

# Canada's class

Canada's reputation for high quality innovative education courses, its stunning scenery and the friendliness of its people make it a firm favourite with overseas students, as Gillian Evans reports.

I think there are a few things that make lasting impressions [on] our students," asserts Crystal Sawyer at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) in Burnby, a 20-minute drive away from Vancouver. "They always comment on how wonderful it is to be surrounded by so much nature [and] they love the chance to make long-lasting friendships with local and other international students."

Rosa Sorace, Marketing Manager at Kester Grant College in Vancouver, which offers a unique English for polytechnic

preparation course, adds that it is easy for international students to feel at home in Canada. "Canada is a country of immigrants and has a tradition of encouraging multicultural diversity. Almost all of the world's ethnic groups are represented in Canada, which provides students with the opportunity to enjoy most ethnic foods, recreational activities, clubs and associations."

Indeed, most universities, polytechnics and colleges in Canada work hard to ensure their students feel at home in their new environment. At the University of Toronto, the International Students Center organises a whole range of exciting trips and events, including dog sleighing, ice-skating, canoeing, theatre outings, a trip to a maple farm and an excursion to Niagara Falls. "The highlight of [students'] stay in Toronto,

in my opinion, is the breadth of activities and events that are available to [them]," says Jane Lawless at the university.

Similar activities are organised at Brandon University in Brandon City, Manitoba. "All the events [organised by the International Student's Organisation] expose [students] to quite distinctive aspects of Canadian culture," says David McLeod at the university's Office of International Activities.

With just over 3,000 students in total, Brandon University is "a relatively small university by Canadian standards", says McLeod. Most of their international students study business or computer science. "Our business programme incorporates a substantial liberal arts and science component compared with many others, and this exposes students to a background that is very useful in [a] modern, technology-driven and fast-changing knowledge economy," says McLeod.

To equip international students with the requisite skills for living in Canada and knowing the country's business practices, Dalhousie University's School of Business in Halifax has commissioned a private language school, the International Language Institute, to provide a series of classes in business English for non-native speakers, which includes culture, business practices and customs.

Outside of classes there is plenty for students to do, says Mary Hamblin at the School of Business. "Halifax is a wonderful port city for the university experience, with six other universities located here, so there are many people to meet. Many students come here to study and plan to remain here, because they fall in love with Halifax and Nova Scotia. [Some love] the northern climate – snow and ice from January to March and fall leaf colours in September and October".

At the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Director of Recruitment and Admissions, Alison Pickrell says that although their winters are cold, "we know how to have a lot of fun in the snowy weather". She also points out that their summers are "quite hot". The university has an extensive range of facilities for students, including two gyms and swimming pools, tennis courts, jogging trail and several eateries. It offers courses in over 100 different areas of study at bachelor,

## Selection of institutions in Canada

	Pay agency commission	No. of students	% int. students
Brandon University, Brandon, Manitoba	✓	3,224	3
British Columbia Inst. of Technology, Vancouver, BC	✓	50,000	n/a
Columbia Academy, Vancouver, BC	✓	190	15
Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia		12,000	20
Kester Grant College, Vancouver, BC	✓	1,500	n/a
Queen's University, Kingston, ONT		18,649	5
Royal Roads University, Victoria, BC	✓	2,250	2
University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK		19,500	5
University of Toronto, Toronto, ONT		49,500	5

## Agent comments

"We mainly send students to St Mary's University, University of Victoria, Queens University and Carleton University in Canada. The most popular undergraduate subjects are business administration, IT, computer engineering and political science. The most popular areas [among our students] are Toronto, Vancouver and neighbouring provinces, because of the climate and well-known educational institutes [there]. Our students mostly like the friendly teachers, amazing school environment and making friends from lots of different [countries]."

**Özge Yücel, Global Visions International Education Counselling Service, Turkey**

"We send students to Humber College, Pitman Business College and the University of Victoria, mainly for marketing and business administration courses. Toronto is most popular with our students because it is the biggest city and the students like that. Our students general choose to study in Canada because of the quality of life and study [opportunities] and nowadays the [favourable] price. Students enjoy the people, their hospitality, the education, the clean cities and a country that is very positive in all ways."

**Juliana Ribeiro, GlobalWay, Brazil**



masters and doctoral levels, and, according to Pickrell, is a world leader in the field of biotechnology.

Canadian education institutions in general benefit from a high quality reputation. The University of Toronto, for example, is the number-one ranked research-intensive university in Canada, according to the Canadian news magazine, *Mclean's*. In addition, its library system, which comprises more than 40 libraries, is rated one of the top five in North America and the most comprehensive in Canada.

Many Canadian institutions have been innovative in designing courses specifically for overseas students. Royal Roads University (RRU) in Victoria, British Columbia, which offers mostly masters programmes, has a full-time, on-campus MBA programme specially designed for students from China. The university itself is situated about 10 kilometres away from the centre of Victoria in the picturesque Hatley Park Historic Site, and its administration building is Hatley Castle. "Victoria is the site of a growing amount of television and movie production, and Hatley Castle is often used as a Hollywood film [location]," reports Art Hamilton, Director of International Programmes at the university.

For students looking for career-oriented training in broadcast media, Columbia Academy in Vancouver is a good choice as it specialises in courses in broadcast performing arts; digital video and TV production; and digital and analogue recording arts. "The most important aspect of our training is that it is 'hands on'," says Kelly Rainsforth, Principal at the academy. "Students do the real work that they are preparing to do in their careers."

Unlike many universities and colleges in Canada, Columbia Academy does not offer its students on-campus accommodation, but as it is located "right in the middle of the Broadway corridor in Vancouver" it is close to all amenities, says Rainsforth. And in their spare time, students make the most of the beauty of Vancouver. "Most visitors to Vancouver are amazed at how clean and beautiful the city is," says Rainsforth. "Snow-capped mountains are only 15 minutes away from the ocean-side beaches."

○ PHOTOGRAPH: CANADIAN TOURISM COMMISSION