

AHASoc: Placement guides

Canada



Who to contact if interested?

The Study Abroad & Exchanges team on studyabroad@st-andrews.ac.uk, who will be able to answer any questions on the application procedure. They will also be able to put you in touch with students just back from Canada, and those who are here in St Andrews from Canada on exchange.

Who is eligible? Academic requirements?

Most second-year undergrad students are eligible to spend their third year in Canada on exchange. While a certain level of academic achievement is generally considered necessary, in reality it only needs to be high enough to guarantee admission into Honours. Consistent scores of 14 or above will satisfy.

However the admissions team will also be looking for signs that candidates are capable of living away from home for prolonged periods of time. That said, this does not mean you must have done so before.

Where can you study?

You can study at three high-quality institutions in Canada: Queen's University in Kingston (situated in Ontario halfway between Toronto and Montréal, on the shore of Lake Ontario), the University of Toronto (situated in downtown Toronto), or at the University of Western Ontario (in London, Ontario, halfway between Toronto and the Windsor on the US border).

Websites:

www.queensu.ca

www.utoronto.ca

www.uwo.ca

What can you study?

All three universities offer a wide range of course options that should meet the academic requirements of St Andrews students. In fact, owing to their greater size, it is likely that students will get much more choice of module options than they would have in St Andrews. Look closely over their course offerings; it may be that courses are offered in other schools that can also meet St Andrews requirements.

Application procedure? Deadlines? References? Interviews?

In the first instance you will need to decide what universities you want to go to. Talk to students who have been, and decide on an order of preference. Make sure you can explain why you have chosen your universities, as this is a common interview question.

Then you need to fill in the application form from the study abroad team, and get your permission to study abroad from the school(s) you intend to enrol in for Honours. You will also need to get two

academic references. Tutors are a particularly good place to start. This will need to be complete and submitted by the end of November.

Over Christmas you should hear whether you have been successful in going to interview, which are normally held around the January exam period. Here you need to prove that you really desire a place abroad at the universities you have requested, and that you will be able to keep up with the workload in Canada.

Shortly after this you should hear whether you have been successful in your application, together with which university you'll be heading to next year!

Fees - both in US/Canada and in St Andrews?

Studying in Canada exchange students will pay their usual full-year tuition fee to St Andrews (whatever that may be); there are no fees to pay to Canadian institutions. However, in addition to accommodation and food fees (which are roughly equivalent to St Andrews) Canadian universities may require you to enrol in a university health-insurance programme (in addition to any travel-insurance you may have). This can be fairly expensive, around £300 for the full year.

Permission from School to leave for a year? How to obtain?

Every school should have an exchange coordinator, whose name can be found from the school offices. You will need to seek their written permission to study abroad in Canada. They will usually grant this so long as your marks in first and second year illustrate that you have a good chance of gaining admittance into Honours. If you intend to graduate with a joint-honours degree you will need the permission of both schools.

Funding? Any aid available stateside? Scholarships etc.

Canadian Robert T Jones scholarships are available to all students exchanging between St Andrews and both the University of Western Ontario and Queen's University, on submission of a short essay. They are valued at C\$5500, payable in two instalments once in Canada.

Accommodation? What can one expect - Halls/ Private residence?

Hall accommodation is available, however as with every university quality is variable and prices tend to be around St Andrews level, or slightly higher once optional meal plans are included. Is choosing this route it is important to study the information available on the university website carefully to see what is included and to think about how you prefer to live. Will you be happy with set meal times for example? Try to seek out information from students from your university of choice.

Some universities offer hybrid accommodation in the form of university managed houses which may offer a good blend of independence when there but security before departure.

Again personal recommendations are well worth seeking.

If you are brave then it is possible to pick up good quality private accommodation on arrival, however this can be an extremely stressful situation to be in and is a huge gamble. Prices do however tend to be much lower than St Andrews.

Visas? Necessary? What kind? Where to obtain one?

You will need a study permit from the Canadian Embassy/High Commission in your country of residence to study in Canada for a year. This can take some time collecting the required paperwork – the most important elements are information from your chosen Canadian university detailing your status as an exchange scholar, and guarantees of your ability to support yourself financially while in Canada. This can then be posted, and you should receive your acceptance by post some weeks later. No interview or health check is usually necessary.

It costs in the region of C\$120 which is not refundable in the event of refusal. You will be given your Study Permit on arrival in Canada. Further information for UK residents is available here:

http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/united_kingdom-royaume_uni/visas/study-etude.aspx?lang=eng

This is normally valid for a couple of months after the close of your course allowing you time to travel, however extensions can be requested once in Canada, and the international office at your university will be happy to advise you on this.

You will be allowed to work on campus with this permit, however if you intend to work off campus at any stage while in Canada you will need to apply for a work permit, which is relatively easy to get (again, ask at the international office for advice) but is slightly more expensive.

Practicalities - Mobile phones, Bank accounts, Health & Travel insurance

As mentioned above most Canadian universities will require you to enrol in a university health insurance scheme, although it is of course wise to have your own travel insurance for the full period you will be abroad as your university cover will expire quite soon after the end of term.

You will need to open a bank account while in Canada. It is worth having a think before choosing a bank as most charge for cash withdrawals from other bank's ATMs, so see which banks have ATMs on campus or in the most convenient locations before picking. E.g. at Queen's only TD Canada have ATMs on campus, so while we shouldn't recommend them directly, you may save some money by opening your account with them.

Pay as you go mobile phones tend to be more expensive in Canada than in the UK. Get ready for credit that expires after 30 days, and paying to receive calls. Take advantage of any money-off offers available, mail-in rebates for example, and consider carefully how to get the most from your money.

You will need to purchase cold-weather gear, however this need not cost a fortune. Most people survive without thermals, for most the crucial items are boots (walking in feet of salted snow will destroy shoes), a good-quality coat, as well as scarves, gloves and hats. Try second-hand stores and army surplus stores before winter bites, there are bargains to be found!