

Studying in Canada—The Hidden Gem

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<http://www.easycircle.it/studying-in-canada/>

With its rugged mountains, ice blue lakes, miles of forests and billowing prairie grasses, Canada appeals to the adventurous spirit. This recreational wonderland boasts over 40 National Parks and Reserves, a dozen of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Alongside its impressive natural beauty, Canada also offers compelling educational opportunities to international students who wish to study abroad. Numerous public and private high schools from coast to coast organize global student exchanges, while this article will explore some striking proposals at Canadian colleges and universities. To scout the possibilities firsthand, you're welcome to visit the Fiera EduCanada 2017 in Milan (Oct 14th) or Rome (Oct 12th).

- **Who might particularly enjoy and benefit from studying in Canada?**

If you love the great outdoors and participate in winter or water sports, you'll rollick in Canada's wealth of fresh-air activities year round. In 2017, Canada tops selected global rankings as #1 for quality of life, and students can snag apartments in many city centers for less than €800 per month (<http://dailyhive.com/toronto/canada-quality-of-life-2017>, www.numbeo.com). If you seek security, this nation also enjoys an admirably high level of political stability, as documented by the World Bank since the year 2000 (www.theglobaleconomy.com). The society also prides itself on being diverse and inclusive, welcoming people of many backgrounds and walks of life (www.newcomerscanada.ca). Furthermore, Canada has established a robust, public education system that offers instruction in English and/or French. A handful of these excellent universities appear consistently in the Top 50 World University rankings, and as a whole, Canadian universities host one third of its national research activities (www.theglobeandmail.com).

- **In Canada, what is the difference between a college and a university?**

If you seek a practical approach to learning and attractive tuition fees, Canada offers the higher education option of "college," **not** to be confused with either the US liberal arts college, nor the UK secondary boarding school (*collegio*). Many Canadian colleges were historically founded as community colleges and thus offer a variety of post-secondary credentials that range from one-year certificates to 2-3 year diplomas to four-year applied degrees. These colleges tend to be comprehensive and dynamic, with a wide gamut of specialized programs that, by design, are closely tied to industry. They highlight experiential learning through paid work co-ops, training internships, laboratory research and hands-on portfolio development.

Because colleges generally have accessible admission requirements and tuition fees, they appeal to a wide variety of students. Plus, Canada's flexible system of higher education further promotes transfer from colleges to universities, with integrated advising support and facilitated transfer of credits. In fact, Canadian colleges and universities often partner for the advancement of research and community building (<https://www.univcan.ca/universities/universities-and-colleges-partners-in-education/>).

Universities in Canada, on the other hand, emphasize abstract, critical thinking and research innovation in professional fields. Because they include graduate schools, universities may offer intensive research opportunities to *laureandi*. In Canada's system, provincial governments have autonomous educational authority, so certain universities are smaller and cater to primarily undergraduate student populations. With no governmental ranking system in Canada, prospective university students are advised to select those that represent the "best fit" for their individual needs, both academically and otherwise. Search the Canadian college or university programs that are best for you (www.studyincanada.com)! Last but not least, in 2016-17, full-time international undergraduates paid tuition fees that ranged from about €12K-€22.7K—relatively inexpensive costs when compared to similar North American counterparts (<http://www.universitystudy.ca/plan-for-university/what-does-it-cost-to-study-in-canada/>).

- **What kinds of work opportunities are available to international students while studying in Canada? What about after graduation?**

The promising news begins with your ability to hold a job on campus *without* a work permit, if you're studying full-time at a post-secondary Canadian institution. Many international students also find employment off-campus for up to 20 hrs/week during the academic year (<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work.asp>). In 1957, the University of Waterloo was the first in Canada to propose a co-operative (co-op) program that integrated classroom instruction with guided placements in industry. Eighty years later at most Canadian institutions, global students may earn university/college credit *and* receive commensurate compensation while witnessing their course readings and lectures put to the test in real-life work scenarios. Generally from the 2nd year onwards through a competitive application process, co-op students alternate semesters of study with periods of work, while some programs may offer a classroom-workplace split during the day. Co-op placements are sponsored by local, national and international companies and may be combined with a Study Abroad experience. Relevant advising is provided for the co-op job search, work permit bureaucracy, CV and interviews. Research shows that an impressive 90% of co-op students receive a job offer within 1 month of graduation. (<http://www.canadian-universities.net/Campus/Cooperative-Education.html>).

Regarding full-time jobs after graduation, an international student who has attended designated learning institutions may be eligible to receive a post-graduate work permit of three years. Since November 2016, the Canadian government has implemented changes to its immigration policy that further recognize international graduates of Canada's higher education system. Such *neolaureati* are expected to comprise a projected 40% of Express Entry applications for permanent residency. In this way, international graduates of Canadian institutions may take advantage of expedited immigration processes and enhanced access to permanent positions throughout the country. Certain provinces also offer immigration incentives to skilled professionals with previous work experience in-country (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/canada-makes-permanent-residency-easier-overseas-students>).

These days, it makes good sense to keep an open mind about universities abroad. Smart students and families may discover that in Canada, there are remarkable gems of education waiting to be unearthed!

Selected figures from online member resources at the International Association for College Admission Counseling, (www.internationalacac.org).