The CIE Pre-arrival Guide

Congratulations! We look forward to your arrival.

These suggested steps will help you prepare for your arrival in Toronto and on campus.

Before you arrive in Toronto, there are some things you will need to prepare for – everything from organizing your travel documents to finding somewhere to live. Check out our pre-arrival information and next steps checklist (below) for details.

Services for international students:

- St. George campus: Centre for International Experience
- Mississauga campus: International Centre
- Scarborough campus: International Student Centre

Related information: Campus Tours

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UHIP

International students at the University of Toronto are automatically enrolled in two separate healthcare plans:

- Your basic healthcare plan, UHIP
- Your **Supplementary Healthcare Plan** (exchange students are not enrolled in the supplementary healthcare plan)

Healthcare in Canada can be expensive, but your basic healthcare plan (UHIP) will help cover the cost of medical services at clinics and hospitals such as doctors visits, emergency visits, blood tests, x-rays and more. It is important to have your UHIP card with you at all times.

Visit uoft.me/uhip to learn how to get your UHIP card online. Learn more about your coverage and plan details at uhip.ca.

Your second plan, the Supplementary Healthcare Plan, helps with the costs of medical services that are not covered by UHIP. For example, prescription drugs and dental services are only covered by your Supplementary Healthcare Plan. You can find more information about the Supplementary Healthcare Plan at www.studentcare.ca.

Charges for the two plans will be posted separately to your ACORN account.

If you arrive in Canada between August 10 and September 1, you may be eligible for UHIP coverage during that time. If you arrive early, contact our UHIP office for more information about health coverage.

Your health is important! Learn more about your coverage at uoft.me/uhip.

Study permit

Congratulations on your admission to the University of Toronto! To study in Canada, you should get a study permit, which is issued by the Canadian Government. Most international students also need a Temporary Residency Visa or an Electronic Travel Authorization, depending on your country of citizenship.

It’s your responsibility to make sure these documents are up-to-date and valid for the full duration of your studies in Canada. This includes being aware of the expiry dates, conditions, and/or restrictions of each document.
To get a study permit, you need to apply online or in-person at the closest Canadian Visa Application Centre in your country of legal residence.

Here’s what you’ll need for your application:

- the letter of acceptance you have already received from U of T
- proof that you have enough funds to pay for at least one year of tuition and living expenses
- a valid passport
- the study permit application form
- the application fee

Depending on the requirements of the visa office where you are from, you may also need a medical examination, biometrics and other documents or forms.

Remember to submit your application as early as possible, or as soon as you receive your official letter of acceptance from U of T.

If your application is approved, you’ll receive a Study Permit Approval Letter and a visa or eTA if applicable. Show that letter when you get to Canada to receive the hard copy of your study permit.

If you’re already studying in Canada with a valid high school study permit, you should get a new permit that’s valid for post-secondary study.

If you’re a transfer student coming from another post-secondary institution in Canada, you may use the study permit you already have, as long as it’s still valid. You will need to update the institution name. To do this, submit a Designated Learning Institution (DLI) request through your online Immigration Canada account. Look for the link that says "transfer schools".

Your legal status is important. Learn more about study permits at uoft.me/immigration.

**Housing**

As part of coming to U of T, you will need to think about where you will want to live and how to arrange it. While many first-year undergraduate students live in one of the on-campus university residences, some first years and most upper-year undergraduate and graduate students live off campus in rental housing or with family.
All of the information you will need to make decisions about your housing while at U of T can be found on the University’s Housing website. Here are a few preliminary things to consider:

**Exchange students**

Exchange students can explore their housing options through off-campus residence-style accommodations and private property listings.

**First-year undergraduate students**

If you qualify for the Residence Guarantee and are interested in living in residence, you must confirm your interest on StarRez before March 31, even if you have not yet been offered admission to the university, in order to be considered.

**First-year graduate students**

Graduate House is U of T’s largest single student residence for graduate students enrolled in a full-time degree program. There is no residence guarantee for graduate students; however, applying as early as possible for on-campus accommodation gives you the best chance of being considered for a space.

**Off-campus housing**

While you will need to conduct your own off-campus housing search, the University’s Housing service can help make that process easier. Once you decide to come to U of T, begin familiarizing yourself with the different types of housing, neighbourhoods, distances to campus and transit options, rental agreements and rental options. While it is possible to begin your search for off-campus accommodation from your home country, you will likely find it easier to do once you arrive in Toronto. Additionally, most rental listings do not go up much more than 2 months before the move-in date. We recommend beginning your search 60 days in advance, as most rental listings typically appear 2 months (44-60 days) prior to the available move-in date.

**Temporary housing**

You may want to consider booking temporary housing for your arrival in Toronto and while you conduct your off-campus accommodation search. This can be done in advance; as soon as you know you will be coming to U of T.
Students with families

Are you planning to bring your family to Canada with you? Student Family Housing is a family-oriented residence reserved for U of T students in a full-time degree program with partners and/or children.

Academic considerations

U of T's academic culture encourages independence and self-exploration: students are responsible for finding the information they need and for advocating for themselves. Asking questions is encouraged and expected in many contexts.

- Your registrar's office is your main source of information relating to academic advising for course enrollment and course selection.
- You are responsible for knowing important dates and deadlines specific to your faculty or academic unit.
- You may find the academic culture at U of T to be different from your previous academic experiences in terms of teaching styles, learning styles, expectations, etc. The University of Toronto offers many resources and services to support your academic transition and success, such as Academic Success and writing centres. You can meet with a learning strategist at Academic Success, or at your own faculty or college, just ask!
- We encourage you to explore all these options to learn more about successful academic strategies right from the start! An international transition advisor can help guide you in this process.

For graduate students

- Consult the School of Graduate Studies for any questions related to registration, awards, and student services. For academic matters related to your courses and degree program, contact your graduate unit or collaborative program.

Get support from a mentor
The University of Toronto offers many mentorship programs where you can be matched with an upper year U of T student (peer mentor), faculty or alumni. Many mentorship programs start over the summer so you can ask questions and get support before you arrive in Toronto. Find mentorship opportunities on the St. George Campus or ask your local campus Student Life office, department or faculty.

The Centre for International Experience’s iConnect International Mentorship Program will connect you with a mentor in the summer before you arrive to help ease your transition to U of T.

U of T Campuses & the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)

U of T Campuses:

The University of Toronto has three unique campuses located in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA): St. George (Downtown Toronto), Mississauga and Scarborough. Find additional information on all three campuses.

You can also explore student services and programs for each campus:

- St. George Campus - Student Life
- Mississauga Campus - Centre for Student Engagement
- Scarborough Campus - Department of Student Life

Explore the GTA:

The GTA is multicultural and diverse, which is not surprising considering that half of Toronto’s residents were born outside Canada. We encourage you to explore Toronto’s diverse neighbourhoods and to get familiar with living in Toronto before you arrive.

You can learn about climate, shopping, transportation, events, etc. by checking out the Centre for International Experience and the City of Toronto websites.
Finances

One of your first financial concerns may relate to how and when to pay tuition fees. Take a look at the annual schedule of tuition fees and relevant information on the Student Accounts website, including instructions on how to pay tuition fees in Canadian funds from outside Canada.

If you are required to show proof of tuition payment/deposit as part of your study permit application process, you can e-mail the Student Accounts Office at info.studentaccount@utoronto.ca to request an estimate of the fees payable (based on the previous year’s fees). They can help you make a payment/deposit even if you have not registered for courses yet.

You may want to consider working in Canada to help supplement your income, but be aware that amounts earned cannot fully fund your tuition.

If you are a graduate student, the School of Graduate Studies has detailed information on financing your graduate education.

All students can use the Awards Explorer to explore diverse funding opportunities.

Working in Canada

As an international student with full-time registration status and a valid study permit, you will be eligible to work in Canada, with some conditions. Be sure to read all the details on our working in Canada page.

The University of Toronto has career services to help you find work including the Career and Co-Curricular Learning Network (CLNx) where you can find on-campus work, off-campus work, work-study, and volunteer positions. To access the CLNx site, you will need an active UTORid and password.

T.A.s (graduate students with teaching assistantships) will likely find the Teaching Assistant’s Training Program a helpful pedagogical resource.
Next steps checklist

These suggested next steps will help you prepare for your arrival in Toronto and on campus.

Before you arrive

- Obtain a [study permit and related immigration documents](#).
- Photocopy important documents (such as your passport and immigration papers). Remember to have the original documents with you at the border crossing and be prepared for [Canadian airport customs](#).
- Consider your [housing options](#).
- Pay your tuition fees. For more information about:
  - [How to pay the fees](#) (Student Accounts webpage)
  - [Tuition fee amounts](#) (also called “tuition fee schedule”)
- Enrol in courses. See your [registrar’s website](#) for specific information about your academic program.
- Sign up to be paired with a [peer mentor](#).
- Make sure your [immunizations](#) are up to date before arriving.
- Create a realistic budget using [U of T’s Financial Planning Calculator](#) based on the [cost of living in Toronto](#).
- Plan your [transportation from the airport to campus](#).
- Learn about the [academic culture](#) at the University.
- Get familiar with [living in the City of Toronto](#).
- Keep in mind that most University offices are open 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday to Friday, and many are closed on the [Labour Day holiday](#) in early September.

After you arrive

- Visit the [Airport Welcome Booth](#) when you arrive at Pearson Airport.
- Learn about the [University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP), and print your policy card](#).
- Get your [U of T student card (TCard)](#), activate your [UTORid](#), and get connected to [U of T wireless](#).
- Get familiar with [phone plans](#).
- Visit the international centre at your campus:
  - St. George campus: [Centre for International Experience](#) (CIE)
  - Mississauga campus: [International Education Centre](#) (IEC)
  - Scarborough campus: [International Student Centre](#) (ISC)
- Attend [orientation events for international students](#).
• Attend your College, Faculty, Program or special orientation events.
• Learn about health services for all students at U of T:
  o St. George campus Health & Wellness Centre
  o UTM campus Health & Counselling Centre
  o UTSC campus Health & Wellness Centre
• Get to know your Registrar’s Office.
• Explore social media about student life at U of T:
  o St. George campus: Facebook, Twitter
  o UTM campus: Facebook, Twitter
  o UTSC campus: Facebook, Twitter

Questions?

If you have any questions before you arrive about any of the information on this page, you can contact an international transition advisor who can help clarify information, provide more details or help put you in touch with the right person at U of T.

After you arrive, an international transition advisor can also help you adjust to university life and life in Canada.

For students studying on the St. George campus, you can also connect directly with other Student Life departments.