

Canada

PGWP & Top University Guide

Canada has surged to become one of the most popular destinations for Pakistani students — with over 50,000 Pakistanis currently enrolled. The combination of world-class universities (McGill #27, U of T #29, UBC #40 in QS 2026), a Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) allowing up to 3 years of work after graduation, and a clear pathway to Permanent Residency makes Canada uniquely attractive for students with long-term immigration goals. It is significantly more affordable than the USA while offering comparable academic quality.

GLOBAL RANKING & REACH

Top 5 QS Higher Ed System Ranking	Top 5 Times Higher Ed Country Ranking	900,000+ International Students/yr	~50,000 Pakistani Students Currently Studying
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WHY STUDY IN CANADA?

- ✓ PGWP (Post-Graduation Work Permit): up to 3 years open work permit after graduation
- ✓ Clear Permanent Residency pathway via Express Entry and Provincial Nominee Programs
- ✓ McGill #27 globally, U of T #29, UBC #40 — four universities in QS Top 100
- ✓ More affordable than USA — average tuition CAD \$36,000/yr vs US \$55,000+/yr
- ✓ 50,000+ Pakistani students already in Canada — one of the largest communities abroad
- ✓ Part-time work allowed: 24 hours/week during semester + unlimited during breaks

TOP UNIVERSITIES — RANKINGS, FEES & BENEFITS

University	City	QS Rank	Tuition / yr	Scholarship / Benefit
McGill University	Montreal, QC	#27 World	CAD \$29,000–\$50,000/yr	Canada's #1 in QS 2026 — top for Medicine, Law, Engineering, Neuroscience
University of Toronto	Toronto, ON	#29 World	CAD \$59,000–\$65,000/yr	Canada's most research-intensive — perfect scores in academic reputation at QS
University of British Columbia (UBC)	Vancouver, BC	#40 World	CAD \$41,000–\$55,000/yr	QS #5 globally for Sustainability — top for CS, Engineering, Environmental Science
University of Alberta	Edmonton, AB	#94 World	CAD \$28,000–\$42,000/yr	Highest QS rank since 2018 — top for Energy Research, Engineering, Medicine
McMaster University	Hamilton, ON	#85 World	CAD \$32,000–\$47,000/yr	Canada's #1 for health sciences innovation — problem-based learning model

University	City	QS Rank	Tuition / yr	Scholarship / Benefit
University of Waterloo	Waterloo, ON	#112 World	CAD \$35,000–\$55,000/yr	Canada's #1 for Computer Science & Engineering — world's largest co-op program
University of Ottawa	Ottawa, ON	#203 World	CAD \$28,000–\$40,000/yr	Bilingual university — strong for Law, Social Sciences, Biomedical Sciences
University of Calgary	Calgary, AB	#182 World	CAD \$26,000–\$38,000/yr	Rising fast in rankings — top for Energy, Business, Veterinary Science
Simon Fraser University (SFU)	Burnaby, BC	#223 World	CAD \$24,000–\$36,000/yr	Strong co-op programs — great value in Vancouver for tech and business
Dalhousie University	Halifax, NS	#301 World	CAD \$22,000–\$33,000/yr	Most affordable major Canadian city — top for Ocean Sciences, Medicine, Law

SCHOLARSHIPS & FUNDING — COMPLETE BREAKDOWN

Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship

FULL FUNDING

Coverage: CAD \$50,000/yr for 3 years for PhD students — one of Canada's most prestigious

Who: PhD students — exceptional academic & leadership record required | Awarded by: Government of Canada

Graduate Research Assistantship (RA/TA)

FULL FUNDING

Coverage: Full tuition waiver + CAD \$15,000–\$30,000/yr stipend for research/teaching

Who: Masters & PhD — widely available across Canadian universities | Awarded by: Individual Universities

UBC International Major Entrance Scholarship

PARTIAL TO FULL

Coverage: CAD \$10,000–\$40,000 for high-achieving international undergrad students

Who: Undergrad — top A Level / IGCSE results required | Awarded by: University of British Columbia

McGill Major Entrance Scholarship

PARTIAL

Coverage: CAD \$3,000–\$10,000 for outstanding new students entering McGill

Who: Undergrad — based on academic merit | Awarded by: McGill University

HEC Canada Scholarship

FACILITATION

Coverage: HEC Pakistan facilitates scholarship slots and funding for Canadian universities

Who: Masters & PhD — apply via hec.gov.pk | Awarded by: HEC Pakistan

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Requirement	Details
A Level / IGCSE Results	Minimum ABB at A Level; most competitive programs need AAA–AAB
IELTS	6.5–7.0 overall; no band below 6.0 for most universities
TOEFL iBT	90–100 as alternative to IELTS
SAT / ACT	Optional at most Canadian universities — helpful but not required

Requirement	Details
Personal Statement / Essays	Required — statement of intent or personal essay depending on university
Recommendation Letters	1–2 academic references required
Study Permit	Canadian Study Permit required — apply after receiving acceptance letter
Application Portal	OUAC (Ontario), ApplyAlberta, or direct university portals

KEY DEADLINES & TIMELINE

Milestone	When	Notes
Fall Intake (September)	January–March	Main intake — most programs and scholarships available
Winter Intake (January)	September–October	Limited programs — not all universities offer this
Study Permit Application	After acceptance letter	Apply immediately — processing 4–12 weeks
Vanier Scholarship	November each year	Via university — extremely competitive
PGWP Application	Within 180 days of graduation	3-year open work permit post-graduation
Express Entry (PR)	After 1 year Canadian work experience	Clear PR pathway post-PGWP

PAKISTANI QUALIFICATION EQUIVALENCY

Pakistani Qualification	Equivalent	Notes
A Level (Cambridge)	Directly accepted — equivalent to Canadian Grade 12	Strongly recognized
IGCSE / O Level	Accepted as high school qualifications	Attach certified copies
Pakistani Matric + FSc	Accepted by many universities — varies by institution	WES evaluation often requested
Pakistani CGPA (Masters)	WES (World Education Services) evaluation required	wes.org — standard for Canada

PRO TIPS FOR PAKISTANI STUDENTS

1. Apply for your Study Permit immediately after getting your acceptance letter — processing can take up to 12 weeks.
2. University of Waterloo is the top destination for CS and Engineering students — its co-op program is world-famous.
3. McGill in Montreal has lower tuition than U of T or UBC with equally prestigious rankings — great value option.

4. Teaching/Research Assistantships at graduate level often cover full tuition + provide a living stipend — target these.
5. Canada's PGWP is the best post-study work pathway after graduation — plan your immigration strategy from day one.