;
- the means to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for personal growth and success in a changing world.

## VISION

The CEPEO community invests with confidence in students as builders of society. To this end, each member of the community is committed to

- ensuring that its actions are focused on the student
- Asserting leadership;
- Contributing to the improvement of the quality of life;
- to promote harmonious transitions.

The CEPEO works as a team with students, parents and communities while valuing the role of each.

## ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

### **Respect... For oneself**

- Of others
- Of the differences in the environment

### **Innovation... Through openness**

- Through creativity
- Through research

### **Transparency... In its decisions**

- In its professional relationships
- In its relations with students, parents and the community

### **Efficiency... In its work methods**

- In the development of its staff





- In the use of its resources

## BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

The mandate of the Bureau of International Education is to contribute to the internationalization of the CEPEO through the implementation of the Ontario Strategy for International Education (K-12). Our team consists of a director, an administrative assistant, a recruitment administrator, an international education advisor, a pedagogical advisor and a wellness advisor. We provide follow-up and support to our international students in all stages of their stay with us, from registration to the end of their stay with us.

## SCHOOL CALENDAR

A school year begins at the end of August/beginning of September and ends at the end of June. This year is divided into two semesters.

- 1st semester (5 months): Late August/early September to late January
- 2nd semester (5 months): End of January to end of June

During the school year, there are vacations and celebrations.

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Remembrance Day
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

We also celebrate important days or months during the year such as Francophone month in March. These are days or periods of high activity in our schools.



## CEPEO SCHOOL RULES

Students have rights but also duties. The following are some of the rules that must be respected within the schools at CEPEO. Failure to comply with these rules may result in several consequences up to and including expulsion of the international student from the school.

### **SMOKING - Zero tolerance**

Students may not smoke on school property and/or in residential areas near the school.

### **DRUGS AND ALCOHOL -Zero tolerance**

The possession, consumption, distribution and sale of alcohol or drugs are strictly prohibited. In Ontario, a student is of legal age at 19, drinking alcohol under that age is a crime and there are consequences.

### **NON-VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT -Zero tolerance**

The school has a policy to deal with violence, threats against others, aggression and harassment in all its forms.

## PONCTUALITY

The student must be on time for each of his/her classes. A student who is late to his/her class will be required to report to the attendance office to obtain an admission ticket. A student who arrives late to school must obtain a pass from the attendance office. A student who is absent in the morning must present a note from his/her parents/guardians to the attendance office upon arrival at school.

## LANGUAGE

At school, students must communicate in French at all times except during English classes.

Consult the complete list of rules here.



## EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

The International Education Office team and your school are available to help you in your academic journey. We also have important partners to support you in your academic success.

### Guidance Service

Guidance counsellors are available to support you in your choice of courses as well as your choices for your secondary studies. Do not hesitate to consult them for advice on your future.

### Homework help

Many opportunities are offered to help you understand the subject matter. Teachers are always available to answer your questions. A homework club is available every day of the week after school. You will have access to qualified people to help you. In addition, you will have access to online tutoring services like My Eureka (<https://moneureka.ca/>) to help you at home.

### Mental Health

Taking care of your physical health is just as important as your mental health. If you need strategies to better manage your stress or if you find that your adjustment to your new environment is more difficult than expected, you can consult a social worker at school. This person is well equipped to help you find solutions.





## EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

In the Bureau of International Education, we are looking for students who:

- Are open-minded, as they reach out to others and want to learn about them in all their diversity;
- are proud Francophones or Francophiles and take advantage of every opportunity to speak in French;
- are involved in clubs and committees at school and volunteer their time to their community
- are committed to their academic success by asking questions, actively participating in the classroom and asking for help when needed
- take care of their physical and mental health by engaging in activities that promote their well-being
- actively participate in activities offered by schools and the Office of International Education
- do not hesitate to ask for help when something is wrong.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

The 40 hours are mandatory for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). Until the end of grade 12 (the last year) you will have to complete these hours. Community service is part of Canadian culture.

Opportunities for community service (volunteering) are offered by schools and also by the Bureau of International Education.

## MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

Several free activities are organized during the school year for our international students. These activities allow international students to discover the region, to learn more about the culture and of course to create friendships. Activities vary from year to year and include museum visits, outdoor activities, sports competitions, food and beverage experiences such as the sugar shack in the spring and much more!



## PURSUE YOUR STUDIES IN CANADA

In Canada, post-secondary education includes college and university. Each offers unique opportunities to learn and grow. At a college or vocational school, your days will be filled with job-related learning activities. You'll have the opportunity to apply your skills in a real-world work environment.

At university, your days will include classes and labs, tutorials or workshops. University life is characterized by its variety and offers you a mix of theory and practice - ideal for preparing you for the job market.

## COLLEGES

If you choose to study at a college or vocational school, you're choosing a job-oriented experience that's in tune with the dynamics of the global marketplace. You'll enjoy world-class experience and countless opportunities to expand your knowledge and skills.

Are you excited about gaining valuable work experience while studying? Colleges and vocational schools offer countless options for you to do so. Each educational institution works closely with businesses and industry to design hands-on training programs that provide the skills employers want. There are also co-op programs that include work placements.

Your studies at a Canadian college may lead to a certificate, diploma or post-graduate degree. You can also take a university transfer program, a trade apprenticeship program or a university and applied program.

## UNIVERSITIES

It's no surprise that so many international students choose to pursue their university education in Canada - 11 of the world's top 250 universities are located here. Our post-secondary institutions range from small, human-scale universities to large, research-intensive universities with a global reputation.

In addition, our faculty members teach from a global perspective, with 40% having at least one international degree. Our

graduates are recognized for their sharp critical thinking, research and leadership skills in a wide range of disciplines.

Source: [Edu Canada website](#)