



**Sir Syed Global Scholar Award**  
Sir Syed Education Society of North America

# SSGSA Guide to Canada

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**Sir Syed Global Scholar Award(SSGSA)**

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## SSGSA Guide to Canada

This guide is divided into three sections as per the phase of the application process:

Phase I: General information about preparing a competitive application package for ensuring an admission offer

Phase II: Applying for a Canadian visa

Phase III: Information on necessary steps for arriving in Canada

Phase IV: Life in Canada

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# Phase I: Applying for Grad school

## Types of schools and available courses

### 1.1 Introduction

Before starting the search for any degree, it is important to know the types of educational institutes in Canada. There are two main types of institutes: community colleges and universities. Universities provide Masters and Doctoral programs whereas community colleges provide post-graduate-diploma and Masters's programs. Generally, a four-year bachelor's degree is required for Masters's in Canada, community colleges also consider three years bachelor's degree.

Doing any master's abroad requires well-planned and well-prepared applications to ensure successful admissions. The preparations should start at least 9-10 months before the beginning of your target semester. So, the first and foremost step is to search for your course of interest. An important point to consider while selecting your institute is the ranking. The first thing that everyone looks for is the world ranking of the target university. However, it is not always recommended to choose your institute based on rankings published online on various websites but rather to look for the rank of the desired course based on course contents and market requirements. Because the quality of education you will get is more or less the same in all the universities and thus choosing the right course is essential. Some websites where you can find available courses are given but the best place to find available courses is university websites as they are the most updated.

<https://www.mastersportal.com/search/master/canada>

<https://leverageedu.com/blog/masters-in-canada/https://studyabroad.shiksha.com/canada/ms-co>

<https://www.findamasters.com/masters-degrees/canada/?40w000>

For Computer Science (Research) ranking you can consider this website:

<https://csrankings.org/#/index?all&ca>

### 1.2 Types of Courses

For engineering bachelor's students the following type of courses are available:

- Master of Applied Sciences (MAsc) (Thesis Based)
- Master of Engineering (MEng) (Course Based)
- Master of Engineering (MEng) (Co-op)

For science bachelor's degree students, the following type of courses are available:

- Master of Sciences (MSc) (Thesis Based)
- Master of Sciences (MSc) (Course Based)
- Master of Sciences (MSc) (Co-op)

Thesis-based course requirements are taking 4-5 courses and successfully defending a thesis. Course-based programs don't have any thesis component rather more courses and a capstone project is in its place. Co-op programs allow the students to combine studies with industrial experience; you are required to complete one or two terms of internship in some company.

## Application process

Mostly, there are two types of master's offered by Canadian universities. One is the course-based master's program and the other is the thesis based. The application process varies depending on the nature of the program

### 2.1 Course-based program

The procedure of selection in the course-based master's program:

Unlike the thesis-based master's program, the way of applying to this program is quite straightforward. You just need to check the basic eligibility criterion like the IELTS/ TOEFL score, percentage requirement, and GRE ( if required). You don't need to email the professors like you have to do in the thesis-based program and directly apply on the portal of the university before the mentioned deadlines. If your profile is good enough to compete with the other applicants in the pool, you will hopefully get selected. There is no role of the supervisor in such kind of master.

### 2.2 Thesis-based program

In this master's program, a part of the credits during the program are covered by the courses offered by the University and the thesis covers the rest of the credits. For the latter part, you will be working under the supervision of a professor in your department and will perform the research work. The procedure of selection in the thesis-based master's program:

#### 1. Being matched with a supervisor of your interest:

For this, one needs to search for a supervisor who has openings under his supervision. This needs to be done months before the application deadline. For instance, if the deadlines for fall intake at a particular university are in December, you need to start sending the emails from August onwards. During this phase, one needs to be patient as the professor usually doesn't reply too easily. You need to be self-motivated and just go ahead with the emails to various professors in different universities and tell them your eagerness to work with them in the desired field. You will find the format of the emails mentioned below. But try to draft them on your own as you may come up with a more catchy email than what we did. We recommend you show your draft to your mentors and

get some valuable input from them too. After consistent efforts, you will definitely hear back from some of the professors. You may hear back in two different ways:

- They will directly say 'Yes' to you after looking at your email and the attached CV and Transcripts in the email. If this happens to you, feel that you are quite lucky, or
- They may ask you for an interview. The professor will mention a particular time and date and will ask about your availability. I will separately tell about the interview process beneath.

The process for drafting of email is shown in this section. Email can be divided into three paragraphs with this content in each:

- (a) Introduce yourself, your bachelor's school, and your CGPA till that term.
- (b) Study the research of the professor and write a few points from his research (eg. you can point out a publication) that attracted you and convince you that your previous work somewhat aligns with his work and make him realize that you have the potential to do research in that domain.
- (c) Mention that you are highly interested to work as a master/ PhD student under his supervision in the following term.
- (d) Attach your Resume, Transcripts, and English Proficiency Score Card (if you have it) in the email.

Note: Before sending the email, you must check the column of prospective students on the website of the professor. Many times, there are specific points that the professor has mentioned for the ones who want to work with him and will connect with him via email. (Example: Keywords for the subject)

### 2. Interview:

This totally depends on your luck. Some professors set up interviews that are too casual and they just want to talk to you and see how motivated you are to work in that particular field. They may end up asking some basic questions from your resume. On the other hand, some of the professors may ask some technical questions, and most of them are from the concepts that you used in the projects that you mentioned in your resume. We recommend you brush up on your projects and publications before appearing in the interview.

At the end of the interview, if you feel like the professor is willing to take you as a master's/PhD student under his/her guidance, you must ask for funding opportunities in the form of RA/ TA.

### 3. Application:

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Once your interview goes well and the professor is ready to take you as a student under his supervision, then the next step is application but now there will be no elimination. You just need to satisfy the eligibility criterion like the IELTS/ TOEFL score, percentage requirement, or GRE. Mention the name of the supervisor with whom you interviewed and make follow- up with him that you have applied.

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## Phase II: Applying for Canadian Visa

The visa process is completely online. You have two pathways to apply for a visa if you are residing in India:

- Student Direct Stream (SDS)
- Normal Visa

First of all, you should get your medical examination done before starting the application. You can take an appointment at any hospital approved by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) near your area. For SDS it is mandatory to have a medical examination done before applying. Meanwhile, you can start filling out the online application form and start preparing the documents. You must make an account on the GCkey portal of IRCC.

For filing the application under SDS you need the following documents:

1. Your admission confirmation letter
2. IELTS (with 6.5 minimum overall and 6 in each section), TOEFL score is not applicable in SDS
3. Full payment of first year tuition fees (you have to upload the receipt received from the University)
4. A Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC), i.e. a blocked account opened in an IRCC-approved bank with 10,000 CAD. Available banks are Scotiabank, CIBC, and ICICI Canada. Prefer a bank that has a branch near your university.
5. Medical examination sheet that you will get from the hospital where you get examined.

These requirements are strict. You need to have these documents for SDS. Apart from these documents, you would also need the following documents. These are not mandatory by IRCC but you have to provide them.

1. An SOP, more details on what to include are given below
2. Your degree and transcript
3. Class 10 marksheet
4. Class 12 marksheet

You should also provide bank statements and an affidavit of support from your parents showing you can pay the second-year tuition fees. If you got a scholarship or don't want to apply under SDS. Then the following documents would be required:

1. Your admission letter
2. TOEFL or IELTS
3. A bank statement (4 months required, 6 months recommended) and a certificate showing an amount equivalent to your tuition fees plus 10,000 CAD for living costs, it is recommended that you put 10,000 CAD in GIC rather than showing in the bank account.

4. Affidavit of support if your showing bank statements of your parents
5. Degree and transcript
6. Class 10 marksheet
7. Class 12 marksheet
8. Medical examination sheet
9. If you receive any scholarship then you can put that document in place of a bank statement if you are fully funded, if you receive partial funding you can have the remaining amount in the form of a bank statement.

### 3.1 SOP for Visa

Start the SOP by introducing yourself and then mentioning the course, university, duration, and start date of your program. In the subsequent 1-2 paragraphs, outline your previous degree and experiences in a very abstract manner, addressing a generic audience. Then explain the answer to the following questions:

- Why Canada?
- Why a particular University?
- Why that particular course? (connect the course content with your previous experiences)
- How would you support your finances? (Explain how much tuition fees you have to pay and how would you cover it)
- Your future plans? (Ideally, you should have a strong reason to return back to India, and your studies in Canada should better your prospects in India)

## Phase III: Arriving in Canada

### On arrival

The first thing to do after coming or before your arrival is to get in touch with your International office or your coordinator; talk to them about each and everything you want to know and inform them about your arrival. Also, after your arrival, send an email to your university health insurance department to make sure it will get activated from Day 1 in Canada. If you did not plan your housing before coming, then you may use Airbnb or a hotel for the initial few days. Most universities have an Indian Student Association (ISA), and reaching out to them is also a good option for guidance on housing. Reaching out to your potential roommates beforehand is recommended to avoid uncertainties in a new environment.

### Enrollment

Enrollment can be done even before coming to Canada. To do your enrollment in person, you can book your appointment and then visit the designated office. You may also have to submit your transcripts if it is not done in advance. Therefore, it is better to always ask your queries to your program secretary/coordinator. It is also suggested to attend the orientation very carefully since it will already resolve many of your queries.

### Housing

Finding accommodation is always a tricky task and especially when you are in a new country where you don't have any knowledge about the housing system. Every university has an Indian student group on social media platforms (such as Facebook). It is a good idea to try to contact Indians in that group even before coming to Canada. Also, try to contact Indians from your program to give you suggestions about housing. It is advised not to transfer a big amount for accommodation before coming to Canada and without personally checking the house's condition. You can ask for some help to check the house condition for you from a person who is already in Canada. But that person should need to be trustworthy. Every university provides housing for students, which can be a good option for the first few months. This option is always free from any kind of fraud.

### Transportation

The bus is the most convenient mode of transportation for intra-city traveling. Generally, you have to take a reloadable bus pass to use the bus service. In some cities, you have to buy bus tickets whenever you have to use the bus service. Universities also provide bus passes at

subsidized fees that may already include in your fees. For intercity travel, you can either use domestic flights or train services (such as Viarail <https://www.viarail.ca/en>).

## Bank Account

This is also one of the important steps after coming to Canada. To open a bank you need some documents such as a study permit, mobile number, address proof (any document with your name and address in Canada), and social insurance number (SIN). There are several options to choose from as your bank: CIBC, RBC, Scotia, etc. Every bank has its offer for students. We recommend trying to talk with your friends in Canada before opening your bank account. Sometimes there may be an offer on referral, so you can avail of that.

## International internship and Visa extension issues

The international society of every university provides timely seminars to guide students if they have any such issues. It is recommended to attend at least one seminar to get an idea about the process in case you will have its need. Also, it is strictly advised to inform the international office of the university in case you have to do any international internships/training.

## Phase IV: Life in Canada

Canada is a diverse, progressive, and multicultural nation. The culture in Canada is highly influenced by European and American cultures. Canada offers a great platform for people around the globe due to being an immigrant-friendly country. Canadian people are very friendly and value everyone's contribution to the country. Montreal Jazz Festival, Winterlude, Celebration of Light, and Pride Toronto are only a few among the many not to be missed extravaganzas in Canada. Canada is also known for its natural scenic beauty. Life in Canada is very welcoming for Indian students.

At the university level, most part of the day for a student will be spent on practical-based career-centered education. Students have to attend lectures, labs, tutorials, and workshops. Apart from classes, those enrolled in a research-based degree must spend their time in research labs to perform experiments and other research works. You can also work as a research assistant where you will be paid according to the available funds for the Professor. If you are working as a graduate assistant (GA) then your course instructor might schedule office hours to help students where you have to interact with them and handle their doubts regarding courses and assignments. However, there are a lot of other opportunities for you to take part like sports and other extracurricular activities.

Canada has much more to offer to students than just big city life. You can find a good work-life balance with 35-40 working hours per week in Canadian cities. Most universities in Canada allow students to work part-time by restricting their working hours to 20 hours a week. Students use these allotted working hours to manage their expenses during student life. Poutine, Bannock, Butter tarts, and Nova Scotia Lobster rolls are the unsaid traditions that everyone encounters and enjoys during their international student life in Canada. For grocery shopping, you can use several stores such as Frescho, Walmart, NoFrills, etc. You can also find Indian grocery stores and restaurants in your specific cities.

Apart from studies, try to go out and explore the places. This is one of the good opportunity to explore and grow. You can always find AliGs if you are feeling homesick. Also, you can learn a lot of things from their experience.