

The Study and Practice of Psychology in Canada: Facts for Foreign Nationals

The information that follows is intended to assist non-Canadians interested in studying or working in Canada within the field of psychology. Its information is not authoritative. Persons wanting to come to Canada to live, study, or work must consult with Citizenship and Immigration Canada for definitive guidance (<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/>). Persons wanting to become licensed for practice as a psychologist in Canada must also consult with the regulatory body of psychology in the jurisdiction in which they want to work (<http://cpa.ca/public/whatisapsychologist/regulatorybodies>).

Studying Psychology in Canada

Undergraduate Studies

Undergraduate psychology courses are among the most popular of university courses and are available at all Canadian universities. However, psychology departments may differ in the number and kinds of psychology courses they teach or in the kinds of research undertaken by their faculty. Further, at some universities, psychology is in the faculty of arts, at some it is in the faculty of science, and at some a student can opt to pursue a major in psychology in arts or science. Each university sets its own requirements for undergraduate admission. Typically, it takes four years to complete an undergraduate degree with a major in psychology.

Whereas in some countries, a student may be able to gain entrance to a graduate programme in psychology with an undergraduate degree in another area of study, that is not the case in Canada. Students who want to pursue graduate studies will need to complete an *honour's* undergraduate degree in psychology, which typically involves the completion of an undergraduate thesis. Students wishing to pursue further studies are best advised to review the entrance requirements of the programmes that interest them to ensure they select the right undergraduate courses. Information about graduate programme offerings and requirements can be found at:

<http://www.cpa.ca/students/resources/graduateguide>

Graduate Studies

There are several specialties and sub-specialties of psychology at the graduate level. Before applying to graduate studies, it is important to consider in which specialty area you would like to focus. The psychology department at the university where you are completing your undergraduate studies likely has a faculty or staff member who acts as a counsellor or advisor to students and who should be able to provide you with some career direction or advice.

It typically takes two years to complete a master's degree and up to another four years to complete a doctoral degree. Doctoral degrees in any of the professional areas of psychology (e.g. clinical psychology, counselling psychology, school psychology, clinical neuropsychology) have practicum and internship requirements in addition to coursework and research requirements. Average time to completion of both a masters and doctoral degree in a professional area of psychology is seven years. More information about becoming a psychologist can be found at:

<http://www.cpa.ca/students/career/becomingapsychologist>

Competition for admission to graduate programmes in psychology can be stiff. Canadian doctoral programmes in professional areas of psychology accept approximately 10% of applicants. The student pages of CPA's website contain more detailed and valuable information about the study of psychology and becoming a psychologist (<http://www.cpa.ca/students/resources>).

Government of Canada Requirements

To be eligible to study in Canada, there are a few things to consider:

- You must have been accepted by a designated learning institution in Canada.
- You must prove that you have enough money to pay for:
 - your tuition fees;
 - your living expenses;
 - living expenses for any family members who come with you to Canada; and
 - return transportation for yourself and any family members who come with you to Canada.
- You must be a law-abiding citizen with no criminal record and not be a risk to the security of Canada. You may have to provide a police certificate.
- You must be in good health and willing to complete a medical examination, if necessary.
- You must satisfy an immigration officer that you will leave Canada at the end of your authorized stay.
- You must be legally eligible to study in Canada through a student, family, or global representative visa.

To learn more about the requirements to study in Canada, please refer to Citizen and Immigration Canada's (CIC) resources: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/index.asp>

Licensure and Accreditation

Licensure and accreditation are important considerations for those pursuing a career in a professional area of psychology leading to practice. To practice and call oneself a psychologist in Canada, one must seek and become licensed (often called registration or chartering) from the regulatory body of psychology in the area of the country where one intends to practice. Information on the licensure of psychology in Canada can be found at: <http://www.cpa.ca/practitioners/practiceregulation>

CPA Accreditation

CPA accreditation is a voluntary process available to doctoral programmes and internships in professional psychology that enables them to demonstrate they have met the standards and procedures deemed requisite for training professional psychologists for practice. A listing of those programmes accredited by the CPA can be found at: <http://www.cpa.ca/accreditation/CPAAccreditedprogrammes>

More detailed information about CPA accreditation can be found at: <http://www.cpa.ca/accreditation/>

The Canadian regulatory bodies of psychology have recently passed a position statement on the national standard for entry to practice as a psychologist in Canada. This national standard includes graduation from a programme accredited by the CPA. The statement can be found here: <http://www.acpro-aocrp.ca/documents/ACPRO%20Position%20Statement%20-%20National%20Standard%20-%20November%202014.pdf>

Though graduation from an accredited doctoral programme may not be a requirement for registration as a psychologist or for employment, it can be an advantage. Applicants for registration or licensure who have graduated from accredited programmes often receive ‘fast-track’ credential reviews by regulatory bodies. Furthermore, accredited programmes are often encouraged to hire faculty and staff who themselves have graduated from accredited programmes.

First Street Accord

It is not uncommon for Canadian regulatory bodies of psychology to consider graduation from a programme accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) as equivalent to graduation from a programme accredited by the CPA. In 2012, the CPA and APA approved and signed the First Street Accord, which is a mutual recognition agreement on accreditation that applies to the accreditation activities each association undertakes in its own country. It demonstrates that the CPA views the accreditation guidelines and principles of the APA’s Commission on Accreditation as equivalent to the accreditation standards and principles of the CPA. Similarly, the APA views the accreditation standards and principles of the CPA as equivalent to its own accreditation guidelines and principles. The First Street Accord recognizes the equivalence of the systems of accreditation of the CPA and APA and does not confer any reciprocal accreditation status on any of the programmes they accredit. Please note that graduation from a CPA and/or APA accredited programme is not a guarantee of licensure as a psychologist in Canada.

The full agreement can be found at: http://cpa.ca/docs/File/Signed_CPA-APA_Accord_2012.pdf

Completing an Internship in Canada

Doctoral degrees in professional areas of psychology typically require the completion of 600 hours of practicum training and 1,600 hours of internship or residency. A directory of internship programmes in Canada can be found at: <http://ccppp.ca/directory-internship>

Those programmes that are accredited can be found at: <http://www.cpa.ca/accreditation/CPAAccreditedprogrammes>

When applying for an internship/residency in Canada, you will also need to apply for a work permit. For more information on applying for a work permit, please visit CIC's website:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work.asp>

Obtaining a License with Foreign Training

Psychologists who are not Canadian citizens and who have obtained their training and licensure outside of Canada will have to apply for immigration to live and work as a psychologist in Canada. For more information, please visit: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/index.asp>

Some individuals may have their language, education, and credentials assessed as part of the immigration process. To review the steps of the assessment process, please visit:

<http://cic.gc.ca/938/Psychologists.canada?id=83>

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/assessment.asp>

For more details about the CPA or any of the above information, please email cpa@cpa.ca.