



ALPHA  
INTERNATIONAL  
ACADEMY

  
St. Lawrence  
College  
*an affiliate of*

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK

---

3405 Kennedy Road  
Toronto, ON M1V 4Y3  
416-640-0161  
[info@slc-alpha.ca](mailto:info@slc-alpha.ca)

# Welcome!

---

We are excited that you have chosen St. Lawrence College @ Alpha International Academy (AIA) to advance your career goals. We are confident that your stay with us will be a happy one with new friends, great faculty, challenging courses and enriching experiences. The staff and faculty at AIA are committed to helping you succeed.

We know that you have many questions about moving to a new country, a new city and a new place of study. This booklet will provide you with useful information and introduce you to your new home.

We are here to help you, so please do not hesitate to ask for any assistance you may require. We want you to learn, succeed, and fully experience everything we have to offer here at Alpha International Academy.

# Table of Contents

<b>Getting Started</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Before You Come .....	5
Arriving Here .....	5
Settling In.....	5
Orientation .....	5
Student ID Cards .....	6
<b>Holidays</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Student Services</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Printing Services.....	7
Computer Laboratory Access .....	7
Counseling.....	7
<b>Visas and Permits</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Proper Documentation.....	8
Applying for Documents.....	8
Study Permit .....	9
Studying without a Study Permit.....	9
Study Permit Requirements .....	9
Where to Apply .....	10
Study Permit Extension .....	10
Passport .....	11
Renewing your Visa (Temporary Resident VISA).....	11
Documentation for Your Family .....	11
Working in Canada .....	12
Travelling Outside of Canada .....	12
United States Visitor Visa.....	12
Re-entering Canada after Visiting the United States.....	12
Visiting countries other than the United States of America .....	12
<b>Finances</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Transferring Funds to Canada.....	13
Paying Tuition Fees.....	13
Opening a Bank Account.....	14
Canadian Currency.....	15
Local Banks .....	15

Writing a Cheque .....	17
Traveler’s Cheques.....	17
<b>Living Here.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Climate and Clothing Considerations.....	18
Clothing .....	18
Electrical/Electronic Appliances.....	18
Transportation .....	18
Toronto Transit Commission (TTC).....	18
York Region, Mississauga, Brampton Transit .....	19
GO Transit .....	19
Long Distance Travel .....	19
Taxi .....	19
Cycling .....	19
Driving.....	20
Access to a Car.....	20
Medical Insurance.....	21
Finding a Place to Live .....	21
There are many housing options available for you both near campus and near downtown. Please take the time to research your options so that you can decide what type of housing best suits your needs, budget and lifestyle. It is your responsibility as a student to locate and secure housing. ....	21
Renting: Rights and Obligations.....	21
Apartments.....	22
Signing a Lease .....	22
Rental Costs .....	22
Housing Tips.....	23
Making Local Calls.....	23
Cellular Phones.....	23
Making International calls.....	24
<b>Canadian Law .....</b>	<b>25</b>
Fundamental Freedoms: .....	25
Responsibilities: .....	25
Legal Rights: .....	25
Discrimination:.....	26
Drug and Alcohol Laws.....	26

Tobacco Laws .....	27
<b>Canadian Social Customs &amp; Culture .....</b>	<b>27</b>
Time.....	27
Greetings .....	27
Tipping/gratuity .....	28
Culture Shock .....	28
Stages of Adjusting to a New Culture .....	28
<b>General Living .....</b>	<b>29</b>
Shopping .....	29
Dinning .....	30
Cleaning .....	30
Laundry .....	30
Dry Cleaning .....	31
House Cleaning.....	31
<b>The Canadian Classroom .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Student Services Documents.....</b>	<b>32</b>
Transcripts .....	32
Confirmation of Enrolment Letter .....	32
<b>Contact Information .....</b>	<b>32</b>

## Getting Started

### Before You Come

As soon as you receive your acceptance to St. Lawrence College @ Alpha International Academy, you should start getting ready for your period of study here with us in Toronto. You should have the following ready upon your arrival:

- Study Permit and Visa if applicable, from your nearest Canadian Embassy or Consulate
- Travel bookings and arrangement for your luggage, if shipped separately
- Local banking and fund transfer arrangement
- Airport transportation
- Living arrangements

### Arriving Here

At your port of entry you must show the officials of Citizenship and Immigration Canada all your documents. Be sure to have them on your person and do not pack them into your luggage.

- CIC letter of introduction, which shows your Study Permit reference number, issued by the CIC office abroad
- Passport, make sure it's valid
- Temporary Resident Visa, if required
- Letters or papers used to obtain your Study Permit e.g. Acceptance letter

### Settling In

After you are settled in your new living space, there are still more to do before you can fully start your studies.

- Contact your family to let them know you have safely arrived
- Call or visit Alpha International Academy
- Attend Orientation Day
- Send your photo to receive your Student ID Card
- Pay Tuition Fees
- Claim your e-mail account
- Open a Bank Account
- Register for Health Care insurance
- Pick up a copy of your timetable and calendar

### Orientation

Orientation is held on the first day of classes. This is a chance for you to have a tour of the premises and to learn more about our school. You can meet with other students, staff members, and faculty, in order to become more familiar with your learning environment.

## Student ID Cards

The student ID card is issued to you as a full time student when you come to St. Lawrence College @ Alpha International Academy. You must send a clear photo of yourself (with a solid, preferably white background such as in a passport photo) in an e-mail attachment to photo@slc-alpha.ca. You should receive your photo ID Card within 2-3 weeks provided that the photo has been accepted. The card is kept for the duration of your studies and is to be used only by the person to whom it is issued. A fee is charged to replace lost or damaged cards. You may also need to present your ID card when writing tests on campus.

## Holidays



This section outlines some important Canadian holidays. The college may not be open on these days. Government agencies and major businesses may also be closed on statutory days.

**New Year's Day** – January 1. Celebration of the New Year. Celebrations usually occur on December 31. People often make New Year's resolutions (a decision to make a change in your life, example, to quit smoking). Statutory.

**Valentine's Day** – February 14. It is considered a romantic holiday. Celebrated in honour of Saint Valentine it is a time for sending gifts or cards to loved ones.

**Family Day** – Third Monday of February. This is a holiday that you spend with your family and is celebrated. Statutory.

**Good Friday** – The Friday prior to Easter Sunday. It marks the day that Jesus Christ was crucified. Statutory.

**Easter Sunday** – A Sunday between March 22 and April 25. It is an important Christian Holiday. Statutory.

**Victoria Day** – A public holiday in Canada, celebrated on the Monday on or before May 25th, Queen Victoria' birthday. Often celebrated with fireworks. Statutory.

**Canada Day** – July 1. Marks the anniversary of the establishment of the Canadian Confederation in 1867. Also celebrated with fireworks. Statutory.

**Civic Holiday** – In most Canadian provinces, a public holiday. Celebrated the first Monday in August. Statutory.

**Labour Day** – The first Monday in September is a holiday honouring Canada's working men and women. Labour Day weekend is regarded as the last weekend of summer and most public schools begin classes the day after Labour Day. Statutory.

**Thanksgiving Day** – The second Monday in October is the traditional harvest Thanksgiving. Statutory.

**Halloween** – October 31. Festivities include dressing up in costumes, decorating your home and having children go door-to-door asking for candy.

**Remembrance Day** – November 11. A day to honour those who fought for Canada in the First World War (1914- 1918), the Second World War (1939-1945), and the Korean War (1950-1953), as well as those who have served since then.

**Christmas** – December 25. A celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. On this day families spend time together and often exchange gifts with one another. If you would like to celebrate Christmas day with a Canadian family please contact International Student Services. Statutory.

## **Student Services**

### **Printing Services**

Our front desk staff will help to put printing credits in your student account, and you can then send your prints as attachments (Work, PDF, JPEG) to [printer1@slc-alpha.ca](mailto:printer1@slc-alpha.ca). Your attachments will be printed automatically from the designated student printer. Each page costs 25 cents, single sided, in black and white.

### **Computer Laboratory Access**

Anyone can access the computers in the computer lab at AIA as long as there are no workshops or classes using the computer lab, located on the second floor. There is no log-in required.

### **Counseling**

Counselors are available to all students at AIA. We want to help you succeed while you are studying with us. If you have a concern or issue that is personal, financial, academic, or immigration-related that is too difficult to handle alone, it could interfere

with your educational goals and your student experience here. We will be happy to work with you to explore possible solutions and all discussions are kept strictly confidential.



## Visas and Permits

The Citizenship and Immigration Canada website has all the information about your status in Canada and provides the forms you need for a Study Permit, visa extension and renewal. You can visit the website for Visa requirements, office locations, and processing times.

[www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)

1-888-242-2100

## Proper Documentation

It is a violation of immigration regulations if a foreigner was to arrive in Canada claiming to be a visitor and then attending or sitting-in on classes.

**IMPORTANT:** Students must get the appropriate immigration documents **BEFORE THEY ENTER CANADA.**

## Applying for Documents

As soon as St. Lawrence College @ Alpha International Academy accepts you as a student, you should apply for the documents you need to enter Canada.

As an international student, it is important that you are aware of Canada's immigration regulations and the conditions of your stay. If you fail to comply with the conditions stated on your Study Permit or Work Permit, the authorization can be cancelled and you may be required to leave Canada.

It is your responsibility to see that your passport and permits remains valid during your stay in Canada. All forms are available on [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca).

## Study Permit

International students must obtain a Study Permit **before entering Canada**. The time it takes to process your application could take up to 6 months. The Canadian Embassy, High Commission, or Consulate in your home country will be able to give you an application form and confirm waiting times.

A **Study Permit** allows you to stay in Canada for a specific period of time for the purpose of studying at a Canadian educational institution. International students must apply for a Study Permit at the nearest Canadian Embassy or Consulate outside of Canada and the Study Permit must be approved before entering Canada. The only exceptions to this rule are that citizens of the USA, St. Pierre et Miquelon and Greenland may obtain a Study Permit at a Canadian port of entry when entering Canada.

## Studying without a Study Permit

If you are registered in a program that will be completed in **6 months or less** you are not required to obtain a Study Permit. You need to be aware that you **cannot** continue your studies past the 6 months for which you are authorized to be in Canada.

If you wish to continue studying in Canada for more than 6 months, you must apply for a Study Permit **outside** of Canada. It is NOT possible to have a Study Permit issued from within Canada. If you think you might want to extend your study time past 6 months please apply for a Study Permit before you arrive.

## Study Permit Requirements

- Proof of identity (valid passport)
- Your Letter of Acceptance from St. Lawrence College
- A completed application form
- Proof that you have enough money to cover your tuition and living expenses for you and your dependants, if any (letter from your bank or bank statement)
- A medical examination, if requested
- Payment of a processing fee for the Study Permit

You may also need, if requested:

- A letter of reference from a dependable person in your community for entry into Canada. The Canadian Embassy, High Commission or Consulate in your country will be able to give you more information on this.
- A letter from your sponsor. If someone is sponsoring your trip to Canada and studies, Citizenship and Immigration Canada will need to see a letter of evidence.

International students changing institutions within Canada who already hold a valid Study Permit are not required to apply for a new Study Permit.

### **Where to Apply**

Once you have obtained these documents, you can apply for a Study Permit at the nearest Canadian Embassy, High Commission or Consulate. The CIC website provides a list of the Canadian worldwide visa offices.

### **Study Permit Extension**

If you need to extend your Study Permit to complete your studies you must apply for an extension. **DO NOT LET YOUR STUDY PERMIT EXPIRE.**

When you are in Canada, forms for renewing Study Permits are available by calling the Case Processing Centre in Vegreville, Alberta (**1-888-242-2100**) and making a request for an application to be mailed to your home address. Forms can also be downloaded from the CIC website.

Applications to renew Study Permits must be mailed to the Case Processing Centre in Vegreville, Alberta for processing. For mailing address, questions, and status updates, call: 1-888-242-2100.

**IMPORTANT:** You should apply for an extension **at least** 30 days before the expiry date of your status in Canada. It is **YOUR** responsibility to ensure you have up-to-date and valid documentation to study in Canada.

### **What you will need:**

- Full details of why you want to stay longer
- Photocopies of passport pages showing name, date of birth, passport number, date of issue, date of expiry, and the stamp made by Canadian immigration officers your most recent entry to Canada
- Copy of your current Study Permit
- Letter from the school indicating confirmation of acceptance and/or registration as a student, the program of study, start and completion date of the academic program, and any conditions of acceptance or registration
- Original transcripts, or photocopies of official transcripts, of the last two semesters of study (if applicable)
- Proof of financial support (e.g. a letter from a Canadian bank indicating your name, account balance and account number)

### **If your document expires before your application is processed**

If you applied before your status expires, you can remain in Canada until your application is finalized, with the same conditions.

### **Leaving Canada before you request for an extension has been finalized**

If you leave temporarily and your Study Permit has not been renewed, you will have to re-apply before you seek to re-enter Canada (either at the port of entry if you have the right to do so or at a visa office outside Canada) and pay another processing fee.

### **Passport**

A Passport is an identification document issued by your government. You must have a valid passport as it guarantees re-admission to your home country following your stay in Canada.

It is your responsibility to make sure that your passport remains valid during your stay in Canada. Pay close attention to the expiry date.

**NOTE:** Your Study Permit will not be extended beyond the expiration date on your passport, so be sure to renew your passport at least 6 months before it expires.

### **Renewing your Visa (Temporary Resident VISA)**

**A Visa is not the same as a Study Permit.** A Study Permit is a document that allows you to study in Canada. It is stapled to your passport when you arrive in Canada and it can be renewed within Canada. A Visa is a document that allows you to enter Canada. It is a shiny foil sticker in your passport and is either a single entry visa or a multiple entry visa. The expiry date on the Visa indicates the deadline date that the student has to enter Canada.

The Visa does not need to be renewed when it expires unless you are planning to leave and then re-enter Canada. This document must be renewed at a Canadian immigration office **outside of Canada** or **CPP- Ottawa**.

Before you visit another country, be sure to find out if you need to renew your Visa to re-enter Canada. Not all countries require a visa to enter Canada. More information can be found on [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca).

### **Documentation for Your Family**

If you plan to bring family to Canada with you, your family members will be subject to the same general immigration requirements that you are. You will be required to demonstrate that you have sufficient funds to support both you and your family while in Canada. Finances can be derived from family savings and any scholarships.

If your family will join you after your arrival in Canada, you will be required to send a letter of invitation to your family stating the length of time they will be in Canada. Also include a certified photocopy of your Study Permit, a letter from St. Lawrence College @ AIA confirming you are a registered student and any financial assistance you are receiving, a certified copy of your employment income (T4 slip), and/or an official bank

statement. Your family must then apply through the Canadian Embassy, or High Commission in their home country.

## **Working in Canada**

International students, studying in Canada, may be able to apply for an Off-Campus Work Permit to work after 6 months of full-time study in the 12 months preceding their application. For more information on the requirements and application details, please see the CIC website: [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca).

## **Travelling Outside of Canada**

### **United States Visitor Visa**

If you intend to visit the United States while you are studying in Canada, you **may** require a U.S. Visitor Visa depending on your country of citizenship.

A United States Visitor Visa can be obtained either from the United States Embassy in your country, before you come to Canada, or from the U.S. Consulate General.

You must make an appointment to apply in person at the consulate. Appointments can be arranged by calling 1-900-451-2778 or online at the website [www.nvars.com](http://www.nvars.com).

Please note: Your passport must be valid for at least six months longer than your intended period of stay in the U.S. The U.S. visitor's visa can take up to six weeks to obtain.

### **Re-entering Canada after Visiting the United States**

When you return to Canada after visiting the United States, the only documentation you will require to re-enter Canada is your valid Study Permit and Passport. **A new/valid visa is not required.**

Note: if you visited another country on the same trip the visa exemption **will not** apply.

If you are studying in Canada for less than 6 months and do not have a Study Permit, you will require proof that your Temporary Resident Status in Canada is current. The stamp in your passport allows you to stay in Canada 6 months from the date stamped, unless the immigration officer at the port of entry specified otherwise. Provided your stamp is still valid you can re-enter Canada without additional documentation.

### **Visiting countries other than the United States of America**

If you plan to visit countries other than the United States, be sure to check with the Embassy or Consulate of the country you will visit to ensure you have the required documents. If you require a visa, allow several weeks to obtain it. Regulations will vary depending on the country you are visiting and your country of citizenship.

## Finances

### Transferring Funds to Canada

The most efficient way to transfer funds to Canada is by 'Direct Transaction' between banks in your home country and a bank in Canada. This is called a 'Wire Transfer.'

To arrange a wire transfer you will need to open a bank account upon arrival in Canada, at a bank that has a relationship with your bank in your home country. Normally, it will take two to five days to receive money through a wire transfer.

### Paying Tuition Fees

If you wish to transfer funds from your home country to pay your tuition, you have two options:

#### 1. Bank to Bank Transfer (Wire Transfer)

Please advise your bank to transfer the money to one of the following banks in Canada to pay your tuition:

<b>Bank:</b>	<b>CIBC</b>
<b>Account Holder:</b>	<b>St. Lawrence Alpha Campus</b>
<b>Swift Code:</b>	<b>CIBCCATT</b>
<b>Transit Code:</b>	<b>02632</b>
<b>Account No.:</b>	<b>3003817</b>
<b>Institution No.:</b>	<b>010</b>
<b>Routing/ABA No.:</b>	<b>026009593</b>

Bank Address:

2904 Sheppard Ave E  
Toronto, ON. M1T 3J3  
Tel: 416 491 4546  
Fax: 416 491 6227

<b>Bank:</b>	<b>Toronto Dominion Bank</b>
<b>Account Holder:</b>	<b>St. Lawrence Alpha Campus</b>
<b>Swift Code:</b>	<b>TDOMCATTOR</b>
<b>Transit Code:</b>	<b>10850</b>
<b>Account No.:</b>	<b>5372804</b>
<b>Institution No.:</b>	<b>004</b>
<b>Bank Address:</b>	

220 Commerce Valley West  
Markham, Ontario L3T 0A8

Please provide the bank with the following information:

- **STUDENT FULL NAME (family name, first name)**
- **STUDENT NUMBER**
- **COLLEGE PROGRAM AND SEMESTER**
- **AMOUNT OF FUNDS BEING TRANSFERRED**

## **2. Bank Drafts, Certified Cheques or Money Orders**

Bank drafts, certified cheques or money orders are payable to Alpha International Academy.

<b>NOTE:</b> Personal cheques are not accepted.
---

### **Other ways to pay for your tuition fees:**

#### **Major Credit Cards**

The college accepts payments by VISA, MasterCard and American Express. Please provide necessary information with your registration payment form. Note: Service charges may be applicable depending on the amount of payment.

#### **Debit/Cash**

In person only – please do not send cash by mail. Please ensure that your debit limit is sufficient before making a payment.

### **Opening a Bank Account**

It's recommended to make an appointment at the bank before going.

To open a bank account, you will need to show:

1. Your student visa
2. Your passport
3. Your student card (or an acceptance letter from the St. Lawrence College)
4. Proof of your address

If you are depositing an international cheque, it will take approximately 20 days to clear. For this reason, we suggest that you carry sufficient funds in cash or travelers cheques, to pay for your books (tuition is probably already paid) and immediate living expenses including housing, food, transportation, basic clothing, etc.

After opening an account you will be issued an access or debit card. They can be used at ATMs to deposit or withdraw money and for shopping. You may also be eligible for a credit card which you can use for purchases on credit.

It is an immigration requirement for entry into Canada that you be able to finance yourself for the length of your studies. You must have sufficient funds for your tuition,

living expenses and transportation to and from Canada. If you have a Study Permit and/or a Work Permit you are not eligible for government-sponsored student loans or other forms of social assistance in Canada.

## Canadian Currency

The unit of currency in Canada is the Canadian dollar (\$). The Canadian dollar is divided into 100 cents. Newly arrived international students sometimes become confused with Canadian coins.

The Canadian coinage is as follows:

				
(Beaver) <b>Nickel – \$0.05</b>	("The Bluenose" Schooner) <b>Dime – \$0.10</b>	(Moose) <b>Quarter – \$0.25</b>	(Loon) <b>Loonie – \$1.00</b>	(Polar Bear) <b>Toonie – \$2.00</b>

Bills (paper notes):

Color	Value	Notation
Blue	5 dollars	\$ 5.00
Purple	10 dollars	\$ 10.00
Green	20 dollars	\$ 20.00
Red	50 dollars	\$ 50.00
Brown	100 dollars	\$100.00

Up until February 2013, Canada had a coin for 1 cent, the Penny (\$0.01). You may still see the copper coin but it is no longer in use. Values ending in 0.01, 0.02, 0.06, and 0.07 will be rounded down. 0.03, 0.04, 0.08, and 0.09 will be rounded up.

## Local Banks

The following are some of the many banks near AIA and around the city. For branch locations, hours, and contact information, please check their websites.

Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC)

[www.cibc.com](http://www.cibc.com)

Bank of Montreal

[www.bmo.com](http://www.bmo.com)

TD Canada Trust  
[www.tdcanadatrust.com](http://www.tdcanadatrust.com)

RBC Royal Bank  
<http://www.rbcroyalbank.com>

Scotia Bank  
[www.scotiabank.com](http://www.scotiabank.com)

Hong Kong Bank of Canada  
[www.hsbc.ca](http://www.hsbc.ca)



# Living Here

## Climate and Clothing Considerations

Weather in Toronto:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average Daily High °C	-1	0	5	12	18	24	27	26	21	14	8	2
Average Daily Low °C	-7	-6	-2	4	10	15	18	17	13	8	3	-3

Please keep in mind that the average daily temperature is not a true reflection of how the weather feels like. In the winter, the wind chill will can take the temperature down to -30°C or lower and in the summer, the temperature can sometimes reach over 40°C.

## Clothing

There is a very big difference between summer and winter in Toronto so you will need a full range of clothing for all 4 seasons. In the summer light-weight clothes are preferable and in the winter, jacket, scarves, gloves, and boots are highly recommended.

You can find detailed weather information for the Toronto area on the Environment Canada Web site: [www.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca](http://www.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca).

## Electrical/Electronic Appliances

Electricity in Canada is 110 volts, 60-cycle alternating current. If you come from an area with different voltages, please note that you will need to buy a transformer for your electrical/electronic appliances. The transformer can be costly. Therefore, you will need to decide which is cheaper: buying a transformer to adjust the voltage on your own appliance, or purchasing a new appliance in Canada.

## Transportation

### Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)

Transportation within Toronto is usually on the TTC. Fares can be in cash, tickets, tokens, or passes (day, week, or month). There is a special pricing available in monthly passes for students, please come see AIA staff for your proof of student status.

Fares are paid upon boarding your bus or entering the subway station. If you are not using a pass then you may require a transfer to board connecting routes. Your transfers

can only be used for a one-way trip and cannot be used on the route or station you obtained it from.

For more information including schedules and trip planning please see [www.ttc.ca](http://www.ttc.ca).

### **York Region, Mississauga, Brampton Transit**

For travelling within the regions around Toronto, it is better to use their own transit system. They all have own tickets and passes but there is a pass that you can use for all regions, including Toronto called the GTA pass. For more information, please refer to their websites.

York Region Transit: [www.yrt.ca](http://www.yrt.ca)

Mississauga Transit: <http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/miway>

Brampton Transit: <http://www.brampton.ca/en/residents/transit>

### **GO Transit**

GO Transit connects Toronto and nearby areas and special attractions.

[www.go transit.com](http://www.go transit.com)

### **Long Distance Travel**

VIA Rail, Greyhound and Megabus will take you much further than GTA and other nearby cities. VIA is cross-Canada but eventually will be more expensive than taking the plane and also longer. Megabus offers special deals to cities like Montreal and New York. Greyhound is a more economical way of travelling.

[www.viarail.ca](http://www.viarail.ca)

[www.greyhound.ca](http://www.greyhound.ca)

[www.megabus.com](http://www.megabus.com)

### **Taxi**

If you need quick transportation to a destination that is fairly close or in a hurry, using a taxi service is a great idea. Keep in mind that taxis will cost a lot more than local transit. There is a base fare and the rest is by distance but may include waiting under engagement. When calling for a taxi you can ask for the fare in advance.

There are many companies operating in Toronto and they can be easily found through the Yellow Pages ([www.yellowpages.ca](http://www.yellowpages.ca)) or Google.

### **Cycling**

Bicycles are a popular form of transportation from spring through to fall and can often be purchased at a reasonable cost. A license is not necessary to own or ride a bike. Bike helmets are no required by law but are highly recommended. Lights are required for night cycling.

Cyclists in Toronto must ride on the road and not the side walk and must also follow traffic rules as a car.

Cyclists must take special care since drivers expect you to be following the rules of the road just as they are. Do not expect drivers of cars to be watching out for you. You are responsible for your own safety. Remember to ride single file and to signal before turning.

Your bike should be locked when it is not in use.

### **Driving**

A valid driver's license is required by law to drive a car or other motor vehicle. Possession of a driver's license and the privilege of driving is a major responsibility. The Registrar of Motor Vehicles, under the authority of the Motor Vehicle Act, issues and renews and suspends driver's licenses.

For information on obtaining a license please check the Ontario services website at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/driving-and-roads>.

### **Access to a Car**

Cars can be bought, leased or rented in Toronto. Regardless of how you access a car, insurance is **compulsory**.

For car owners and lessors, the insurance company issues a financial responsibility card (pink card), which must be produced when registering a vehicle or if stopped by a police officer. Automobile insurance rates vary considerably. Rental companies will work out insurance for short-term rentals.

There are severe penalties for driving a car without insurance.

If you want a car for a short period of time, a weekend trip, for example, you may want to consider a car rental. Most rental car agencies require drivers to be 25 years old for insurance purposes, in addition to a valid driver's license, a credit card or passport, and a deposit. Some companies will rent to students who are under 25, but over 21. Rental agencies are listed in the Yellow Pages of the telephone book under "Automobile Renting". Read the rental contract very carefully. Also, make sure that you and a Car Rental Representative thoroughly inspect the care BEFORE you rent it, making note of any scratches, etc.

In Toronto there are also a couple car sharing companies that will offer monthly memberships and anytime access to their cars. A quick search should be able to find them.

## Medical Insurance

In some countries, people are covered for medical or dental treatment without any cost. They go to a doctor, dentist or hospital and they receive treatment at no cost. This is **NOT** the case in Canada.

It is compulsory for all international students to purchase medical insurance and that may be done at AIA directly. For full-time students, the cost of the medical plan is included in the tuition. You can find out all about your insurance plan details and all other relevant information here: <https://www.inglestudents.com/alphaacademy>

## Finding a Place to Live



There are many housing options available for you both near campus and near downtown. Please take the time to research your options so that you can decide what type of housing best suits your needs, budget and lifestyle. It is your responsibility as a student to locate and secure housing.

### Renting: Rights and Obligations

You are responsible for paying the rent by the first day of the month. Your landlord must give you written notice of a rent increase 60 days before the increase becomes effective. Different rules apply for fixed term leases, year-to-year leases and long-term leases.

You are responsible for giving advance notice if you wish to vacate your apartment. For month-to-month leases, you must give your landlord notice in **writing**, one calendar month in advance. In a year-to-year lease, notice must be given at least 3 months before the anniversary date of the lease. Proper notice must be given to the landlord before the first day of the month. For example, giving notice on May 31 is sufficient to terminate the rental agreement effective June 30. However, should you give your notice on June 1, you will have to pay rent until July 31. Be very careful about these deadlines or you might end up paying an extra month's rent to the landlord.

If you rent a room rather than a self-contained apartment, there is no legislation covering increases or notices to vacate. A written agreement is wise.

## **Apartments**

Finding the right apartment that meets all your needs can be tricky. There are many things to take into consideration before you settle for a place to live. Please also refer to “A Newcomer’s Guide by the Government of Canada” for additional information.

[www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/guide/section-05.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/guide/section-05.asp)

Our best advice is to take your time and visit a number of places before making your decision and signing a lease. Here are a few points to consider before renting a room.

## **Signing a Lease**

You may be asked to sign a lease. In this case, you should be well-informed as to what to expect. Here are some tips on signing a lease:

- Once you agree to rent an apartment or a house, you may be asked to sign a lease. This legal document of one or two pages describes the rental property, outlines what is included and any options, such as parking and storage. It may also state whether pets or more people are allowed.
  - Most apartments are leased by the year, although some are rented monthly. You will probably need to pay the first and last month’s rent when you sign the lease.
  - Pay special attention to the parts that state exceptions and additions. You want to know exactly what you will pay for and what will be paid for by the landlord.
  - Be sure you know what the monthly rent payment includes. For example, is the electricity included, the water included, the parking included?
  - Also, find out whether you have to pay a fee if you leave before the lease term is over. You cannot usually break a lease agreement.
  - It is also likely you will be asked to provide a Canadian reference or have a co-signer sign the lease to guarantee your financial commitment.

## **Rental Costs**

Sharing an apartment with roommates can lessen living costs. If you decide to share accommodation with roommates, you may decide to purchase furniture together. If this is the case, it is wise to make agreements regarding ownership and financial repayments in advance. This will help avoid ownership/financial conflict if you decide to move out.

When renting accommodation, you will generally be required first and last month's rent and possibly be required to put down a damage deposit. If you leave the premises clean and in good condition, the damage deposit will be refunded to you.

Before moving in to your apartment, be sure to walk through it with your landlord and make a list of all the damages (*Tip: Some students also take a camera and take photos of the pictures as proof of the condition of the apartment*). The cost of repairing any damage after you move in and/or to clean will be deducted from your damage deposit when you move out, normal wear and tear excepted.

Utilities such as electricity, water, and heat may or may not be included in the rent. As a new user of these services, you may be required to pay an initial deposit. You will then be responsible for paying a monthly fee for use of each service. If they are not included then you will have to contact the local providers and organize the setup yourself.

Services such as phone, cable (TV), and internet will require you to negotiate on your own with the service providers.

## Housing Tips

Here are a few housing tips that might prove useful to you:

### 1. Ask lots of questions!

**For example:**

- Are heating and hot water included in the rent?
- Are there laundry facilities in the building?
- Is the apartment close to a bus stop?
- Does the rent include appliances?

2. Check appliances (refrigerator and stove) to make sure they are in working order before you sign the lease. Also check the taps for water pressure and hot water availability.

**NOTE:** When the landlord/agent asks for identification, show them your letter of acceptance from St. Lawrence College, your Study Permit and your passport. **Never give out your credit card number.**

## Making Local Calls

Local calls (within the city) require the 3 digits of the area code and the 7 digits of the phone number. If you wish to make a long distance within Canada and the United States, you must also dial 1 before the 10 digit number.

## Cellular Phones

There are many cell phone carriers in Canada that offer a variety of services and plans ranging from long-term contracts that include everything from internet and unlimited SMS packages to ones that only include voice calling with no contract. Offers change frequently, so shop around. Some stores, offer multiple cell phone providers and can help you compare.

Some popular cell phone providers in Ontario:

Bell Mobility: [bell.ca](http://bell.ca)

Rogers Wireless Express: [rogers.com](http://rogers.com)

Koodo: [koodomobile.ca](http://koodomobile.ca)

Telus: [telusmobility.com](http://telusmobility.com) Virgin Mobile: [virginmobile.ca](http://virginmobile.ca)

Wind Mobile: [windmobile.ca](http://windmobile.ca)

Fido Mobile: [fido.ca](http://fido.ca)

## Making International calls

To place international calls please dial 011 – Country code – Area code – Telephone number.

**TIP:** A good website that guides you step by step to call any country outside of Canada is <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/dialing.html>

### Common Country Codes

China	86	Nigeria	11	United Kingdom	44
Japan	81	South Korea	82	Pakistan	91
Mexico	52	Taiwan	886	Brazil	55

## Canadian Law

Canada is a multicultural country. You will see people from many different countries and backgrounds here. Canadians believe in tolerance and equality among people. Men and women are treated with equal respect.

### **Fundamental Freedoms:**

People in Canada enjoy the following fundamental freedoms: freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression; freedom of peaceful assembly; and freedom of association. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is included in the Constitution Act of 1982. International students enjoy the same freedoms.

### **Responsibilities:**

Along with these freedoms is the responsibility to both know and abide by the law. Ignorance of the law is not considered a valid excuse for breaking the law. Visitors to Canada who break the law will be treated the same as Canadians, and are subject to the same legal proceedings and penalties. Beyond the legal process, immigration authorities are entitled to prescribe their own separate proceedings. In serious cases, deportation could be the end result.

### **Legal Rights:**

You have legal rights in addition to the above stated fundamental freedoms: the right to be secure against unreasonable search and seizure; the right not to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned; the right upon arrest or detention (a) to be informed promptly of the reasons therefore, and (b) to retain and instruct counsel without delays and to be informed of that right, and (c) to have the validity of the detention determined by way of habeas corpus and to be released if the detention is unlawful.

These are only some of the legal rights recognized in the federal charter. Many provincial governments, including Ontario, have enacted their own human rights codes as well. You can read more about Canada's Charter of Human Rights from [http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/pdp-hrp/canada/guide/index\\_e.cfm](http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/pdp-hrp/canada/guide/index_e.cfm)



**Discrimination:**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states everyone can claim the rights under this declaration. Your rights are not limited by:

- Your gender
- Your sexual orientation
- Any mental or physical limitations
- Your race or color of skin
- The language you speak
- Your religious belief
- How much you own
- Your ethnic origin
- What country you are from

If you feel you have been the victim of any offence, please contact the office.

**Drug and Alcohol Laws**

The legal drinking age in Ontario is 19. Alcohol can only be purchased from “The Beer Store” (beer only, [thebeerstore.ca](http://thebeerstore.ca)) and from LCBO stores (beer, spirits and wine, [lcbo.ca](http://lcbo.ca)). To purchase or drink alcohol or to enter a bar you will likely have to show photo ID with your birth date, such as a passport. To avoid losing your passport it is recommended that you obtain a “Bring Your ID” card from the LCBO.

Most bars serve food and some offer entertainment, such as live music, DJs and dancing. In Ontario, alcohol may not be served earlier than 11 am or after 2 am, so many bars will close at that time on weekends, and earlier on weekdays. If a server at a restaurant or bar feels that a customer is becoming impaired, they have the right to refuse to serve that person more alcohol and may have you removed from the restaurant or bar.

Alcohol may not be consumed in public and there are strict laws against drinking and driving. Consequences of impaired driving are serious: you can lose your license, be fined or spend time in jail.

The use of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited in Canada, and the abuse of drugs or alcohol is a serious offence in Canada. If you are caught in possession of drugs you can be seriously penalized. There are also laws against over consumption of alcohol. You must never operate a vehicle after you have consumed alcohol. In regards to alcohol use, it is important that you remember not to:

- Carry open liquor (bottles of alcoholic beverages with the top off or seal broken) in a car
- Walk in a public place with open liquor
- Consume liquor in a non-licensed area
- Provide liquor to anyone under 19 years of age
- Behave in a disorderly manner while drinking on a licensed premises

- Refuse to take a breathalyzer test, which measures the content of alcohol in your body

## **Tobacco Laws**

In Ontario, you must be at least 19 years of age to purchase cigarettes and you may be asked to show photo identification to prove your age. Ontario has laws prohibiting smoking in all indoor public places and within an indicated distance around the entrances. This includes all restaurants, bars, shopping malls, and grocery stores. Violation of this law can result in a fine.



## **Canadian Social Customs & Culture**

Canada is known for its multiculturalism, with a population of people from many different origins. This multiculturalism makes Canada an ideal place to study, live and work. Canadians take pride in their individuality and many people who come to Canada maintain their customs and cultural identity. To make a smooth integration into your new community there are a few general guidelines that you should be aware of.

### **Time**

Canadians place a high priority on punctuality (being on time). When you have interview or appointment, it is customary to show up a few minutes earlier than the scheduled time. If you are unable to make the interview or appointment at the scheduled time or if you are unable to make it at all you would need to let the individual you are meeting know by calling as soon as possible.

### **Greetings**

Depending on the situation, there are a few guidelines when greeting people. A formal greeting (example: interviews, meeting colleagues) when meeting people for the first time could include shaking hands and a simple, 'nice to meet you'. An informal greeting is used when you have already met an individual or if you are among friends, Example, 'hi, how are you?' Usually no handshaking is involved.

## **Tipping/gratuity**

It is customary, if you are happy with the services you have received to give a small amount of money to the service employee (10-15% of the bill/cost). Tipping is usual in restaurants, clubs and taxi services and **not** in fast-food restaurants (example: McDonalds). If you do not tip it may suggest that you are unhappy with the service. When paying the bill check for a service charge already added. If a service charge has already been added this is the tip and there is no need to tip further.

## **Culture Shock**

The term "Culture Shock" refers to the anxiety produced when a person moves to a completely new environment. This term expresses the lack of direction, the feeling of not knowing what to do or how to do things in a new environment, and not knowing what is appropriate or inappropriate.

Like most students, you will experience a whole range of feelings and reactions when you first arrive. It is a normal reaction to what can be a drastic change in your physical, social, and cultural environment. Everyone reacts differently when placed in a new environment; some may experience culture shock to different degrees. You are not alone in feeling concerned about change.

Here are some things you can do to reduce culture shock.

- Learn about the new culture
- Approach the move with a good attitude. Be open to new ways.
- Develop a hobby – there are many different clubs or associations that you can get involved with in your community
- Learn to include regular physical activity and time to relax in your routine
- Increase contact with the new culture such as volunteering
- Give yourself lots of time to accomplish the things you need to do. You will find it easier and less stressful if you do not try to complete too many tasks in one day.
- Make sure to get enough sleep
- Experiment with food slowly. New food can upset your stomach, so try to continue to eat some of the foods you ate at home and drink bottled water during your first 2 or 3 weeks in Canada.
- Call, write, or e-mail your family and friends. If you keep in touch with people at home, you will feel less homesick
- Ask questions. If you are unsure about something, ask someone. People are generally very willing to help, and asking questions will help you learn things more quickly, making your transition smoother
- Explore the city. The more you get to know the city and all it has to offer, the more at home you will feel
- If you feel stressed, look for help. There is always someone or some service available to help you.

## **Stages of Adjusting to a New Culture**

Honeymoon Period

You will probably be fascinated and excited by everything new in your surroundings. International students are usually elated to be in a new culture at first.

### Culture Shock

You are immersed in new problems: housing, transportation, food, language barriers, and new friends. Fatigue may result from continuously trying to comprehend and use a new language. You may ask yourself, "Why did I come here?"

### Initial Adjustment

You find problems such as housing and settling into classes are now manageable. Although you may not be perfectly fluent in the new language yet, basic ideas and feelings can be expressed.

### Mental Isolation

After you have been away from your family and friends for a long period you may begin to feel lonely. Many international students still feel they cannot express themselves as well as they can in their native language. Frustration and sometimes a loss of self-confidence can result.

### Acceptance and Integration

You have established a routine (i.e., work, school, social life). You have a good level of comfort with the habits, customs, food and behaviors of people in the new culture. You feel comfortable with friends, colleagues and the new language.

### Return Anxiety, Re-entry Shock, Reintegration

After having adjusted to and lived in the new culture for a long period of time, you must prepare to return home. This requires more adaptation and adjustment. Re-entry shock can be more difficult than the initial culture shock you experienced upon first arriving in the new culture.

## General Living

### Shopping

Stores are generally open 7 days a week with the exception of smaller, independent stores. Mall hours are generally from 10:00am to 9:00pm on weekdays and vary on the weekend depending on the mall. It is recommended to check the hours of the store you are going to, especially on holidays, before you leave home.

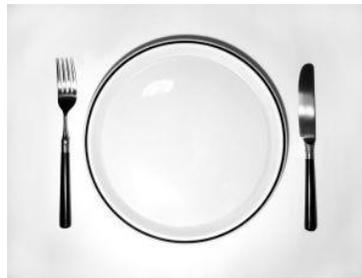
When purchasing, here are some points to remember:

- Always keep your receipt, items can be usually refunded or exchanged you're your receipt based on store policy. Some sales are final.
- Watch for sales! You can find real savings this way, but check the merchandise carefully to make sure it is not inferior or damaged in some way.

- Spend time looking around and comparing prices and quality of items before purchasing.
- Always check clothing tags and labels for laundering instructions, wrinkle resistance, colorfastness and other garment characteristics.

During summer and fall, look for garage or yard sales. People in your neighbourhood might be selling their used furniture and other household items at a low cost.

Bargaining for a better price is not common in Canada but there are some exceptions. For example, almost everyone bargains for a better price when buying a car or house, or other expensive items such as furniture. People who sell things privately may also bargain.



## **Dinning**

There are eateries of all price points and cuisines all over Toronto and the surrounding areas. Not all establishments will serve alcohol, only the licensed ones will. Taxes on your food will follow the regular 13% as applicable on nearly all other purchases (except for fresh produce). Alcohol is taxed at 10%.

Tipping/Gratuity is the norm in Canada and is usually 10-15%. Tipping is mostly at sit-down restaurants but some smaller to-go places will also accept tips in little jars.

## **Cleaning**

### **Laundry**

Apartment Buildings have washers and dryers (coin or laundry card operated) for the resident's use. If you are living in a place that does not have a washer and dryer, check for a laundromat near you. Laundromats contain a number of coin-operated washers and dryers. Most public laundromats supply washing detergents or bleaches from coin operated machines but it will be cheaper to take your own large box of detergent to the laundromat with you.

## Dry Cleaning

For those items of clothing that cannot be washed, such as coats and suits, this can be done by any of the Dry Cleaners listed in the Yellow Pages of the telephone directory ([www.yellowpages.ca](http://www.yellowpages.ca))

## House Cleaning

The simplest way to keep your apartment/room/house cleaning time to a minimum is to choose mild, all-purpose cleaners as well as a site-specific cleaner i.e. toilet bowl disinfectant and a tub, sink and tile cleaner. Remember, product labels are your best source of information. The name usually says exactly what the product will do.

List of essentials:

- Non-abrasive, all-purpose cleaner ideally in a spray bottle. These are effective on moderately soiled, washable surfaces i.e. cabinets, floors, stovetops, painted walls, countertops and woodwork.
- Toilet bowl cleaner
- Disinfectant. These and chlorine bleach are the only household cleaners that will kill surface bacteria and viruses. In order for a cleaning product to have the word “disinfectant” on its label, it must meet government specifications for effectiveness in killing microorganisms.
- A bottle of liquid dishwashing detergent
- Window and glass cleaner in a spray bottle

## The Canadian Classroom

Students find their experience in Canada different in the following ways:

Course organization varies and is determined by the professor. Students are given a course outline, which details readings and evaluation methods. Often students find that grades are based on various requirements and class participation. It is expected that students will use outside sources to supplement course readings.

**Grades are based on assignments, tests, mid-term, and final exams.** In addition some courses require research papers or presentations, group projects and participation in classroom discussion.

**Relationships with faculty are informal.** Professors encourage discussion and appreciate students asking questions in class and are generally approachable. It is a good idea to communicate with your professors regularly about your progress and any difficulties you may be encountering. All professors have office hours and most communicate with their students via e-mail. Students are given the opportunity to evaluate professors and/or teaching assistants at the end of each course.

**Students behave informally in the classroom,** For example, they may sit in class with their feet on the chair or desk, eat, drink, or even sleep! Students may interrupt lectures

to ask questions or even to raise objections to what is being said. In general, these behaviors denote disrespect when done in a belligerent or aggressive manner. In fact, one way in which a student can show respect for his or her teacher is by being an active participant in class.

**Plagiarism**, defined as the use of the work or ideas of another without acknowledgement (giving credit).

Some examples are: Submission of another's work as one's own, in part or whole, or paraphrasing reproducing another's work without proper acknowledgement.

**NOTE:** Plagiarism as a serious offence and could result in expulsion from the school. For complete information, please refer to AIA's Academic Policy.

## Student Services Documents

### Transcripts

In order to get a copy of your school transcript, you must fill out a transcript request form. These are available at the front desk or on the College's website. After you have completed the form, you can take it to Student Services and they will let you know when it will be ready for pick up.

### Confirmation of Enrolment Letter

You can request a Confirmation of Enrolment Letter at the front desk or by calling student services at 416-640-0161. You will only receive one if you have paid your tuition fees and are officially enrolled for the semester.

## Contact Information

Alpha International Academy  
Admissions Office  
3405 Kennedy Road  
Toronto, Ontario  
M1V 4Y3  
Canada

Phone: 416-640-0161  
Fax: 416-640-1330

General Inquiries: [info@slc-alpha.ca](mailto:info@slc-alpha.ca)  
Admission/Registration: [admissions@slc-alpha.ca](mailto:admissions@slc-alpha.ca)  
Alpha International Academy: [www.slc-alpha.ca](http://www.slc-alpha.ca)  
St. Lawrence Main Campus: [www.stlawrencecollege.ca](http://www.stlawrencecollege.ca)