

Information for INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



Updated: February 2023

Preparing for your travel to Canada

Eligibility

Before you travel to Canada, make sure you are [eligible to enter](#) and that you have all the documents you need. To enter Canada as a student, **you must:**

- have a valid study permit or a [letter of introduction](#) that shows you were approved for a study permit, [unless you don't need one](#); and
- be attending a [designated learning institution](#).

We encourage you to travel to Canada as early as possible after you receive your documents, to avoid the busy travel period in late August, early September, and in early January.

Documents Required

If you have applied for a study permit (and work permit, if applicable) and have not yet received your visa and/or letter of introduction, **do not travel to Canada until you have received these documents**. Be sure to review all your documentation and ensure your information is correct before travelling. If not, please contact [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#).

Have in your possession all of the documents required **before** you travel to Canada. **Do not place any of these documents in your checked luggage.**

To enter Canada, you must have:

- a valid travel document, such as a passport
- the port of entry letter of introduction the visa office sent you when they approved your study permit or a valid study permit if it was previously issued
- a copy of a valid letter of acceptance from your school
- a valid [electronic travel authorization](#) (eTA), a valid visa, a valid green card (or [equivalent official proof of U.S. status](#)) or another valid travel document
- proof of funds to support your stay in Canada
- no criminal or immigration-related convictions (unless pardon has been granted or deemed rehabilitated)
- valid immigration medical exam results, if applicable ([find out if you need one](#)) and be in good health.



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If you do not have all of these documents, you may experience delays during the immigration processing and/or you may be refused entry.

What to expect when you arrive to Canada

When you arrive in Canada, you may experience longer border processing wait times in order to complete all necessary paperwork.

A border services officer (BSO) will direct you to where you need to go to complete your study permit application. Some airports have a special processing area for international students arriving in Canada. Please watch for signage that may be directing you to this designated area.

Once you receive your study permit, before leaving the student processing desk, make sure to carefully review the information indicated on the permit and correct any errors.

Social Insurance Number

To work in Canada or to access government programs and benefits, you require a nine-digit number known as a Social Insurance Number (SIN).

Apply for your SIN

You can apply for your SIN using one of these options:

Online

Applying online for your SIN is quick and easy. The [eSIN portal](#) offers a secure and protected environment where you can complete your SIN application and upload digital copies of your documents.

In person

Service Canada may be in your community offering one of their clinics that issue a SIN at educational institutions or community organizations near you. Contact the International Student Centre at your educational institution for more information.

If you are unable to apply online or attend a SIN clinic, we recommend you [book an appointment](#) at a nearby Service Canada Centre and bring all the [required documents](#).

By mail

You can choose to mail your completed [SIN application form](#) and all required documents to the Social Insurance Registration Office. For more details, visit [Social Insurance Number – Apply](#).

Once your application is complete, Service Canada will issue a paper confirmation that includes your unique SIN. Your SIN is confidential and you should protect it.

To learn more about the SIN and how to apply visit: [Social Insurance Number – Overview - Canada.ca](#)