

Health and beauty in Canada

Institutions offering health and beauty courses in Canada are seeing increasing international interest in their courses, although visa problems hamper growth.

The provision of health and beauty treatments, covering subjects such as cosmetics, hairdressing, massage, aromatherapy and beauty therapy, is a growth market worldwide, as members of richer nations seek new outlets for their increased wealth and leisure time. Colleges in Canada offering courses in this field have been noticing increasing interest from international students as the trend for health and beauty treatments spreads.

This is confirmed by Amy Lee-Lefebvre from LaSalle College Group in Montreal, who cites Korea and Japan as the biggest growth markets for their college which offers courses in hairdressing, esthetics and artistic make-up. She goes on to explain, "[This is] in part because of their culture and also the growing trend to follow North American trends."

Mark Avola, from Avola College of Hairstyling and Esthetics in Toronto, says that Japanese students have made up the largest student nationality on their esthetics course for the last three or four years, partly because "there are not any reputable esthetics schools in Japan".



International student markets are generally confined to a few, although Avola points out that this may be due to difficulties experienced in obtaining a student visa rather than a lack of interest from other nationalities. "Many people have enquired [about our courses] from other parts of the world [such as] Pakistan, India and Africa," he says, "but it seems as though it is very difficult for those people to obtain a student visa to come and study [in Canada]."

Ross McKay, from New Image Beauty School in Moncton, which has experienced lots of international interest in its courses since launching a new website, agrees. "Unfortunately, our immigration policies are too difficult for many to meet," he confirms.

Canada's reputation as a quality education provider as well as its high standard of living is instrumental in attracting international students. "Canada is ranked as one of the top countries to live in, taking into account [its] educational system, its life expectancy, national income and quality of life," says Lee-Lefebvre. However, Bill Head, from the Pollock School of Beauty in Winnipeg, believes health and beauty schools in Canada have a more specific allure for international students. "We believe that health and beauty schools in Canada tend to have higher standards and present more opportunities for graduates," he says.

Courses in esthetics instruct students in the art of manicure, pedicure, wax removal treatment, facial treatments and the application of make-up, and graduates of these and other health and beauty courses can find themselves able to take up a wide variety of different jobs, either at home or overseas. Head says, "Graduates of our programme go on to become staff hairstylists, salon owners, estheticians, product technicians, sales representatives, instructors, fashion consultants and competition judges."

Due to the constantly developing nature of the health and beauty industry, it is important that institutions in this field keep up to date with changing trends and requirements. "Both [hairstyling and esthetics] are always evolving with time and fashion and it is vital for a school to be aware of the changes if they want to be current," says Avola. Courses offered at LaSalle College are greatly influenced by the demands of students, according to LeFebvre. "Students are now more aware of trends because of the media and, as a result, demand more from the courses," she points out.

Course checklist

Qualifications - the most common types of qualification available for the health and beauty courses offered in Canada are certificates and diplomas, with diploma courses lasting from eight months to one year, and certificate courses taking less time than this. Private colleges in Canada are all regulated and approved by the authorities from the province in which they reside, which ensures the standard of education given. Graduates of certain courses may also qualify for membership of industry associations within Canada – such as the Federation of Holistic Therapies Canada.

Entry requirements - most of the institutions offering health and beauty courses do not have any formal entry requirements, especially for mature students, although a good command of English is generally considered to be essential. Certain personal characteristics such as good communication skills and a flair for fashion can also be useful. Courses that last for more than six months also require international students to apply for a student visa.

Typical course costs – As a guideline, a diploma in Esthetics (known as aesthetics in British English) lasting eight months costs: CAN\$5,500 (US\$3,544)

Selection of institutions providing health and beauty courses in Canada

	Location	Use agents	No. of students	% int. students
Avola College of Hairstyling and Esthetics	Toronto, ON	✓	50	4
Dominelli International College of Esthetics	Vancouver, BC	✓	60	17
Elegance School of Esthetics	Cornwall, ON		45	0
Erica Miller Spa School	Mile Ranch, BC	✓	20	50
LaSalle College Group	Montreal, QC	✓	500	15
New Image Beauty School	Moncton, NB		22	0
Pollock School of Beauty	Winnipeg, MB		65	5