

# Student life in Canada

----- Supriya Kumar Chakraborty

## **Making friends**

Try not to be shy! Remember that making friends is important to everyone in their first year of university. Smile as you see other students, say hello and call others by name. Join in student activities and meetings, and bring a photo album from home to show new friends your home country and its customs.

Meeting people and making friends is an important part of your university experience. Be friendly, but be yourself and be polite. Saying, "please" and "thank you," are important Canadian customs, and your personal friendships will improve if you express your gratitude and appreciation to those around you. Remember, too, that you are an ambassador of sorts and your attitudes and behavior will influence people's opinion of your home country.

## **Things to bring**

Whether you are in Homestay or private accommodation, you will be provided with a bed, storage space, and a desk and chair in your room. You may want to bring with you, or purchase on arrival:

- Alarm clock
- Decorations for your room (posters, pictures)
- Bathrobe
- Flip flops for the shower
- Laundry detergent/laundry bag
- Crates for storage
- Umbrella
- Personal toiletries
- Towel
- Calendar
- Dictionary
- School supplies (pens, pencils, notebooks etc)
- Contact information for family members
- Calculator

## **Clothing**

Is important to bring clothing suited for the weather: at your chosen University you will experience four distinct seasons. During the winter, expect milder temperatures versus the rest of Canada and northern United States, but the temperature will typically drop almost to freezing. In the summer, the coastal location makes the city a pleasant place to live, with average temperatures reaching 22°C. Spring and Fall have comfortable, mild temperatures, averaging between 10-20°Celsius.

## **Computers**

Although your University has computers and printers for student use, it may be useful to bring your own computer and printer which you can use in your accommodation.

## Telephones

- **Cell phones:** Most international students purchase cellular phones when they arrive, as most mobile phones purchased in other countries will not work in Canada. The international dialling code for Canada is '+1'.
- **Emergency numbers:** blue emergency phones, with a direct line to Security Services, are found around campus. In the event of a serious injury, dial 911 first to contact the external emergency services.

## Money

- You should never keep large sums of money on you or in your accommodation.
- You can open a savings/checking account at a bank close to campus (bring your passport), cash traveller's checks (be sure to keep a separate record of the serial numbers), or use a credit card to withdraw money.
- Remember that you are responsible for all personal expenses at university including: books, toiletries, study supplies, social activities, personal spending, telephone bills, damages to your accommodation and other expenses. All of these bills must be paid in full before your final year's University transcript and other academic records will be released.

## Safety

As everywhere else in the world, there is crime in Canada. You should be careful as you get to know your campus and the community surrounding it. There are some basic safety guidelines that you should pay attention to:

- It is often not safe to walk alone at night. Always ask someone to accompany you if you are unsure about the area you are going to.
- It is sometimes unsafe to use public transportation alone at night. Always ask someone to accompany you.
- Be certain to lock your accommodation and car doors and windows whenever you leave them. Never leave valuables (including cash, credit cards, cell phones) unattended and out in the open - even in a locked room.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash.
- Never accept a ride from a stranger, nor offer a ride to a stranger.

## Extracurricular activities

We recommend that you take advantage of the student clubs, arts/cultural events, trips and other activities that your desired University offers. You will have a good time, meet new people and make friends for life.

You can participate in drop-in recreational sports, which are relatively informal for students looking to learn a new sport or just exercise. Many students join a club to meet other students

who share their interests, but it is recommended that you do not join more than 2 or 3 clubs so as to not lose focus on your studies.

## **Official University closings**

You should receive an academic calendar when you arrive at your chosen University/Colleges. Take special note of public holidays when the University/College will not hold classes, for instance over winter vacation.