

# Canadian Universities Information

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*How can you get a first rate university education with international experience at a reasonable price, all within a 7 hour drive from Newton? Think Canada!*

## Cost

In Canada, there is no such thing as a private school or a public school. All schools are publicly supported by federal and provincial government funds. Tuition is purposely kept low to make the schools as accessible to as many students as possible.

Note: what we call college and universities in the USA are really only known as universities in Canada. The word “college” in Canada refers to a school with more technical training, similar to a trade-school, that you might only attend for a couple of years. It does not mean a four-year undergraduate degree school.

Just because Canadian universities are less expensive, does not mean they provide a less rigorous education. On the contrary, McGill, University of British Columbia, University of Toronto and Queens College are four of the most highly rated universities in Canada and are equivalent to an ivy league school in the USA. If you'd like to check ratings, please go to McLean's:  
<http://oncampus.macleans.ca>.

Canadian schools charge different tuitions for different majors. For example, science majors need to pay for the use of the lab and the upkeep of the equipment. In general, attending a university in Canada costs about the same as going to your local publicly-funded state university in the USA, which can be nearly half the cost of some private universities.

If you are a Canadian resident, then you are charged a lower tuition for their universities. In general, the cost for Canadian residents is similar to the cost of community college in the USA.

The province of Quebec has three tiers of tuition costs. The lowest is for residents of Quebec, the next lowest is for Canadian residents, and then the highest tuition is charged to everyone else (but is still very reasonable compared to American tuitions). If an American student chooses to major in French while going to a university in Quebec, then they will pay the same rate of tuition as a resident of Quebec (the lowest rate).

### Technology/STEM

Canada is home to many high tech companies, such as Blackberry and Imax, among others. The province of Ontario is equal to our Silicon Valley, and has many schools with outstanding engineering and science programs. The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) initiative is very strongly supported by the Canadian government, since the majority of future jobs are in these areas.

### School Size

Canada is home to a full range of universities, just like in the USA. There are small, medium and large schools in urban, suburban, and rural settings. The nice thing about schools in Canada is that even large universities work hard to keep the classroom clusters small, since they believe it is very important that the students have access to their professors.

Canada has 240,000 international students every year. Of these, 100,000 are American. Every American student has access to an International Studies Office, where they can receive special help if they need it (such as finding a place to live off campus).

## Programs of Study

You might have heard how some parts of Canada still have a 13<sup>th</sup> grade. This is true in the province of Quebec, where Canadian students go to high school through 13<sup>th</sup> grade, and then go on to three years of university. However, American students in Canada would attend for four years to receive their degrees, just like in the USA. Degrees offered in Canada are the same as the USA: bachelor of arts/sciences (B.A. or B.S.); master of arts/sciences (M.A. or M.S.) and doctorate (Ph.D.). Fields of study are just as wide and varied in Canada as they are in the U.S.

## Admissions Process

The Admissions process is significantly different in Canada. Canadian universities are not interested in recommendation letters or SAT scores, neither of which is required. Instead, Canadian schools focus on the numbers, i.e. the students' grade point average (GPA), their academic record, and what extra-curricular activities in which they have participated.

Each university has its own recruiter for American students. Marc Jacques would be more than happy to put you in touch with the recruiter for any particular Canadian schools you are looking at. (His contact information can be found at the beginning of this document.) Many of the recruiters for Americans also work in admissions to review applications. When working with a recruiter, be sure to tell them the exact field(s) that you plan to study (if you know). Some universities are stronger than others in specialized fields. Unlike the USA, Canadian universities are not competitive with one another. Instead, they prefer to have a good match between the student and the university, even if that means recommending you go research a different Canadian school. Recruiters find it much more productive to have happy students, rather than be competitive.

Admissions at Canadian schools are rolling admissions. (There is no early admission or early action process.) In general, plan on applying at least eight months before you want to attend. If you want to start in September, then apply by January 1<sup>st</sup>. And if you want to start in

January, apply by May 1<sup>st</sup>. For some Canadian schools, you will receive an answer in six weeks. For others, there are set times during the year when they send out their acceptances.

If you have high SAT scores, feel free to send them to boost your application, but they are not required. Also, Canadian schools appreciate seeing a student whose GPA has risen each year of high school.

New England, and Newton in particular, is a very popular place from which Canadian schools like to recruit. Newton has a high graduation rate and its students are often international themselves or have traveled extensively. Therefore, they are more likely to come to Canada if accepted.

Once you are accepted, it's recommended that you register for class online as soon as enrollment opens, so that you have the best chance of getting your first choice of classes. Since classrooms are much smaller in Canada, it is possible to be shut out at times. (The same thing happens at American universities, too.)

Be sure to give your Newton South High School guidance counselor at least four weeks notice before you plan to send your first transcript, so that your guidance counselor has time to get everything ready. After the first transcript is prepared, subsequent transcripts only require a few days notice.

### Financial Aid

Financial Aid in Canada is merit-based, not need-based. Depending on your student's GPA, they will be offered a financial award, which does not need to be repaid. The better their GPA, the more money they will be offered. For their freshman year of university, the aid will be based on the GPA of their full senior year of high school. And for every year after that, their GPA will determine the aid they receive for the following year. For example, if a university student has a higher GPA their sophomore year, then they will be offered a larger financial award for the junior year, than for the previous one.

If your student receives financial aid from an American source, please check to see if those funds can be used in Canada. For example, Pell grants can only be used at American schools. Canada is willing to accept American financial aid, you just have to check with the source of the funds and make sure that works with their policies.

### Student Life

Canadian universities have the same broad range of clubs and activities as most American schools. One difference: the sports are not at the same high level as college football and basketball in the USA, but there are plenty of varsity and recreational league sports at every Canadian university. Most universities are very open to creating new clubs and will give you a stipend to create one.

The overall lifestyle will be very similar to a comparable area in the USA. The one exception is that Canada's cities (such as Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto) have an even lower crime rate than the USA.

Student housing varies widely depending on the size and location of the school you attend. Some schools have a commuter nature to them, just as in the USA. As said previously, every American student has access to an International Studies Office, where they can receive special help if they need it (such as finding a place to live off campus).

For access to money, it is recommended that students open up a bank account in the town of their university. Banks such as TD Bank, Royal Bank of Canada, and Scotia Bank are all Canadian banks with American offices, which makes transferring money easier. Banks charge a fee for such transfers, so it is more cost effective to do a few large transfers each year, rather than many small ones.

### Health & Wellness

All American students are required to pay for Canadian health insurance while they are students in Canada. The cost is \$400 per year, which is significantly lower than what a similar insurance policy would cost in the USA.

## Working in Canada

American students in Canada can automatically use their student visa as a work visa and work anywhere they like, on or off campus. Upon graduation, American students can receive a visa if they would like to work in Canada permanently.

Having gone to university in Canada is a very valuable life experience, since many American companies do a lot of business in Canada and are looking to hire Americans who understand Canada. In addition, even if you attend an English speaking university in the province of Quebec, you often finish school bilingual in French, since all stores, restaurants, etc. in Quebec are French first, English second.

## Resources

Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada: [www.aucc.ca](http://www.aucc.ca)

McLean's: [oncampus.macleans.ca](http://oncampus.macleans.ca)

Canadian government: [www.educationau-incanada.ca](http://www.educationau-incanada.ca)