

Issue 4, July 2022

THRIVE

International student magazine

STUDENT OF THE MONTH

MEET
CLARA!
47

8 ways to
enjoy
Vancouver's
summer

12

Dos and Don'ts
when renting in
Vancouver

75

CONTENT



17

Lifestyle

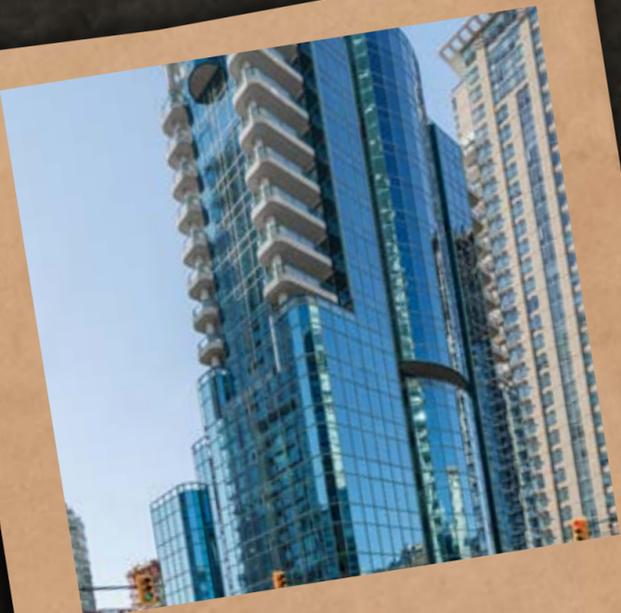
1. Must-haves in Vancity
2. Expectation Vs Reality
3. How things work: A guide to the Vancouverite lifestyle



54

Essentials

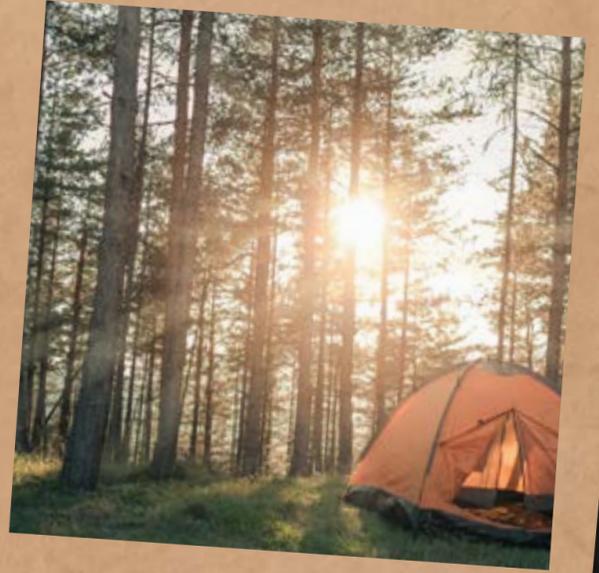
1. Salaries in Vancity
2. Scams...Beware
3. Meet Sidekick



66

Home

1. Landlords in Vancouver
2. Discover GEC
3. Dos & Don'ts when renting in Vancouver



3

Experience

1. Welcome to Carnaval Del Sol
2. Richmond Night Market
3. 8 ways to enjoy Vancouver's summer



35

Aspire

1. A closer look at SELC College
2. Inside LaSalle College Vancouver
3. Meet Clara | Student of the month!

Experience





Experience

Welcome to Carnaval del Sol!

Experience a real Latinamerican festival in Vancouver

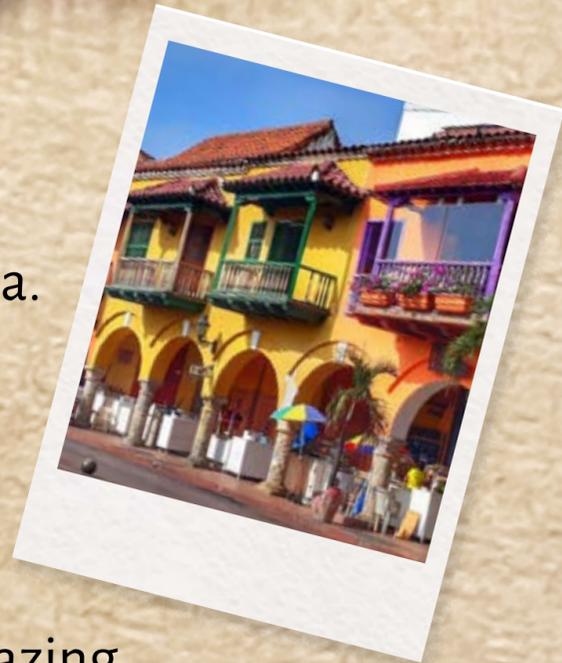
Carnaval del Sol a 24-day celebration of Latin American culture, diversity, unity, respect, and community with outstanding performances, food, workshops, activities, and more surprises! This festival was made to immerse its participants in what Latin American culture really is. The main event of this whole festival is the actual Carnaval, which occurs over a weekend.

The idea behind the Carnaval was to try to recreate the same vibrant atmosphere that Latin American plazas usually have. Now, just in case you are wondering what a plaza is, they are usually the center of small towns in most of Latin America, or at least they started that way. Still, at the end of the day, plazas are a place for gathering, a big esplanade surrounded by locally owned businesses and restaurants, super colourful places full of life and joy! Take this place in Mexico, for example!





Or this other place in Colombia.



Well, Carnaval Del Sol doesn't fall any short of that! It's kind of like stepping into the Disney movie *Coco*, a big Latin American party! And we happen to be there this year. It was an amazing experience, full of great food, live music, folkloric performances and much more. They even had open-air lessons for you to enjoy, from dancing classes to culinary lessons. It was super entertaining. The tickets were only \$10 (although you could get access for free on Friday), and they also offer free access to seniors and children.

Once inside, you can expect to see a variety of foods and performances from all over Latin America. Classic Colombian arepas, Mexican tacos, and churros are some of the most popular. Still, we suggest you keep your mind open and your appetite high as you will like to experience as much food as possible. And, of course, the shows are as diverse as the food. They had people representing and performing music and dances all the way from Brazil up to Mexico.

Whether you are Latino or not, whether you are in Vancouver just for vacation or for the long run, this event is worth attending. It will remind you of home if you happen to be Latino, and you will experience a real Latin vibe if you are from anywhere else. Plus, something that makes this event so special is also the attendees... they simply make the experience so much better! They are incredibly kind and warm people (lots of them Latinos) eager to meet new people and share their culture with the world. They made this experience so much more special. Now, that's enough talking; why don't we just show you what this experience looked like... take a peek!





Without a doubt, we can't wait for Carnaval next summer. We're looking forward to seeing what new things they will amaze us with! If you have more questions about the Carnaval and the people who organized this event, don't forget to visit: latincouver.ca



Experience

Richmond Night Market

Where food meets the night!

Are you a night owl? Do you and your friends love to hang out late in the evening and eat good food? Well, you are in luck. Vancouver Greater Area has fantastic nightlife, and Richmond Night Market is an excellent example.

In this article, we will tease your senses. So much that you will want to grab a friend and go this weekend!

First, let's get the specifics out there so we can begin the eye feast! Richmond Night Market is run annually, only during the summer and weekends. 😞 Although they are open on long weekends and on Canada day.

Admission fee:

- General – \$7
- Children (under 7 years) FREE
- Senior (60+ years) FREE



Super important notice: Everything in the market is cash only, including the entrance fee. If you don't want to carry a lot of money, take enough for your entrance and use the ATM inside the market.

There is always one heck of a lineup to go in. It took us 25 mins to get to the ticket counter! So, give yourself plenty of time when visiting the market.

This year the market is located near Bridgeport Station of the Canada Line and next to River Rock Casino Resort.

Richmond Night Market's open hours are:

- Friday 7PM-12AM
- Saturday (Line up starts at 5:30pm) 6PM-12AM
- Sunday (Line up starts at 6:00pm) 7PM-11PM
- Long-Weekend Monday (May 23rd, Aug 1st, Sept 5th, Oct 10th) 7 PM-11PM
- Special Open for Canada Day (Thursday, Jun 30th, line up starts at 6:30pm) 7PM-12AM



This international food festival starts on April 29th and ends on October 10th, 2022. You can find out more information on their [website](#).

Okay, now let's get to the juicy (pun intended) details. The best part of this whole article! The food!

Richmond Night Market is predominantly an Asian market with Asian-inspired food and Asian-inspired entertainment. So basically, you have access to the whole continent (ish) in one majestic place.



We decided to try this experience for ourselves and share the story with you. So take notes!

The market features a minimum of a hundred vendors selling all kinds of food, drinks, desserts and knickknacks. So do your own yummy research and use our list as merely a start to a wonderful journey 😊.

Once you enter the market, you will see the performance stage where they offer live music and entertainment throughout the day. On your left will be the first row of vendors. These vendors sell anything from toys, jewelry, Japanese-inspired souvenirs and more. If you don't spend all your money there and get to the end of the row, you will find the food.

Here is the list of food we tried:

Chef BBQ - Xinjiang Style BBQ skewers

Regular price: 4 skewers for \$15

We sampled 4 of their 5 different skewers. Angus Steak Beef, Xinjiang Cumin Lamb, Sweet Garlic Chicken and Premium BBQ Prawn. Our favourite was the Angus Steak Beef. It was juicy, and the flavour was elite. The Sweet Garlic Chicken was our second favourite for the same reason... JUICY. Finally, our least favourite one was the BBQ Prawn, which was overcooked and flavourless.



Mr. Onion - Deep Fried Blooming onion

Promotional closing price: \$5 . Regular price: \$9.50

This was fantastic! The onion's presentation was really cool and unique, but not just that, it was crunchy, and the taste was sweet and packed with flavour. However, we recommend you eat it fresh as it loses its crunchiness after a while.



Crunching Croffle - Oreo Dream and Choco Banana

Promotional closing price for two: \$18. Regular price \$11 each.

OMG! This is 100% recommended. Croffle is a merger of waffle and croissant, and it is genius. The whipped cream on top of the Oreo Dream waffle complemented the crunchiness and the chocolate. The Choco Banana had a nostalgic taste that also measures up to the Oreo Dream.



Thirst pony - Mango lemonade

Promotional closing price for Mega: \$5 + Unicorn \$5. Regular price for the mega: \$8.

After all that food, the lemonade was a refreshing finale. The taste was good but not special. It is a drink that quenches your thirst and is worth the money you spend on it. The Unicorn was a nice touch and is currently resting on one of the Thrivver's desks.



The total cost of the experience for two people is \$62, including the entrance fee.

#Tip: If you want to save some money, visit during the closing hours. An hour before closure, they start discounting some food.

Are you hungry yet? 😊 Don't take our word for it! Go out there, eat your way through the night. Keep us in mind, tag us @thrivve.van and show us what you are having!



@lesspainmorejoy



8

WAYS TO ENJOY VANCOUVER'S SUMMER

DEFINITELY THE
MOST EXCITING
SEASON OF THE
YEAR 👉

Summer is hands down the best time of year in Vancouver! It is characterized by having wonderful temperatures that reach an average of 27°C. People from around the world gather in this city to enjoy its festivities, outdoor activities and beautiful nature. It also happens to be the busiest time of the year both for tourism and for international students.

Without further ado, here are 8 ways that Thrive recommends you to enjoy during the summer.



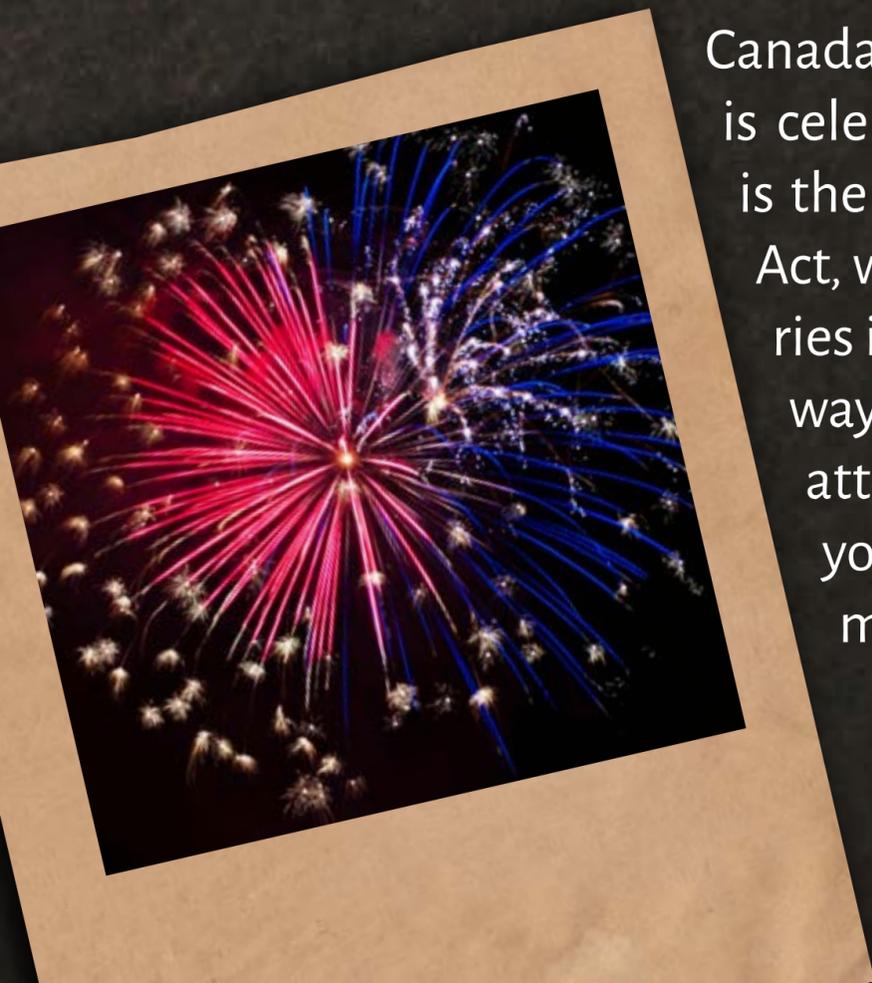
1. Beach time! 🤗🏖️

It is one of the most recurring summer plans in Vancouver. Going to the beach is an activity you can do right after work or over the weekend with your friends. Although they are not crystal clear waters, with beautiful white sand and water at a reasonable temperature, like the Caribbean waters, they still have their own charm! Not every day, you can experience a beach-like environment which also happens to be right next to a forest or just 5 min away from the city's downtown. Plus, most of them are great spots for watching the sunset.

Now, when it comes to popularity, in Vancouver, the most common beaches to go to are Sunset Beach, English Bay and Third Beach. You can even add Kitsilano Beach if you don't mind going away from downtown. But if you do your research, you will find way too many beach options out there for you to enjoy #ChillingAtTheBeach



2. Experience a Canada Day Celebration 🇨🇦



Canada's national holiday, Canada Day, is celebrated every year on July 1st. It is the anniversary of the Constitution Act, which consolidated three territories into the single nation of Canada, way back in 1867. It's super fun to attend, and depending on the city you would like to spend it in, you might encounter different things.

A pancake festival, fireworks, street performances! It's super fun to attend to, and it is a must if you want to have a truly "Canadian experience" 😊

3. Enjoy one of the multiple street festivals! 🎪

From watching artists express their creativity to enjoying an immersive culture-based experience, street festivals during the summer are for sure a thing you should pay attention to! Some are close to the water, others to a park, or just in between alleys and parking lots. There are tons of different festivals, but most have the same basic structure; streets are closed so pedestrians can walk freely, plenty of food and cool products everywhere, and generally some entertainment. And the coolest thing about them is that they are usually organized by a specific neighbourhood or organization, so they all have their charm.

Take the Vancouver Mural Festival, for example, an 11-day festival that goes throughout the city and is dedicated to celebrating and showcasing local artists. You can even see them while they work on their art, right there on the spot! You will see every type of artist, while, in the meantime, you can go and enjoy the local cuisine or crafts from the street booths. For sure, a must on your to-do list!



4. Go camping for a weekend 🏕️

There is no better weekend getaway than to grab your tent, your sleeping bag, and some of your friends and spend an unforgettable night under the stars around a campfire. BC offers an almost



uncountable amount of possible camping experiences for people to enjoy, as its nature is vast and beautiful almost everywhere you go! You will have the opportunity to wake up with views of a lake, the sea or the beautiful mountains (trust us, you don't see mountains like that every day).

Furthermore, it is a fun, adventurous, and above all, a budget-friendly experience. You will find campsites starting at \$30 for approximately 4 people and some free first-come, first-serve sites! If you go to the latter, we recommend arriving early because the spots fill up quickly. In any case, here are some good options for you to consider camping: take a look into Squamish, Fraser Valley, Whistler, Cultus Lake or even catch a ferry to the Sunshine Coast or Vancouver Island. Remember to bring bear spray just in case! (Oh, and bug spray too!! Very important)



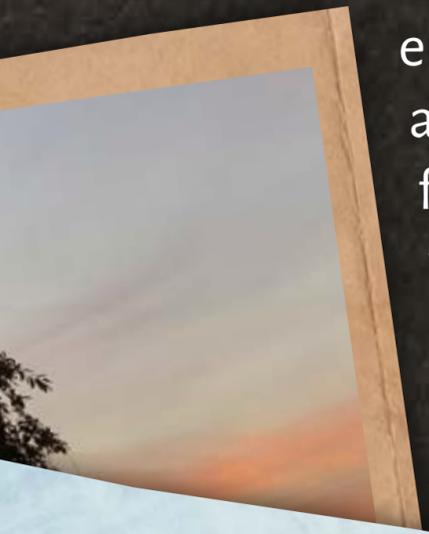
5. Spend the day at a lake with your friends

If you don't want to spend the night away from home, a good alternative is to spend the day at a lake. As you know, near Vancouver there are many incredible lakes to spend the day with your friends or family and take a refreshing swim. Get yourself a float and enjoy a few beers in the sun while you float in the water. We recommend you to check some of these out: Mystery Lake, Cabin Lake, Whyte Lake, Brohm Lake, Cat Lake, Alice Lake, White Pine Beach, Pitt Lake, and Cultus Lake.

6. Attend Drum Circle Tuesdays on Third Beach 🥁

The Drum Circle is a musical event that takes place every sunny Tuesday on Third Beach at Stanley Park. An event where hundreds

of people gather to dance around to the rhythm of dozens of drum players, giving them a great beat to follow along while watching the sunset!. This event is a runway for all kinds of characters and people from all over the world; it's truly a unique experience with a really fun atmosphere very fun. Plus, If you have a Djembé or any kind of percussion, you are free to join the drumming and have a good time!



@shamrockbar

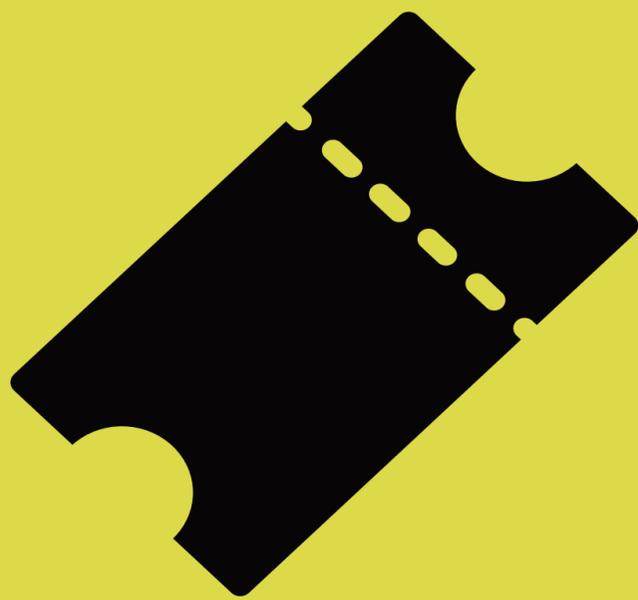
views, sailing sports (windsurfing, kite-surfing, etc...), diving, paddleboarding and a thousand other activities! Are you going to miss it? And don't worry about the budget. Some of these options go for as low as \$15 to \$20 per hour for kayaking.

8. Celebrate the Vancouver Pride Festival

Did you know that Vancouver Gay Pride is one of the largest 2SLGBTQAI+ parades in North America? Get ready for the party of colours! The Vancouver Pride Festival takes place every year during the first week of August, it goes on for a couple of days, and it has a little bit of everything in it! Street food, performances, art exhibitions, a parade, you name it! It occurs in multiple parts throughout the city, although the main shows occur in Davie street, which is the street that represents this community the most in Vancouver.



Lifestyle



Lifestyle

*Must-haves in
Vancity*
**7 things you
must have for
your life in
Vancouver**





Like any other place, once you have lived there for a while, you start realizing some of the things you need to have a comfortable life. For example, if you live in New York City, you must be patient, while in Rio de Janeiro, you need to have a couple of eyes on the back of your head!

Just kidding, when we say “things you need,” we mean material stuff. Like a good pair of shoes or comfortable clothing and, in the case of Vancouver, 7 things you need to have to live better!

For the Rain

Umbrella: You probably heard this a million times already, but, for some reason, people don't conceptualize how real this is until they have lived in this city, so... here we go again. In Vancouver, it rains A LOT! So having a good umbrella is a must in this place!



And please, we understand that being an international student usually implies living on a budget, but we do recommend you buy a good quality umbrella! It will save you a ton of money over the long run, as cheap umbrellas, the ones you can buy for under \$15, usually break down fairly quickly. Just wait for one strong wind to hit those umbrellas and PUM! It's done!!

Raincoat: A common alternative to an umbrella used more by locals is a good raincoat! Vancouver's rain tends to be reasonably





light throughout the year, so although it rains a lot, the rain that hits this city it's usually not that bad, and a good raincoat will help you go by without any issues 😊 plus, you avoid needing to carry an umbrella everywhere, all the time, which we know can be annoying at times.

Waterproof Backpack: What's the point of having a great raincoat if your things are still going to get wet, right? A waterproof backpack is undoubtedly a good investment in this city! Our recommendation? [Herschel Supply Co.](#)!! They have pretty good and stylish waterproof bags. 🙌



For the Summer

On the other side of the spectrum, we have Summer!! Beautiful blue skies, with no clouds in sight and the sun shining almost every day. With temperatures ranging on average, at least from the last couple of years, between 24 and 30 degrees, we are not kidding!

Sunglasses: Yes, the sun shining over you and filling you with lots of energy and vitamins is excellent!! But you still need to be careful, not to mention that you can also use this as part of your seasonal attire. Having a good pair of sunglasses is essential in this city! Not



only because of the great weather and the lack of clouds but also because the city's landscape is full of skyscrapers made primarily of glass, so they have a pretty strong light reflection of the sun. Plus, the city is surrounded by water, so there's a lot of light reflection from there too... As you can imagine, no matter where you look, having some protection for your eyes sounds like a good idea.

Sunscreen: Another must-have! Plus, according to many skincare professionals, regardless of the weather conditions, we should be using sunscreen daily! Why? Ultraviolet rays increase your risk for skin cancer and skin aging, and you are exposed to them every day. So, not using sunscreen in Vancouver's summers is a no-no!

A/C: Super necessary!! Trust us. In the last few summers, the temperature has been increasing, and each year is hotter than the previous. Just last year, 2021, BC had a heat wave so bad that over 500 people died from extreme weather conditions!

It is such a concern that recently, Vancouver's city council approved a law that makes A/C units a requirement for any building taller than 3 floors! However, it's going to take a while for new developments to implement this law so, in the meantime, we encourage you to get your own A/C system. It will make your life so much better!

One more thing! (Just in case):

A good pair of boots: You cannot live without a good pair of boots here in Canada. They'll help you survive during the cold winters, overcoming all the snow you might find on your way. They'll keep your feet dry during the rainy seasons, and if you are





smart about the type of boots you get, they'll even be helpful to you when you want to go for a hike. (Trust us, it is guaranteed that you will go hiking at some point! Even if you don't like it).

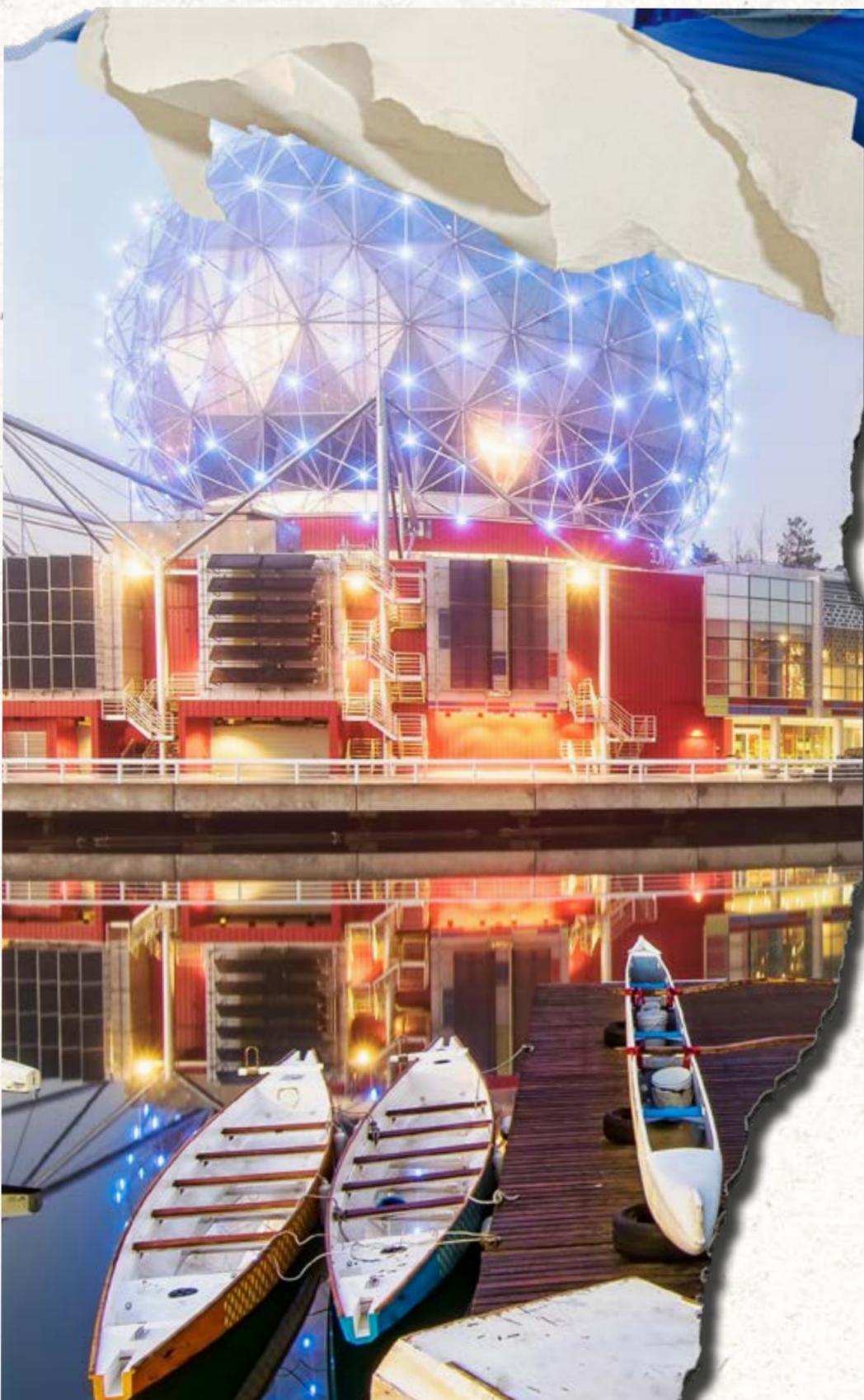
***Tip:** If you come from a country where these types of boots are not necessary, we recommend you wait until you are here to get a pair. You will save a ton of money because buying these boots in tropical countries, for example, can be expensive, and you will save space in your luggage ;)

Got any other recommendations of things you need to live in Vancouver? Let the community know! Reach out to us and we'll make sure to share your ideas.

Instagram: [@thrivve.van](https://www.instagram.com/thrivve.van)

Email: info@thrivvemag.com

Or post it directly on our online forum: <https://www.thrivvemag.com/forum>





Lifestyle

Expectation

VS

Reality!!

This article is not a series of humorous memes of expectation vs reality, even though we enjoy those memes very much. This article is a reflection of conversations we had with 10 people from the Thrive Community.

We asked international students about any expectation-shattering-realities they would like to share! Here are a few of the categories and observations that resonated with us.

POLITE VS FRIENDLY

How do we define people in Vancouver?

In the last issue's article, 'Vancouverites, not so friendly', we differentiated between polite and friendly. A common misconception we have of Vancouverites is that they are nice and friendly, and these expectations are based on a Canadian stereotype. However, the real-



ity is that they are polite. This politeness may include embracing different cultures and backgrounds, apologies when bumping into you and even opening doors for you on some occasions.

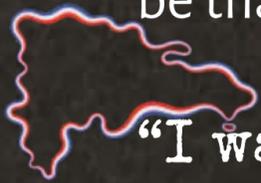
“I thought it was a very open community.”

Ghassan, Egypt

This politeness, however, does not mean inclusiveness all the time...

“Canadians are not inclusive, they are nice and everything, they are very polite, but they will not include you in their social circles.” Belu from Argentina clarified.

This is a generalized idea we have of the locals once we start living here. However, maybe “Vancouverites are not friendly” may be that they are just shy.



“I was impressed by how gentle people in Vancouver are and yet how shy they can be.” Tomas, Dominican Republic

It could very possibly be that there's a big contrast between cultures. We come from everywhere, and our cultures can drastically differ from Canadian culture. People from LATAM, for example, are warm, social and outgoing. Still a generalization, but it is how we perceive Latins to be.

On another note, maybe Vancouverites are shy, and that's why they come off as aloof, but can we afford to be shy too? Will we survive in this city if we stay within our comfort zone? That is a question for another day.

VANCOUVER AS A HUB

Vancouver is diverse to the core. It is a beautiful city that has gathered people from all over the world; this is what we see on





TV. A city where you have a multicultural celebration of diversity, a sense of community, where you find yourself and build your tribe. Vancouver is a hub.

The negatives come with all the positives accompanying being a cultural hub. Most of the newcomers to Vancouver are international students. They bring their youthful energy, food, and music, and they contribute to the society as a whole. However, part of being a hub is that people come and go.

“The amount of people that you know that will go back to their countries after a while is really high.” Javier, Mexico

While building your tribe is part of the Canadian experience, things tend to change once you graduate from your program.

“I was under the impression that socially you make a lot of friends, you build your network and you learn a lot about other cultures – as soon as you move out of school you basically have no social circle left, after school people have their own lives and seeing your friends becomes like booking appointments.” Ash, India

Although this point applies to most people after they graduate from school, it is accelerated in Vancouver for international students because of the constant turnover. Because Vancouver is so diverse and full of international students, that process becomes inevitable.

“Everyone gets busy and socially it’s very hard to make friends.” Ash, India

Even if you try to make Canadian friends in the hope of having friendships that last longer, it is not easy to meet Canadians in this city.



Another thing you will see here is the in-groups. Ahmed from Kenya said it best.

“In my opinion people tend to surround themselves with the familiar, you would see the Arabs in one large group, local white Canadians in another group. I guess I would rarely see an actual mixed friends group at uni, which made me stick to my comfort zone and surround myself with people who come from the same country or background.”

“I eventually found and built my community with people that come from similar background/country and I would not change it for anything. As a result of shared experiences in Vancouver we have built very strong and meaningful relationships.” Ahmed, Kenya

CANADA IS NOT THE USA

Yet another phenomenon, especially for those who are used to the US. There is an expectation that Canada will be somewhat similar to the US in many ways. Pedro and Ale from Mexico opened our eyes to how simple it is to make that association. One point mentioned by both of them is the concept of consumerism.

“The market is very controlled. Something we didn't expect at all” Pedro, Mexico

“I thought the variety of brands will be like the US, and it's the opposite.” Alejandra, Mexico

Vancouverites and British Columbians in general, love everything local. Local restaurants, local brands, local businesses. That is reflected when you visit the supermarket and see only two or three milk brands. Competition is low, so we only have a few options within a narrow price range.



Another differentiator is the availability of services. The city's infrastructure is different from the US. One thing we have noticed is that there seems to be high demand for entertainment but not enough places to match the population density. Therefore, you end up waiting in long lines or just never get to enjoy what you want.

“You have 5 classes in your area (sports) and they get filled on the first hour of the first day.” Pedro, Mexico

LOCAL STANDARDS

The government is in everything, from regulating certain industries to setting standards for the minimum quality of service expected. In education, for example!

“I didn’t expect the government to be so strongly involved... at least a good standard of education. I find that amazing!” Pedro, Mexico

All educational institutions must fulfill a minimum requirement to operate in BC. From Kindergarten to University. This way, you can rest assured that your education in the worst-case scenario meets the minimum requirement, which is fairly good.

The top local standard that no one talks about enough, though, is the nature within the city.

“I didn’t expect it to be so beautiful.” Ghassan, Egypt



“I knew I was excited when I went there but it completely surpassed my expectations” Pedro, Mexico

We have the government to thank for that too. There is a minimum requirement for each BC city to have a specific popula-



tion-to-park ratio. That is why you will see a park every couple of blocks in your neighbourhood. At the moment, BC has 1,033 provincial parks, recreation areas, conservancies, ecological reserves and protected areas, covering more than 14 million hectares, approximately 14.4% of the provincial land base.

LIFE IS NOT EASY

Sometimes, when you hear about the involvement and support of the government, the city's safety and the people's freedom, you might think that life for you will be fantastic here. Although you can have a wonderful life in Canada, it won't come easily.

“A lot of people think it is so easy and that you are going to have this wonderful life but in reality, you have a good quality of life but you have to work hard for it.” Ala'a, Yemen

One of the obstacles you will face here is being able to save money or own a home. It's like joining the race late but not being given a boost. For example, you will be expected to pay taxes like anyone else.

“They don't take into account your net worth, only what you are making. We pay the same taxes as our coworkers who already have an apartment and savings.” Belu, Argentina



NAVIGATING THE SYSTEM

The Canadian systems are mostly straightforward, although they sometimes seem complicated. From healthcare and immigration to employment, there is a system for everything. For example, the healthcare system is simple. Yet, suppose you want to see a specialist. In that case, you must see your family doctor, who will refer you to a specialist. You will wait for the specialist to contact you with an appointment that could be months away. Simple, yet complicated.



The healthcare system in Canada is free. However, free healthcare has its consequences.

“There is no culture of prevention.” Andrea, Mexico

There is no annual check-up. You only get tested if you are complaining about something specific. It can be very frustrating if you come from a country with excellent private medical services.

But of course, you are good to go once you fully understand the systems, including the unwritten ones, such as the employment system. The tools are there for you to succeed in life in Canada.

“Understand the system, how it works, where you fit in and then sell your ass off.” Tomas, Dominican Republic

You, without a doubt, will have many expectations of life in Canada, whether negative or positive. We hope this article helps you understand Canada better and also helps you keep an open mind.

What were your expectations when landing in Canada? Activate your free membership on our [website](#) and share them with the community on the [forum](#).





Lifestyle

How Things Work: A Guide to the Vancouverite Lifestyle

Every country, every city and even every neighbourhood has its own identity, those things that make that place different from any other. It could be anything, from how people talk, dress, slang, behaviour, even the small details count! By coming from overseas, you will expose yourself to many of these behaviours and protocols that only locals are familiar with.

That being said, we wanted to prepare you a little bit better for dealing with the differences. Perhaps it will also help you avoid cultural shock, as you would know now what to expect even before arriving in Vancouver. Find here 8 things that are norms in Canada but are not necessarily standard elsewhere.

1. Shoes off

Probably one of the practices we love the most, as it makes a lot of sense once you think about it, and that is taking off your shoes before entering your house (or anybody's house, for that matter).



Yes! That's something most people do over here. They have a shoe rack right at their entrance so that they can place the shoes they want to wear outside and then take some flip-flops to use inside their houses. And it makes a lot of sense! It helps keep your place tidy for extended periods of time and allows you to store your footwear in a more organized manner.

2. DIY card payments in restaurants

That's right! Over here, once you ask for the bill in any restaurant, it's common for the server to handle the machine over to you so that you can operate it yourself, select the amount of tip you want to leave (10% minimum, 15% most common), and pay for your meal. Once you are done with the process, you hand back the machine to your server.



3. Car sharing is a thing

Although this service is getting more popular worldwide, it is still not a simple service that people have made part of their lives. However, in Vancouver, this is the case! Car sharing services are companies that



allow people to rent a vehicle, usually through their phone over an app, so that they can use it for short periods of time, from just a couple of minutes to even for a whole day.



If you can access this kind of service as soon as you arrive in Vancouver, it's going to be worth it, we promise you! It will get you out of trouble now and then, like if you miss your bus to get to work or if you need to pick up some furniture you just bought.

4. Canadians loooooove to plan ahead 🙄

If you are looking forward to having a weekend getaway, camping, or even just having a date with someone special, be prepared to make reservations waaaay in advance. One thing we realized is that Canadians love to plan well ahead. That means making reservations for wherever you want to go with enough anticipation or... be prepared to wait in line if not miss the chance of doing whatever you want!

5. Self-checkout is everywhere

Depending on where you are from, you might already be familiar with a concept that is used basically in every big retail chain company like Walmart, Canadian Superstore, Shoppers, etc. Heck, you even find the same idea in Mcdonald's! With their self-service machines.

Self-checkout services are super simple to use, they are user-friendly, and they are for sure convenient if you are not buying plenty of stuff, so don't be scared of utilizing them 😊 They can save you a lot of time as you can avoid the big queues for the cashier lanes.





6. Bill splitting

We love this concept! And plenty of people from Thrivve's community didn't know it was a thing before coming here. Bill splitting is when restaurants offer to split the total of the bill however you and your group find convenient—going on a double date? You can split the bill in half! You went with a bunch of friends, and

each of you wants to party individually? It's doable! It's even possible for one person at a table with a big group to ask for part of the bill so they can pay and leave without affecting everyone else.

Amazing, isn't it!? The best thing is that you don't even have to worry about remembering about this service, as it is a standard question from your waiter to ask you when you ask for the bill 😊

7. Take out boxes, DIY

This one is annoying, especially if you come from countries where this is considered part of an excellent customer service at a restaurant.



Let's say you went to have dinner with some friends... you all got excited with the menu and asked for more food than you could eat. Now you ask the server to have all of the leftovers to go. Well, what will happen next is that they will bring a couple of containers to your table for you to figure out how to put all that food in those containers. And more often than not, they will not even provide a paper bag for you to carry those containers after, which is impractical.



8. Escalators

Last but not least is escalator etiquette. Another habit that might be common depends on where you are from but is still worth mentioning.

In Canada, there is an unwritten rule that everyone knows when using the escalator. If you are in a hurry or want to climb up the steps, stick to the left side of the escalator. If you're going to stand, stand on the right side of the escalator. Never stop on the left side, so you don't block the traffic.





Aspire



Aspire

A closer look at SELC College

The best option for Work & Study Programs in Vancouver

Study, Work, Immigrate... That's what most people in Thrivve's community are looking for. This is because not everyone can come to Canada directly to immigrate or work. Still, everybody is more than welcome to study! And that could lead to people eventually getting a work permit and the PR after that. That's why it is so important to properly choose an institution. One that allows you to reach these goals, prepares you for the local market, and offers you the support you need at every step of the journey. That's what SELC College can do for you!

SELC is a career preparation college for international students. It was founded over 35 years ago and has continued evolving ever since to provide the best service possible to whoever decides to call this college their home. We, the Thrivve team, had the chance to get to know SELC college a little bit better, as they invited us to chat and get to know their new campus! (Which is quite stunning, to be honest! 🥰)

We had the opportunity to meet with Marina, the Director of International Marketing at this college. She was kind enough to show us around and tell us more about what they do. Marina has over 6 years of experience in the international education industry, so we learned a lot from her... Here's what we learned:

Let's start with hearing a little bit more about Marina:

My name is Marina Monaco, I am originally from Brazil and I arrived here in Vancouver as an international student 7 years ago. Since then, I have been working in the International Education



industry in different positions. I worked as a student advisor (salesperson) in an exchange agency to advise people on how they could come to Canada, I then started working at SELC in 2017 focusing on the Latin American and European markets and that took me to where I am today; Director of International Marketing for SELC College.

Please tell us about SELC, how long have you guys been around? What's your take on education and what kind of programs do you offer?

SELC was founded in 1985 in Sidney, Australia. In 2012 we opened our College in Gastown Vancouver. Since then, SELC Vancouver has developed its own brand, unique culture and warm atmosphere. This is what separates us from the larger and less personal institutions. Students arriving at SELC for the first time are always pleasantly surprised at the range and quality of facilities including the excellent student support that SELC has to offer. In fact, SELC students immediately gain a sense of a personal and nurturing environment that ensures all students can settle comfortably into their studies. This calming atmosphere that SELC has created is an intrinsic value in SELC's student culture. SELC staff go out of their way to make the college a place where everybody knows your name, and where you as a student can feel at ease and welcome no matter what continent you are from.

For International Students SELC offers all the tools they need to succeed in Canada: starting from English classes to make sure students have the proper level to thrive in their vocational programs at SELC College. While students are taking their academic part of the program, our Career Department is already working with them to prepare them for the Canadian job market, so when the Co-op comes, they have all the support and preparation to start an amazing career in Canada.

Once students graduate, they can have the opportunity to start an immigration process, as all our programs are in high demand in the market and prepare them for the industries.



For those students looking to continue their academic life, SELC offers a high-level Pathway with Public Colleges and Universities in Canada, such as BCIT, Acsenda School of Management, FDU and more.

What's the thing you like the most about this college?

SELC offers all support and tools international students need to achieve their goals in Canada. Some students will come looking to improve their knowledge and background, go back to their country to start a great career with a Canadian education diploma, or possibly immigrate to Canada. Plus, the fact that most of SELC's team were themselves international students is something crucial, in my opinion! Most of us have basically been in your shoes, so we know what they need to thrive in Canada.

We heard you have a new campus coming. Can you tell us a little bit about it? Why are you opening this new space, and what can we expect from it?

Yes, we are and we are super excited about it! We were located at Gastown, where we'll remain to have a campus for our ESL students. Currently, we have more than 200 students taking English programs with us, from the morning to the evening, suited for all levels.

Our brand-new Campus is located on W. Pender 1155. It's a 14,000+ sq/ft state of the art of learning space to train a new generation of skilled workers in BC and abroad! This new location was opened to offer an amazing infrastructure to our student body that is growing a lot. We also needed more space and specialized labs for our new programs: Digital Marketing, Supply Chain, Live-in caregiver childcare, Postgraduate nursing, health care assistant and much more!

Could you please tell us the profile your students have? Like where do they come from, and what expectations do they have when they come here?



We have students from more than 30 different countries, and all of them with different backgrounds and experiences, which makes our community extremely rich in culture. As mentioned before, we have students that want to gain an excellent Canadian education to go back home and start a career, students that will immigrate to Canada through their work and students who will continue their education with our pathway partners after they are used and immersed in the Canadian culture and more adapted to the Canadian education system.

Is there any program you offer that is the most popular amongst your students?

All our programs are extremely popular as they offer a high demand in the market. Hospitality Management and Digital Marketing are super popular programs due to the high market demand. Supply Chain is also a super-fast growing industry and SELC is the only college in BC that is a center of excellence in logistics learning, credited by CITT (Canadian Logistics' association).

Not to mention our programs in the healthcare industry, which are extremely necessary for Canada right now.

One of the most challenging decisions students must make is choosing the right school. Could you tell us some of the benefits for people who select SELC as their college of choice?

All our programs have high demand in the job market, so students can find jobs easily. Our students will count on full-time support from our Career department even before the co-op starts, they will be prepared and trained to join the Canadian job market. We offer lifetime job placement support, even when our students graduate, as well as lifetime refresher training, so they are always up to date in their industry. Not to mention the free academic English support we offer to all students 😊



Plenty of our international students are concerned they might have fewer opportunities than local Canadian students. What are your thoughts on this? Opportunities such as employment, government grants, scholarships, and so on.

We are sure our students will be able to compete with Canadian students as we offer excellent academic education that is very focused on the current industry trends, we offer exclusive career preparation and support and ongoing English preparation.

We offer scholarships as well as payment plans so students can pay for their education while working in Canada.

Finally, is there a message you would like to give to international students? Any important announcements?

As a former international student myself, I can assure our students that we will offer all the tools and support they need to succeed and achieve their goals in Canada. We understand their needs and challenges and have an amazing team. The main priority is to transform dreams into reality.



Aspire

Inside

LaSalle College Vancouver

Thinking about arts, media or design?
Think about LaSalle!

Vancouver never falls short when providing students with institutions to choose from for their education, and this month, we had the opportunity to get a closer look at one of the best options: LaSalle College Vancouver!

Being part of a global education network, LaSalle College Vancouver (LCV) is one of the best colleges in Canada for Applied Arts. Bakery, Fashion Design, Graphic Design, Audio and Film, Video Game Design and much more, and they for sure excel in every one of them!

#Random Fact: LCV was named the top school for Game Design by the Princeton Review! And is one of only four schools in the country to offer a Bachelor in Fashion Design





We have always heard great feedback from international students about this college, but we didn't completely understand why until now. If you are looking for a college that not only provides excellent quality education, as good as public institutions in fact, but also has a deep care for its community and its students, then you have found the right place!

How so? You may ask. Well, LCV understands how to support its students in every possible aspect you can imagine. It is one of the colleges that offer the most support for international students; they have mentorships programs, career-related workshops (you know, to teach you how to prepare your resume or how to prepare for an interview, for example), free counselling sessions so that students can talk with someone about their mental health among many other things (student lounge with pool table anyone? 🎮 😊)



But, you know what? Why don't we let you hear it directly from LCV instead? They are, after all, the best ones to describe who they are and what they do!

Meet Mihee Haring, director of Sales at LCV, who kindly received the Thrive team and explained who they are and what they do. Here are some of the things we learned from her:

Please tell us about LCV. What's your take on education, and what kind of programs do you offer?



We, LaSalle College Vancouver, are an applied design, media and arts college where creativity, community and skills development are central to how we offer our more than 35 programs.

Our goal is to be part of a student's journey in achieving their career goals. We do this by offering programs relevant to the job market taught by faculty with close connections to relevant industries. When you visit our campus, you will experience creativity instantly. Student work is displayed throughout the campus, you can see what our students are creating in the fashion and textile lab, and you may get a glimpse of what is happening in the various art and media studios we have. Our college is known for its sense of community which is so important for international students. You may be surprised but most of our college staff, from the receptionist to the faculty, know our students by name. Our small class sizes, clubs and events help make students feel at home as well.

We are all on one and the same campus which has many benefits. The word 'applied' refers to how we design and teach our programs. For us, it is all about your skills development and getting you job-ready. In almost all our programs you will spend half of your time in classes and half of your time in a lab, studio or kitchen. We believe you need to apply what you learn!

We understand that you haven't been here that long, as you acquired what once was the Art Institute of Vancouver. Despite this relatively recent change, could you tell us what impact you think LaSalle has had on the local industry?

What many students don't know is that we are part of the LCI Education network, one of the largest higher education networks globally (23 campuses across the world). Our main campuses in Canada are LaSalle College Montreal and Vancouver. Montreal is where it all began over 60 years ago! The origin is a very interesting story about the founder Jean-Paul Morin. He was a local entrepreneur in the 1950s whose ambition was to offer education to help people gain access to the job market. At present, LaSalle College Montreal is the largest bilingual higher education institute in North America. Our Vancouver campus joined the network over five years ago and we have benefited greatly from our global network, academic resources and a flow of creativity in our programs and culture. We kept the best of the Art Institute of Vancouver, updated



our programs, attracted the best local professionals and are ensuring we are firmly connected to all relevant local industries in the greater Vancouver area.

We heard you are moving to a new campus 🔥 can you tell us a little bit about it? Why are you opening this new space, and what can we expect from it?

This is super exciting for all of us here right now and our future students! We had a ground-breaking ceremony in the summer of 2021 with the Vancouver mayor, Kennedy Stewart, present. We needed a space which could house bigger studios and labs and overall more capacity to host our students. Our new campus will comprise over 100,00 square feet spread over 7 stories. We were lucky the development of our new space could happen right next to our current campus, so it's quite exciting for everyone to see this project being developed right in front of us!

The mayor put in simple and clear words: our new campus in the Renfrew station area (the Kaslo neighbourhood), will bring renewed energy and activities to this part of Vancouver. Check out the videos and virtual tours on our website. It's hard not to be impressed! The building will have access to outdoor space, rooms for physical activity, healthy food options and a meditation area. In addition, the building's design is guided through both Fitwel and Rick Hansen Gold certifications, making it a health-first building that is accessible to people of differing abilities. Envision state-of-the-art Culinary kitchens, several maker spaces, a gaming lounge, and even a suspended theatre that will serve as a multi-purpose space. Languages Across Borders (LAB) Vancouver and LaSalle College Vancouver High School will also call this new building home.

As you know, Thrivve magazine focuses on international students, and we would love to ask you more about your international community. Could you please tell us the percentage of international students at LaSalle and where do they come from?



We have about 60 to 70 % international students at any given time. Per program, the origin of our students can vary. We have a great mix of domestic and international students in our Fashion, Interior and Graphic Design programs. We probably have a bit more Canadian students in our Game Programming and Design programs as we are locally well-known for our award-winning programs in this area. Our Associate of Arts has a lot of appeal to international students wanting a firm academic foundation or wanting to add academic skills to their applied education but, overall, we have students from every corner of the world! Making our community a really exciting and interesting place to be at all times.

Any particular program you offer that is popular amongst internationals?

We are an applied college, but what many don't know is that we offer quite a few bachelor's degree programs as well. These are all interesting for our international students as a bachelor's degree gives you a leg up in the job market plus the eligibility to apply for a PGWP*. We currently also have a very attractive bursary for our Associate of Arts degree program. It is likely the most efficiently structured associate degree in BC for international students.

One of the most difficult decisions students must make is choosing the right school. Could you tell us some benefits for people who select LaSalle as their college of choice? What extra support do you offer to international students?

Okay, this is easy to answer! Aside from expert faculty, strong programs and our applied approach to education, it is definitely our





community that stands out. From the moment you select our college to after your graduation, you will feel part of something bigger. Our admissions process includes an interview, this is not to make you pass or fail, but for us to figure out together with you if we are a great fit. That's just the first step. When you start here as a student, you will be in a cohort in most programs. This means you study with your cohort until graduation, working on projects as in real-life. Collaborating with students from other programs, as in real-life. Working on projects at all days and hours of the week, like a professional in real-life. Our student services, career services, IT staff, equipment room team and of course your teachers all have one purpose only: to support you on your journey and help you get ready for your career.

Plenty of our international students are concerned they might have fewer opportunities than local Canadian students. What are your thoughts on this? Opportunities such as employment, government grants, scholarships and so on.

Canada has grown to become the number one destination for international students. And this is for obvious reasons: the government welcomes international students and workers to join the labour force. There are many pathways into residency for international students and skilled workers. I understand the concerns but as a student, I would research the opportunities, and the job market in the province you are considering and select a program based on your background, interest and Canadian employment demand. At LaSalle College Vancouver we have several scholarships international students can apply for once accepted into a program (Talent, Entrance, Leadership scholarships for example).

Last but not least, is there a message you would like to give to international students? Any important announcements?

We understand there are many options to select from in a country you may know little about. Check out our [Instagram account](#) to get a real sense of what our students and alumni are doing. Browse our [website](#), and if you are interested, [schedule an interview](#) with one of our advisors. LaSalle College Vancouver has many diploma and degree programs in art, media and design as well as culinary arts. We are here to help you select and prepare.



MEET CLARA!

Aspire

Student of the Month



Eleven years away from home and still fighting every day in the pursuit of the Canadian dream... What a warrior!! Meet Clara, a former international student in Vancouver who left her home years ago to pursue a better life.

As you probably imagine, actually managing to immigrate to, well, any country is hard! It requires time, unbelievable effort, mountains of paperwork and tons and tons of patience (like, you have no idea how much patience you need to endure the whole immigration process). However, Canada is famous for being the most immigrant-friendly country! Although that doesn't mean it's easy to immigrate here, it just means that it is not as complex as other countries. It's still a challenging process to go through. Unfortunately for some, like in Clara's case, the country you are from may play a crucial factor in this process.

Originally from Brazil, Clara had to deal with the difficult decision to leave everything behind and start over with one simple goal: having a better quality of life.

Clara has a Bachelor's in Physical education. Although she worked in her field for a little bit back in Brazil, she knew from the beginning that staying there wasn't an option. Brazil simply didn't offer her the quality of life and security she was looking for... so back to square one.

Her whole journey started with the desire to study in the US, you know, to pursue "the American dream." However, after receiving an unexpected job offer to work on a cruise ship, Clara decided to go in a different direction, placing her faith under what ended up being false promises. You know how this is, whenever a salesperson oversells something to you, and you buy whatever they sold.





Anyways, that happened to her. When offered the opportunity to work on a cruise ship, they painted a different picture than what she actually got.

She joined her first cruise ship job completely broke, as she spent her resources in being able to join that crew, so there was no turning back! She had to make this work!! To make things worse, she didn't know that much English! So her hard work needed to show what her words couldn't. She realized then that whatever she thought she knew of the English language from her basic education was not useful at all. She needed to learn on her own, and hey... it worked! After 8 years of working in the cruise ship industry, Clara spoke English and Spanish and even understood Italian and French.

A lasting 8 years long career that started with a spa position. She didn't expect to achieve much, but she learned how to speak multiple languages, which gave her the opportunity to work for what many would call their "dream company,"; Disney. That job marked the beginning of the end of the cruise ship journey in Clara's life, when the last cruise she worked for stopped in the city that today she calls home; Vancouver.



When she first arrived in 2019, she came only as a tourist for a couple of weeks. She had the opportunity to meet with friends from Brazil who happened to be living here already. They were the ones who placed the idea of pursuing the Canadian Dream in Clara's head. They started talking about how easy it would be for her to immigrate and get the PR. She would only need to take a short course or program that would buy her some time to spend here while going through the PR process...Big mistake.

Without looking deep into it, Clara took her friends' word she enrolled in the first school she knew offered a short program for a low price. She then came to Vancouver again to start studying at SELC College, a 4-month program in which she could study for 2 months and then work for 2 months. However, that wasn't that important for Clara. She just needed 4 months to apply for the PR.



When arriving as a student, Clara did in 4 days what some people take months to do... She managed to land a job faster than what Amazon takes to deliver that package you want! She arrived on a Friday, and she had the job offer in her hand by Tuesday! #MindBlown. Credit to Clara's friends in this case, as they were the ones who helped her get settled and ready to work in just a couple of days.



***Note:** That, right there, is the perfect example of the advantages of knowing what to do as soon as you arrive. Check out our [Just Landed](#) article, it will help you out ;)

Ultimately, those couple of weeks that Clara spent in Vancouver before even coming to study were crucial in her journey. In that short time, she researched: what she needed to do to apply for the study permit, the format for her resume to adjust to Canadian standards, how to move around the city, where to do groceries, and more. It was time well spent, and it helped her and rewarded her with a job in just 4 days.

To Clara's surprise, and despite having such a firm landing in Vancouver, Clara realized she had made a big mistake, which was not double-checking if the information her friends gave her was accurate or not... Sadly, it was not. Don't get us wrong, her friends had the right intention in helping her; they were not immigration professionals and, therefore, couldn't be sure if the path they ideated for Clara was accurate. Unfortunately, Clara needed way more time than just 4 months to have enough points to apply for the PR.

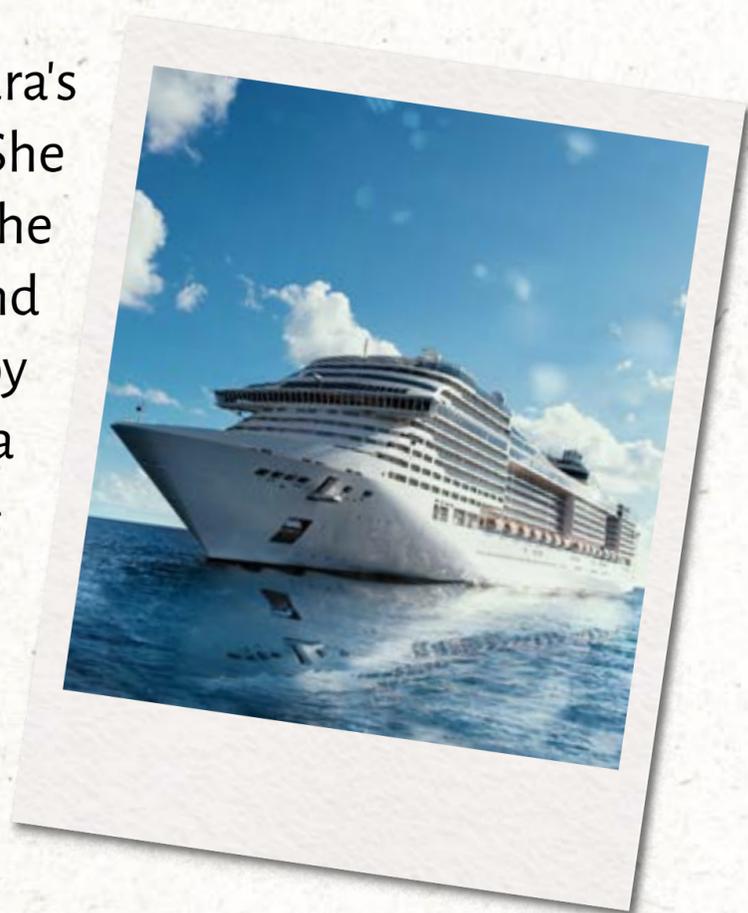
It was there at that moment that Clara realized two things. The same two things that she now considers her 2 Golden Rules for anyone interested in immigrating to Canada to follow:



- **Do your homework!** Do your research about the immigration process you would need to follow to be able to immigrate here. Even if you are not interested in that at the beginning! It is worth it for you to have an idea about it because if the time comes that you change your mind and you do want to live in Vancouver, you would be ready. Then it would be easier for you to know what to do.
- **Find an honest immigration consultant.** That could be a lifesaver. You will probably hear a million stories from different people during your time here, and they will all try to explain how you should immigrate. “You should do this”, “I have a cousin that did this other thing”, “You should do that. It worked for the brother of my second cousin who came 10 years ago to Vancouver.” or something similar to that... Regardless, it is always a good idea for you to find a GOOD immigration consultant and ask for their help.

Everyone is different, with different stories, backgrounds, skills, etc. All of this matters for immigration, so there is no “one size fits all” kind of formula for actually getting a PR. Do your research! Inform yourself, contact a consultant you can trust as many of them are just in this for the money and don't really care about you! And then, and only then, plan your path towards immigration and start executing!

Once these two **rules** came to Clara's mind, it was all clear from there. She set herself a solid plan. She found the proper immigration consultant, and she bought herself even more time by switching to a 2-year long program, a that would allow her to stay in Vancouver long enough to figure out the best way to apply for the PR. She agreed with herself that she would need to continue to do a great job, no matter where she was, to get an offer of sponsorship from an employer. That





wouldn't stop until she got one... She planned everything, visualized it, and once she had a clear vision, she aimed at it non-stop!

Of course, this doesn't mean things were easier from there, hell no! On the contrary, she needed to put more effort than everybody else! She needed to work more hours and be exceptional at everything she did as she couldn't lose her student status. She needed to stand out from everybody else at her work to be an essential part of the team. It was a race against time and a race against herself, to the point where Clara's process was no longer about her professional profile but about her willpower!

And boy! There were many points in her journey where she thought she couldn't handle it anymore. It's not an easy process. Life is a steep hill that is also constantly throwing things at you. It's a tiring process, and there are plenty of moments in which you just want to give up. Clara needed to work extra hours, spend time traveling here and there for her work, and limit herself when it came to spending. She needed to save money for her PR application, rent, expenses, immigration consultant, and slowly pay the debt she acquired to pay for 1 more year of studying. She sacrificed the "today" for the vision of having a better tomorrow, and man! Not everyone dares to do that!



Clara's journey is worthy of admiration, no less than that, although unfortunately, it's not over yet. Today, Clara is waiting for a response on her PR application. She managed to apply to the PR without even needing to be sponsored by an employer, as she committed herself to do. She has been waiting for a while, and she has no clue how much more she will need to wait. In the meantime, she is just hanging in there, planning her next step to be able to stay in Canada while still waiting for her PR response.



While that happens, we can not do much more than to wish her the best, to have our fingers crossed and wait along Clara for her PR's response, hoping it arrives in her life as positive news. Best of luck, Clara!!

Sincerely,

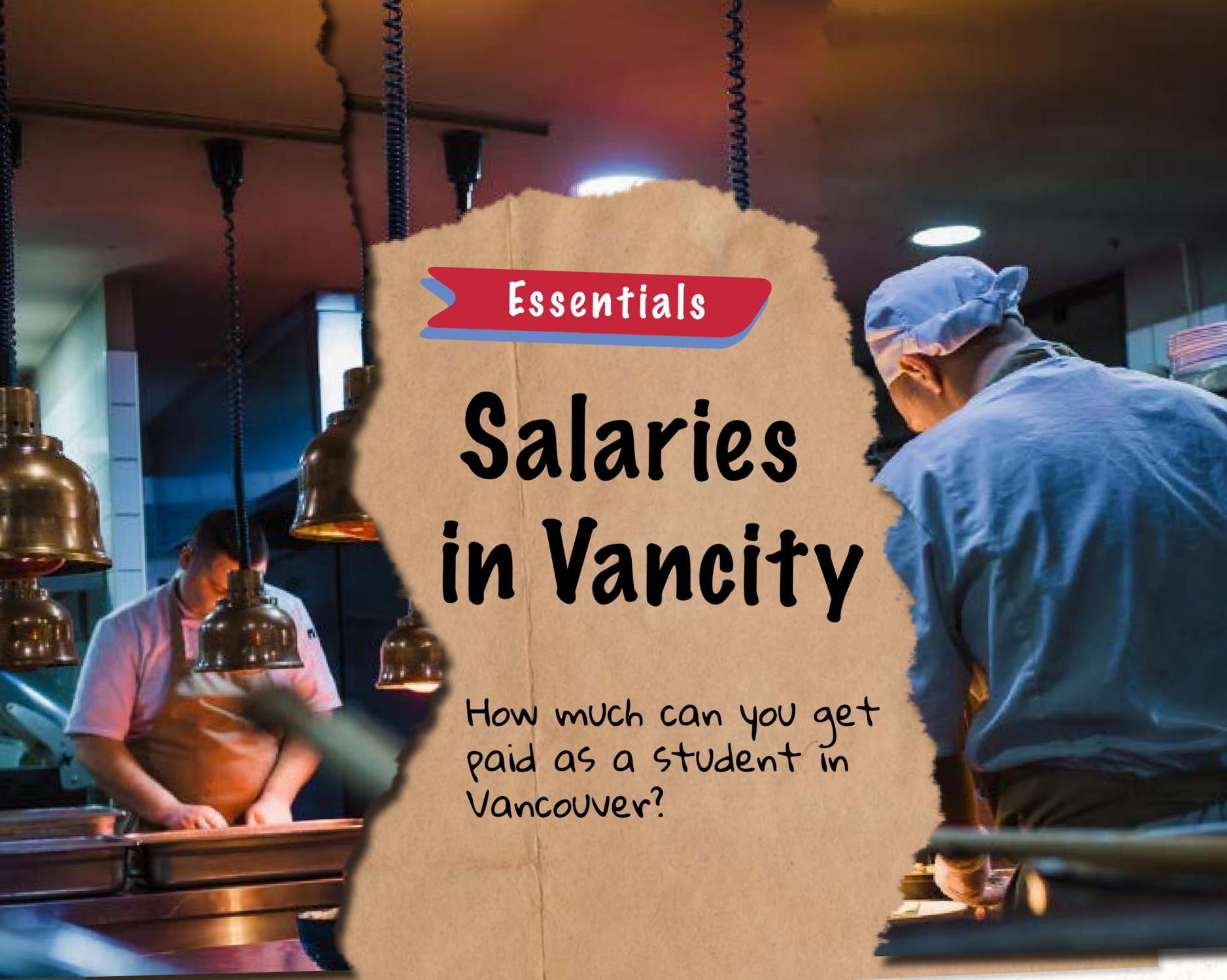
The Thrivve Team.

P.S. One more extra rule the Thrivve family got from talking to Clara... If you are just curious about living abroad, and that's why you want to study in Vancouver, for example, **consider first coming to study for a month or two.** It could be something as simple as coming for an English program or a short certification that you are interested in. Doing so might save you a lot of time, money, and resources and will prevent you from multiple headaches. You have no idea how many people blindly commit to a 1 or 2-year program in this city without really knowing if they will like either of them! As a result, by the 3rd or 4th month that they have been here, they are already regretting their decision. So please take your time to actually think if this journey is for you 😊.





Essentials



Essentials

Salaries in Vancity

How much can you get paid as a student in Vancouver?

Forgive the tone of this article. We always get serious when we are talking about money. We understand the implications of a job on your life as a student, so we take this responsibility very seriously.

We will cover the basics of working in Vancouver and then get to the numbers. So let's get started!

As you already know, international students with visas over 6 months (on a study permit) are allowed to work up to 20 hours a week. This is considered part-time work.

Check out [this article](#) about your first job in Vancouver as we discuss more about the study permit and how to find a job.

Part-time jobs in British Columbia are mostly, if not always, paid hourly. Now, what's the least you can get paid in BC 😅 before tax? The current minimum wage in Vancouver, BC, is \$15.65 an hour.



So the minimum you can make before tax is:

Hourly Wage	Weekly	Bi-weekly	Total in a month
\$15.65	\$313	\$626	\$1252

Part-time jobs are generally labour jobs, meaning that they are jobs such as waitressing, kitchen staff, sales, cashier, customer service ... etc. Unless you have specific in-demand skills, such as software engineering or digital marketing, you will probably spend your job hunt on craigslist. Small and medium businesses post on Craigslist or Kijiji because it is free but beware of scams! And be safe going to in-person interviews. The rule of thumb is always google any opportunity before you move forward.





Types of jobs available for students and the average wages for each job.

Job Type	Average Rate/Hour
Restaurant (front of house)	\$16 (Plus tips)
Kitchen staff	\$17 (Plus tips)
Cleaning/housekeeping	\$18
Security guard	\$17
Customer service	\$17
Retail	\$18
Caregiver	\$25
Moving company	\$20
Events company	\$25
Receptionist	\$19

These are just a few examples of the jobs you may encounter as a student. The wages differ from one listing to another but this is to give you an idea of how much you can get paid in Vancouver. There are many more jobs out there for you to look into. Keep in mind that sometimes finding a job is a job on its own, so be patient and be positive that this is all part of the wonderful journey of being an international student.





Essentials

SCAMS... BEWARE!!!

SCAMMERS TARGETING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Despite Canada constantly being ranked as one of the safest countries in the world, crime is not an exception here. One of the most common types of crimes on a day-to-day basis is scams! In a similar fashion to any other country, we have the classic random phone calls trying to get you to share personal information, email-based scams, and text messages; you name it!

However, here in Vancouver, International Students need to be more careful with two specific types of scams; FB Marketplace & Craigslist and job hunting scams.

Facebook Marketplace & Craigslist: Based on what we have heard from close friends and people in the Thrive community, we can definitely say that scams through Facebook's Marketplace and Craigslist are the most common ones people fall for! This can happen to anyone who is making a transaction through these plat-



forms, but the most common ones happen when international students are looking for accommodation. So be careful with that!

We actually have another article on [Dos and Don'ts](#) when it comes to renting in Vancouver. Go read the list of things to avoid doing in the renting process because they will help you avoid scams. Regardless, here are some other basic points for you to identify and avoid scammers:

- Avoid accommodation listings in which they show none or almost no pictures!!
- Avoid listings that are posted multiple times and with poorly written descriptions.

Golden Rule: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!!! A time will come in which you'll find a posting for a place you really like and that you would do anything to have! It will probably look like a beautiful, modern place for a really low price. If this happens... make sure to compare the price of that property with other similar properties around the area. If it's low compared to the other ones, it's probably a scam, so just let it go.

Job hunting scams: Now, this type of scam is a little bit more tricky to identify and even to understand... but this one specifically targets international students!! Please keep your eye open for this one.

Scammers have gotten smarter, and their tricks are getting more and more sophisticated. They have realized they can steal thousands of dollars by deceiving international students who are looking for jobs in Canada.

How does this scam work? It works by tricking students into thinking they are going to be hired by a company that is willing to sponsor a work visa for them.

How it starts. It starts with a job posting, which is usually uploaded to the most common job search platforms such as LinkedIn, Indeed,





ment while we work on your immigration process. Furthermore, we are sending you the contact of a supplier of ours with whom you can buy all this equipment at a discounted price”

Finally, the scam takes place!! And this is when the scam happens.

1. The cheque they are sending you is fake! Therefore, you won't have the money to buy all the stuff they are asking for.

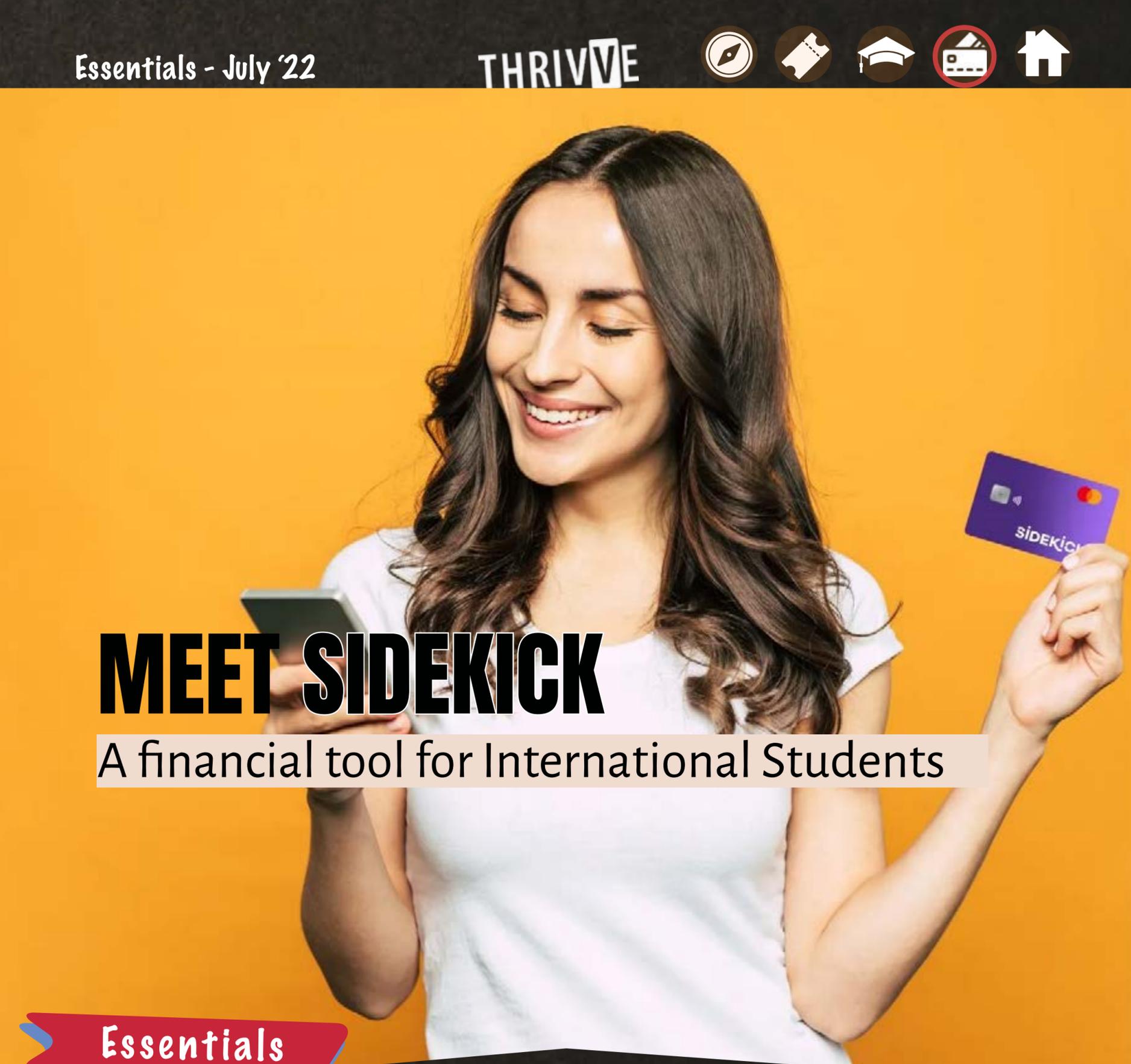
- Keep in mind that, in Canada, when you deposit a cheque into your account, your balance will immediately reflect the cheque's amount you just deposited. However, that's just the balance of what you would have if the cheque clears with the bank! This fund checking process will take the bank about a week.

2. The “supplier” they are referring you to... doesn't exist! It's them! So, if you buy the equipment they are asking you for from the supplier, you will just be paying them with your own money!!! The cheque will bounce after a week, and you will have spent your savings for nothing. 😞

This type of scam has its variations, of course. Sometimes they ask you to buy equipment. Sometimes, they ask you for money for your “work visa applications” and other alterations to the same story... So, the short version of what we are trying to say is: NEVER TRUST AN EMPLOYER WHO ASKS YOU FOR MONEY. Regardless of the situation!

This has been a growing problem. More and more of our students have reported falling for this type of scam, and, sadly, there's no authority or institution in Canada that can help people who get scammed like this. We hope this article helps you avoid this rising issue. Be careful out there!

All the best,
The Thrivve team!



MEET SIDEKICK

A financial tool for International Students

Essentials

Some of the most common questions we hear from international students are “How can I bring my savings to Canada?” “What's the best bank to open an account with?” “Which are the best credit cards for international students?” All of them are very important questions, and we actually cover the answer to one of them in one of our previous [articles](#). However, we want to present you with a potential answer for all those questions, a tool that is made specifically for international students and that has your best interest in mind!

Meet Sidekick!! The all-in-one financial solution for international students in Canada.

Last month, we had the opportunity to meet with Mauricio Korb-er, a professional who has worked in the international education industry for over 10 years and is currently part of the Sidekick team. He was kind enough to explain to us a little bit more about this financial solution. Here's what we learned:



- **First things first. What, exactly, is Sidekick?** Sidekick Card is a web portal that provides mobile payments, prepaid credit cards, and financial solutions specifically made for international students. Also, Sidekick is backed up by Mastercard, which means you can access their atm network basically from anywhere.
- **How does it work?** Well, the card works for both students whose parents are financing their studies in Canada and for self-financed students. Sidekick was created to mainly support students who are about to go to Canada and are in need of safely transferring money from their home countries to Canada. That being said, this card will still help students who are already in Canada. They can apply for it too! Although by then, they have probably already gone through the struggle of finding a different method to bring some savings with them to Canada.

Therefore, one of the biggest pains Sidekick helps ease for international students is that they don't need to worry about finding a way to send all their savings to Canada or bring them in cash. I mean, who likes the idea of just travelling around with 10,000 dollars in cash? It's just not ideal.

- **What's the process to get a Sidekick Card? Any requirements?** The process is super simple and quick! It takes you no longer than 5 to 6 minutes to complete all the steps, and everything can be done through their website. It's fairly easy to register. You just need to have your email and personal info, like any other common registration form, plus proof that you are an international student. This could be either your study permit (if you have it already), or the LOA (Letter Of Acceptance) you got from your school, and that's basically the only requirement. They even allow students as young as 8 years old to get one of their cards! (with their parents managing their accounts, of course).
- **Ok, I have already applied for the card. What's next?** The cards are only delivered in Canada, and they will go directly to your accommodation. Whether it's a Homestay, student housing, or a place you found on your own, it doesn't matter. It's important to mention, though, that they do not send the cards to your



school, only directly to your accommodation. Something for you to keep in mind 😊

The other option is, if you are either in Vancouver or Toronto, that you can choose to pick up their card at any PhoneBox location, which is a local telecommunications provider. This option is also the go-to if you need to request a replacement of your card. If you go to PhoneBox, you can request a card replacement for free.

- **So, once I have the card, do I need to go to Sidekick's website to access my card information?** No, you don't! Once you have the card, you can download their mobile app from the App Store or Google Play Store and link it to your card. You will then be able to manage your transactions, check balances, and so on.
- **Is this a free service?** It basically is, yes! Their basic package only requires a one-time activation fee of \$35 CAD, and after that, it is completely free! They do have a premium option as well, which you can subscribe to for just \$10CAD per month, and it lets you have up to 3 students in one account! So it's ideal for parents who are sending their kids to study in Canada. Plus, you also get some extra benefits like their budgeting tool and their wellness support service.
- **What are the alternatives to Sidekick?** As a matter of fact, Sidekick is the alternative to the most common services you know, like PayPal, Xoom, Western Union, or bringing your savings in cash! All of them have their advantages and disadvantages, including Sidekick, so it mostly depends on you to decide which service or alternative is the best for your needs.

It's so great to hear about products and services like this, and we could probably keep writing and addressing more and more information relevant to this card, but we think it's better for you to see it for yourself 😊 For more information on Sidekick, please feel free to check out their website at <https://www.sidekickcard.com/> or send them an email at hi@sidekickcard.com. The Sidekick team will be more than happy to help you out.



People, just in case you are thinking about this, this was not a paid article! Although it might seem like it. Thrive is constantly looking for any information about products, services, or programs that we believe might be useful for your journey as an international student. There's tons of information that no one ever tells you about before coming to Canada or even once you are here, so we want to be that missing piece for you!

Hearing what Sidekick wants to do and all the support they offer for students, we decided to share their work with you so that, luckily enough, you can have one less thing to worry about 😊

With love, the Thrive team!







Home

Landlords in Vancouver

Making the renting process a nightmare!

It's known worldwide that Vancouver is one of the most expensive cities to live in, and the biggest contributing factor to this is the ridiculously high renting prices. However, on top of that, tenants have to face another big problem: how complicated the Landlords are making the renting process! Daaaamn, finding accommodation has become an absolute nightmare 😊💀

We are not kidding; sometimes, applying for a property you like feels even more complicated than applying for the Permanent Residency! How come? Well, it's simple. Landlords are just trying to protect their properties and make sure their financials won't be compromised by renting their place to the wrong person. So it's easy to understand why they want to be very thorough when picking their tenants. But have they gone too far?



#Fun fact: Do you know the term “Squatter”? It’s a term for those who, once they manage to secure rent in one place, won’t leave no matter what the landlord tries to do! They won’t pay rent, won’t answer the landlord’s phone calls, and won’t leave the house as they can live by ordering food. They are probably a landlord’s worst nightmare!! Now we understand what property owners are trying to protect themselves from.

Renting in Vancouver has always been difficult. There are tons of people looking for a place to stay at the same time. Yet, there aren't that many great places to stay in (lots of demand, not the best supply), and everyone is fighting to be either in downtown or close to a Skytrain station and, of course, the biggest issue of all, the market prices.

However, over the past few years, and probably due to the pandemic, the renting process has become even harder for international students. The reason is that Landlords have increased the required paperwork for the renting application with the intention of having a great tenant. Plenty of those things are super challenging to obtain for international students! Especially for those who are literally just arriving. Here's what they ask for:

- **PROOF OF YOUR STATUS IN CANADA**
(copy of your visa)
- **PROOF OF INCOME:**
 - ~ Paystubs
 - ~ Job references (preferably from a supervisor, not a coworker)
- **REFERENCE FROM PREVIOUS LANDLORD**
- **CREDIT CHECK**
- **COVER LETTER** (a one-page document explaining who you are and why are you interested in their place)
- **BRITISH COLUMBIA IDENTIFICATION**
- **TENANT INSURANCE**
- **A SIGNED TENANCY AGREEMENT**
- **PASSPORT COPY**





This amount of documentation is annoying... but it apparently has become the standard over the past few months! So, when looking for a place, ensure you have all of these documents ready whenever a potential property owner or representative asks you for them. You'll never know when you'll need them.

Attention: Plenty of landlords will mention as requirements for you to be able to stay in their place things that are not allowed for them to ask for!!!! So be aware of that. The best way to ensure you are doing the right thing is by referring to the [BC's tenancy agreement](#). Always try to use that agreement when signing for a property rental. This way, you will be entirely sure you are agreeing only to the terms the government of BC has set in that agreement.

Here are a couple of examples of what we mean:

- Some Landlords will try to forbid you from having guests in your place. That's illegal! Let's say you want to invite some of your classmates to your house to finish a class project; you are within your right to do so! Although many landlords will try to fool you and say otherwise.
 - They can, however, establish a reasonable "visiting hours" plan with you.
- Another widespread example is the landlord not allowing you to hang anything on the walls... not even a poster with tape! But that's BS. You can even install shelves in your apartment, as long as you leave your apartment in the same condition as you found it. That means fixing any holes you drill for hanging stuff around. So our suggestion is... read the basic [tenancy agreement](#) the government provides! It will help you a lot when it comes to the dos and don'ts of the renting process, and you can always ask your landlord to use that agreement instead of their own. If they do not agree to that term, they probably want to take advantage of you.





Extra tip! Check out these pages. They might help you find if, by any chance, the person you are trying to close an agreement with is giving you a good or bad deal. These sites contain reviews from tenants about their contracts with different people. If you are lucky, you might find some info about the person you are interested in making a deal with 😊

<https://www.ratemylandlord.com/landlords/>

<https://www.openigloo.com/>



Home

Discover

GEC

Student accommodations in Vancouver!

If you have been following us for a while, then you are already familiar with all the different types of accommodations you can find in Vancouver. We discussed that in our [Finding Accommodation 101](#) article in our 1st issue. There, we mention a specific type developed for international students; Students Housing or Residencies. These accommodations basically consist of a dormitory in either a building or a house exclusive to international students.

The rooms in this type of accommodation could be shared or single and, depending on the type of accommodation, the kitchens and washrooms would also be shared. This is the type of accommodation you frequently see in American movies when a student moves into the campus accommodation or when they join a fraternity, for example.

So, what's the Best Student Housing option in Vancouver?

Now that we have refreshed your memory, we want to introduce you to GEC Living! Global Education City (GEC) is probably the primary private provider of student housing options within Metro Vancouver, and it's easy to see why.

GEC has set a standard in the industry on how things should be done when providing housing for international students. With 5 residences already distributed around the city, and one more to come in just a couple of months, they have helped over 10,000 students from over 71 countries! So they for sure know what they are doing.

“But what accommodations options do they offer?” 🤔 Well, GEC likes to keep things simple for its students, so you can find 3 options with them:



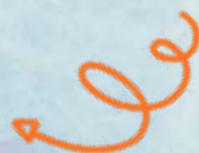
← **Shared Bedrooms**



↷ **Renting the whole place**



Private Rooms in a shared apartment



The prices range, of course, varies depending on which location you pick, which type of accommodation, and the length of your stay. The longer you stay, the cheaper it would be for you 😊 The average starting price is around \$270 per week for a shared room, just for you to have an idea. However, if you would like a more concrete price range, feel free to reach out to them directly so they can give you a quote.

#Tip: If you like what you see, plan well ahead of your stay with GEC!! As they are popular and pretty busy throughout the year. For example, just for this year, GEC is Fully booked until December 2022!! So, if you are coming to study in Canada for Spring 2023, now is an excellent time to book your stay with them 😊

Why GEC and not other options?

Well, we are going to be completely transparent here. Yes. GEC does not offer the cheapest of options when it comes to accommodation, we get that, but the cost-benefit you get by staying with them is totally worth it!

	GEC®	Homestay Families	On-Campus Housing	Shared Apartment
Minimum Lease	✔ 5 weeks	✔ Flexible	✘ 1 year	✘ 1 year
Lease Payment	✔ Monthly	✔ Monthly	✘ Upfront	✔ Monthly
Furniture & Appliances	✔ Included	✔ Included	✘ +\$150	✘ +\$150
Utilities	✔ Included	✔ Included	✔ Included	✘ +\$100
Internet	✔ 100 mbps	✔ ~100 mbps	✔ ~100 mbps	✘ +\$50
In-Suite Laundry	✔ Included	✔ Once a week	✘ +\$25	✘ +\$25
Weekly Housekeeping	✔ Included	✘ None	✘ None	✘ None
Fitness Centre	✔ Included	✘ +\$75	✔ Included	✘ +\$75
On-Site Management & Centralized Security	✔ Included	✘ None	✔ Included	✘ None
Student Community Experience	✔ Included	✘ None	✔ Included	✘ None
Total Per Month	\$1,100+ Groceries +\$ 500	\$1,200+ Meal Plan Included	\$1,275+ Meal Plan +\$ 800	\$1,400+ Groceries +\$ 500

All the financial figures are the best estimate or average market rate for the Metro Vancouver market as of Mar 1st, 2022. Prices may change subject to a variety of factors and market conditions.



The concept of arriving in Canada while already having secured a place to live is fantastic. You have no idea how many headaches and problems you can avoid by doing so! A place that is well located, safe, clean, and transparent thought-out the whole renting process. That is the real value behind GEC. So, if you are looking for accommodation and you have no idea where to go, now you know where to start looking 😊

For more information, visit <https://gecliving.com/> directly.





Home

Dos and Don'ts when renting in Vancouver



Renting in Vancouver might be very different from renting back home. As first-time renters, you may encounter strange requests from landlords or agents ... we know. As renters in Vancouver, we have learned many lessons over time, and now we want to share these lessons with you!

We have compiled a list of dos and don'ts when renting your home in Vancouver. You may feel intimidated when looking at this list, but don't worry; even if you have made mistakes or if you do fall for a trick by a landlord, it's all part of the learning process, forgive yourself and move on - there will be better memories to replace them with. So let's look at the "To-Dos" first.

✓ Do...

Do in-person viewings

Never rent a place that you haven't vetted yourself. If you can't go, or if you still haven't come to Vancouver yet, send a friend. No friend? Then stay in a temporary place through a trusted agency, such as Homestay and GEC. We also heard of nikiapp.com, where they go for viewings on behalf of students. Most scams happen because students can't vet the listing. Either the place doesn't exist, or 5 people are living in a two-bedroom apartment. Jeez, that's a mess! 😅



Do sign a contract

This is important! Well, they are all important 😊 But this one prevents you from potentially being homeless. For example, while searching for a home, you will come across basement suites, renovated basements that homeowners rent out to pay their mortgage. Some owners don't want to declare this as an income when they file their taxes, so they avoid contracts "proof" and ask you to pay in cash. The risk here is that the tenant law does not protect you. If you come home and find all your stuff on the sidewalk, there is nothing you can do about it. So, insist on signing a contract. You can use a [template](#) provided by the government.

Do look up the bedbug registry

This might sound strange to you, but bedbugs are real! They are nasty blood-sucking insects that, once they enter your home, will be very very hard to get rid of. And expensive! So check the history of bedbugs for that property. Sometimes putting the address and adding "bedbugs" on google can get you some answers. There are also websites out there that keep a [registry](#) of bedbug reportings.

Do check the public transportation

Sometimes when looking for a place to stay, you may find that your options are few, especially at a specific price range, so you rush when applying for an apartment/room within your range. If you find one that accepts your application, you may also rush to put in a deposit and sign that contract. The point here is that you also may forget to check the accessibility of the place by public transportation. So remember to check that quickly by going on maps and seeing the travel time between your school and the home by public transit before sending out your application.

Do check what neighbourhoods to avoid

We will keep this point short and sweet. There are neighbourhoods that you should avoid. It's not because they are unsafe. It's just that they come with some petty crimes and odours. We list and talk about these neighbourhoods in our article [Places to Avoid](#). check it out!





Do request 24 hours' notice before the landlord visits

Although this should be mentioned in the renter agreement, sometimes you must pay extra attention to it, especially when renting a basement suite. Homeowners will use the excuse of you being a "student" and being in "their home" to do surprise checkups. But you are not a child and you are entitled to your privacy, so say no to nosey landlords and ask them to respect the 24-hour notice rule.

Do consider the utilities

Depending on what you are renting, some places will ask you to register for your own utility accounts. Such as Hydro, water, and internet. Some other places might have all included in the rent or just water. Ask beforehand so that you can arrange to set up any accounts you need before you move in. These accounts will ask for deposits that the company will pay back in a few months; therefore, budget for that too.

✘ Don't...

Don't pay the first month's rent before you receive the key

When securing a place, you are asked to pay the deposit and sign a contract. That is normal. What is not acceptable is that you pay the first month's rent before you receive the key to the home. Some owners might still try to ask for the rent in advance, object and don't be afraid of repercussions. If you accept, it will become the norm for others, and not everyone can afford to pay that much upfront.

Don't give your SIN

Every agent or homeowner will have different application forms for renters to apply. A phenomenon that we came across multiple times is that they would ask for your social insurance number on the application. Don't fill it! They have no right to ask for it. Some will ignore it and won't comment on it, but some will have the audacity to pressure you and even threaten to reject your application. You are only expected to give your SIN to your employer, bank and accountant. We don't want you to fall victim to identity theft. They can run a credit check without your SIN.





Don't pay the last month's rent in advance

Want to hear about another audacious act by landlords/agents? Well, you should listen to it anyway 🤪. They will ask you to pay a deposit + the First month + the LAST MONTH's rent. Their excuse is that it's in case you leave without notice or if you can't pay your rent, they will have money to cover it. That is illegal. They can not ask you for that. Stand your ground and say, "NO. I know better than to do that."

Don't pay more than half the rent as a deposit

In British Columbia, the deposit is a maximum of a half-month. Landlords can't ask for more than half a month for a deposit, but of course, some will still try to ask for more. 😞

Don't pay utilities deposit if the utilities are included

The same goes for utility deposits if the utilities are included in the rent. They will say something like if electricity comes back more than \$60, they will charge you the extra amount. Or if you leave and your bill is too high, they will use the deposit to pay it. It's nonsense, and you can dispute it.

Don't pay an application fee

Since people rush to apply for home rentals, they end up applying to many places at once. It's like when you swipe right on everyone on Tinder in hopes of a match. Landlords fear that most applicants are not serious renters or will have other options already, so they charge application fees to weed out the mass applicants. We understand why they do it, but you can still refuse if you don't think it is okay.

This is our list. Please keep in mind that not all homeowners are like that. We don't want to paint them with a suspicious brush, but we are here to help protect you, so we are somewhat biased towards you 😊. If you find the landlords' requests reasonable, you can add it to your agreement, as long as you are okay with it.

Do you have more questions about the renting process in Vancouver? Do you have lessons of your own that you want to share with us? Send us an email, a message or better yet, start the topic on Thrive's [forum](#).

Contributors



Rafah Al-Mutarreb

Co-Founder, Editor in Chief & Graphic Design

As an international student myself during my bachelor's in Asia and my masters in Canada, I gained different perspectives on what it takes to study abroad. I have eight years of experience in various fields; Marketing, Advertising, Education and Entrepreneurship. I am creative and clumsy, and now I am a full-time Thrivver, dedicated to our community.

Javier LaValle

Co-Founder, Writer and Creative Director

I've worked in the International Education industry for over 5 years now, and I have had the opportunity of working in almost every possible angle of it! I have worked for agencies, and service providers, schools... and during this time I realized how hard it is for people to go through the whole process of studying abroad and I wanted to do something about it!



Hermann Fink

Content Creator

I'm an international student from Mexico City. After almost 6 years in Canada, I've lived the struggles of an international student, completed my studies, and managed to successfully start a life in Vancouver. I worked as a business instructor for a few years and heard all kinds of stories from students like you. I hope I can share some of my knowledge through this magazine, so that you have an amazing experience here!

THRIVVE