

STUDYING IN CANADA (Master's / PhD Pathway)

A Practical Guide for Graduate Students: Minimize Costs & Maximize Success

STEP 1: WHEN TO START

Start early—ideally in the final year of your bachelor's degree.

Fae's timeline:

- August 2021: Started research
 - September 2021: Took TOEFL
 - November 2021: Applied to universities
 - March 2022: Received offers
 - April 2022: Applied for a study permit
 - August 2022: Moved to Canada
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STEP 2: FIND THE RIGHT UNIVERSITIES

- You don't need agents. Use official university websites.
 - Fae personally checked every university website in Canada.
 - Make a shortlist based on your field, supervisor fit, and funding potential.
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STEP 3: MINIMIZE YOUR COSTS

A. Don't Ask for Funding in the First Email

- Instead, express interest in their research.

- Ask for a Zoom meeting/interview.
- During the meeting, ask, “What are the department’s and your lab’s funding policies for graduate students?”

B. Look for These Funding Sources:

- **Research Assistantship (RA):** Paid by your supervisor’s research grants.
 - **Teaching Assistantship (TA):** Paid by the university.
 - Fae received both an RA through her supervisor and a TA by teaching undergrad courses.
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STEP 4: ESTIMATE YOUR LIVING COSTS

- Use tools like Numbeo to compare cities.
- Consider tuition, rent, food, transport, insurance, etc.

Why Alberta?

- Lower cost of living at the time.
 - The University of Calgary was ranked #169 globally.
 - Fae loved the cold climate and mountain views.
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STEP 5: GET A PART-TIME JOB

- You can legally work up to 20 hours/week (off-campus or on-campus).
- Fae got a tutoring job in her **first week** with a great interview and cover letter.
- A year later, she was promoted to **manager** at the same company.

- ♦ *Note:* Jobs are harder to find now and won't cover everything—but they help.
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STEP 6: IMMIGRATION PAPERWORK

- Write your **statement of purpose** and **resume** yourself (Fae did and has shared hers on this website).
- Take **TOEFL** or **IELTS**—Fae scored 107/120 on TOEFL in Iran.
- **No GRE** required for most Canadian schools.

When applying for your visa:

- Show enough savings (proof of funds).
 - Convince the officer you'll return to your country (even if it's not true).
 - Avoid showing strong ties to Canada (they may think you'll claim asylum).
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FINAL ADVICE

- Don't waste money on immigration consultants who don't care about your outcome.
 - You can do this yourself with time, honesty, and strategic planning.
 - Even without family support, it's possible. Fae did it—and so can you.
- PROJECT NEEK