

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

International Students in Vancouver



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Visa

Q: My child is currently waiting for a visa. What if the permit is not obtained when they have to start college/they have to depart?

A: All incoming students are required to have both a visa and study permit to enter Canada. If the permit is not obtained when they have to depart, students will not be able to enter Canada.

Q: Is there a way to fasten/expedite our visa process?

A: Depends on the situation – but if there's no specific problem, the IRCC office will not accept any requests to expedite the process.

Q: For those who must apply for a US visa because of a layover in the US, does the application have to be done from Indonesia or can it be done on arrival?

A: No, you must apply for a US visa from Indonesia. There are no on-arrival visa applications.

Q: Do we need to apply for a student visa every year?

A: No – a student visa is valid until the student completes their study or until the passport is expired. If your passport expires, you must renew your passport and subsequently all the other documents that depend on your passport (i.e. Student Visa, Study Permit).

Study Permit

Q: What documents must be prepared in order to receive a study permit/obtain a student visa?

A: Prepare an application for a Study Permit first. Then submit Biometrics and a valid Medical Check Up. After approval, will automatically be issued a **Temporary Resident Visa (TRV)**, and will need to submit a passport to the VFS to have the TRV inserted. Then, receive a Letter of Introduction which will be brought to Canada and given to the Canada Border Services officers at the airport to be switched with the **Study Permit** document.

Q: How long is the process to get a study permit? (If I apply from within Indonesia)

A: Approximately 1-2 months, but can be longer due to the pandemic (up to 3 months).

Q: How to get the study permit after/upon arrival? How long is the wait?

A: Once you arrive, after going through Immigrations and obtaining your luggages, there is a designated room next to the baggage carousel that allows people to wait for and receive their respective permits. Depending on how crowded the airport is or how many people are waiting for a permit, the wait could be as brief as 30 minutes to as long as 3 hours.

Q: How to get the study permit after arrival from other locations that are not in Vancouver (i.e. land-border from US-Canada, Toronto, etc.)?

A: Submit Letter of Introduction at first point of entry in Canada to obtain study permit (i.e. if your campus is UBC Vancouver but your first point of entry in Canada is Toronto, then you must submit the Letter of Introduction to exchange with your permit in Toronto, then fly to Vancouver.)

Q: How do you extend the study permit after 1 year?

A: Similar process to when applying for a study permit initially. Gather all the required documents, fill in the application form, and submit these documents. Submission of the application form and required documents can all be done on the IRCC website.

Documents

Q: What documents to bring when departing to Canada?

A: In addition to a passport that has not expired containing a valid visa (TRV), Letter of Introduction/Study Permit that's been approved and is still valid, proof of completed MCU that is valid, Letter of Acceptance (LOA), proof of funds, ArriveCan receipt, and proof of vaccination (that's been uploaded on ArriveCan as well)

Q: Do the documents need to be translated or is it better to just bring the original?

A: The documents that are required to enter Canada must be in English. For visiting family members, we recommend bringing officially translated documents (English ver.).

Q: Do I need to bring my original birth certificate? If yes, should it be translated to English? Any other original documents I need to bring with me?

A: Bringing copies of the original documents is enough. There is no need to bring original documents. If it's possible to obtain official translations of these documents, we highly recommend translations. However, for less important documents, it's normally unnecessary.

Q: Is custodianship/legal guardian mandatory to have for minors?

A: It is optional as also stated in the IRCC website. However, students specifically enrolled in college might require these custodianship documents, as well as for some accommodations (i.e. renting an apartment by yourself).

Travel Plans

Q: I haven't booked a flight yet since my visa is still in process, so what flight is recommended for me without having to apply for any US visa?

A: Narita is a favourite for travellers as flights there have short layover durations and the flight distribution is quite an equal split. However, it is more on the expensive side. Popular airlines to Japan (Narita or Haneda) are **ANA** or **JAL**. Other popular layover destinations which are usually more affordable include Taiwan (Taipei) using **EVA Air**, Hongkong using **Cathay Pacific**, or South Korea with **Korean Airlines**. Recently, a new route has been opened as well which flies directly from Singapore to Vancouver and vice versa, with **Singapore Airlines (SQ)**.

Q: Best way to get to Kelowna from Vancouver for a first time student?

A: Usually by renting a car and driving approximately 5 hours to Kelowna is the most common way to get there. Other students are also known to travel to Kelowna with other fellow students on a bus or by plane.

*Additionally, for travel to Vancouver Island, for schools such as Vancouver Island University (VIU) or University of Victoria (UVic), students can take a ferry to Vancouver Island either from Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal or Horseshoe Bay Terminal, depending on the destination.

Arriving in Canada

Q: How to apply for MSP upon arrival?

A: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/msp/bc-residents/eligibility-and-enrolment/how-to-enrol>

Q: What are the processes of obtaining/opening a SIN, a bank account, BCID, or a SIM card?

A:

- **SIN:** visit the nearest Services Canada office and apply in-person
- **BCID:** make an appointment and visit the nearest ICBC office and apply in-person
- **MSP:** apply online at:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/msp/bc-residents/eligibility-and-enrolment/how-to-enrol>
- **Bank account:** Choose a bank that is either (1) near the school's premises or (2) near your living accommodations. Banks are often similar in nature with similar benefits, so we recommend choosing whichever bank is more convenient.
 - List of Banks that students normally choose (which include but are not limited to):
 - RBC
 - Scotiabank
 - TD
 - CIBC
 - HSBC
- **SIM card:** Usually, students use Chatr when they first arrive as they allow for a pre-paid plan since they are still under 19 (minors) and it's quite affordable. But, there are lots of other carriers that have their own benefits that would best accommodate your needs.
 - List of popular Carriers among students (which include but are not limited to):
 - Chatr
 - Fido
 - Koodo
 - Bell
 - Rogers

Q: When will we be able to open up a bank account, and will there be any charge?

A: Bank accounts can be opened at any time, as long as all of the required documents are complete and prepared. However, we recommend making a reservation/booking an appointment with the bank when first opening a bank account, instead of drop-ins. Student accounts typically don't have extra charges.

Q: What is the best time to report your arrival in Canada to KJRI?

A: As soon as you arrive in Canada, you can do an online report called *Lapor Diri* to KJRI from the KJRI online website.

Q: First things to do after arrival in Toronto?

A:

1. Register **OHIP** – for health insurance (MSP is the BC equivalent)
2. Make **Ontario ID** – for identification purpose (BCID is the BC equivalent)
3. Create your SIN
4. Open a bank account
5. Get a SIM card

Post-Graduation Permit and Work Life

Q: How do we get a work permit?

A: You must first officially graduate and receive your Certificate of Completion. Then, you have 90 days to decide whether you want to apply for a Study Permit extension, apply for PGWP (Post-Graduate Work Permit), or immediately leave Canada. If you decide to stay for work, then you have to first apply for PGWP through the IRCC website in order to receive a work permit.

Q: How is the situation of the field of work in Canada?

A: There's realistically no way you won't get a job in Canada, just don't give up. Despite complicated circumstances since the COVID-19 pandemic, more and more jobs are more accommodating to potential candidates. Jobs are less demanding and are more flexible (flex times, WFH, wellness days, etc.), employers are also very open to fresh graduates knowing the situation that they went through during the pandemic. Just try your best to apply daily and diligently, regularly check emails, and network as much as you can during your school years.

Q: How to get additional income for students?

A: Part-time work → a Study Permit allows students to work 20 hours maximum each week, 40 hours maximum each week during the summer (full-time). Minimum wage is around \$15-16 CAD/hour before tax deductions. But, through filing taxes, students receive tax return of the wage cuts that were incurred previously.

Miscellaneous

Q: What are the safest applications which could be used to transfer money?

A: Western Union, or debit and credit cards are the most common ways used to pay. Cohort Go is an app that allows for an easier way to transfer money to pay tuition fees if a bank account has not been opened.

Q: In a certain study program (i.e. Diploma/Bachelor), is there a maximum amount of time/duration in which that program must be completed? If so, how long is the duration for each program?

A: Depending on the study program, it could be 2 years for a Diploma, or 4-6 years for a Bachelor's degree. Depending on the amount of courses that you take each semester and whether or not you join the Co-Op program (usually Co-Op pushes back graduation by 1 year to complete a minimum of 3 work terms (4 months each), the length/duration of your study program varies. We recommend checking with your respective institutions and also your LOA.

Q: Apartment/Flat/Dorm Accommodations that are recommended around Vancouver (near different campus locations)?

A: People usually go on websites such as Craigslist or Zumper or etc. to look for accommodations around Vancouver depending on the locations' distance near various campuses. Large institutions like UBC and SFU have dorms typically for first year students which could be registered for during the time students receive their admissions. Colleges such as Langara, Douglas, Columbia, etc don't have dorms and students usually stay in homestays.

Q: Where to stay after first arriving in Vancouver?

A: While waiting for the homestay or dorms, first-time visitors usually stay at an airbnb or at hotels when they first arrive in Vancouver for the first few days, then officially move into the homestay, dorm, or apartment afterwards.

Q: For the exam and during study in the university, is there more paper based or computer based?

A: Depending on the professors and which universities, but now they are mostly in-person and computer-based. For example, in UBC most programs hold exams that are usually conducted through Canvas (which can be accessed through computers/laptops online) but must be

completed in-person on campus along with other students. Only several exams are paper-based. In terms of course materials, almost everything is now online where textbooks or lecture slides can be accessed easily for students.

Q: How soon should we register for classes/courses? And are there any general tips when registering classes/courses?

A: It depends on the university, there is usually a predetermined schedule that was given from the institution, so students must follow the exact date and time that was set. We recommend applying as soon as the schedule is released, as quickly as possible. Course registrations are highly competitive as classes fill up very fast. We strongly encourage students to prepare their course schedule way in advance before your registration date and also prepare for back-up course sections just in case you don't get the one you want. Please regularly check your emails for important announcements and information regarding registrations among other significant university information.

Q: What's the safest platform to find homestay online? Currently we were checking on homadorma.com

A: casacanada.com/homestay-vancouver or by word-of-mouth (through references from other students or family friends).

Q: What are the new health protocols in Canadian institutions?

A: Health protocols are more relaxed in Canadian institutions now (no more mask mandates, but still encourage frequent sanitization and social distancing when necessary.)

Q: What does preparation for school look like? What are the books or gadgets that university students usually use on their first day? What types of books and gadgets should they bring? Is it enough to just use regular notebooks like when they were in highschool?

A: Most professors tend to use e-textbooks or lecture slides, so we recommend bringing a laptop or an iPad since most of these course materials are accessible online. Learning styles of students are different, some prefer using regular physical notebooks and that's okay. Although, more and more students often use laptops or iPads nowadays.

Contacts

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