

Regular Exchange Program Short term Study Program (SSP) Study India Program (SIP)

GENERAL INFORMATION

- The Ontario India Student Exchange Program (OIN) is one of four programs run by Ontario Universities International (OUI) (<http://www.ouinternational.ca/programs>)
- The OIN website lists Ontario universities that are partners of OIN. The program is open to undergraduate and graduate (including PhD) students from these universities.
- OIN offers three options: (i) **Regular Exchange**—attending an Indian partner university for one semester or the full year academic year; (ii) **Short Term Study Program**—doing an independent study project of two or three months duration under the supervision of a faculty member at an Indian partner university; (iii) **Study India Program**—participating in a month long program, in August, offered by Symbiosis International University in Pune. The program is an introduction to the study of India. Students pay a fee of approximately \$2000 (2018 rate). The fee covers tuition, accommodation, some meals and travel.
- The OIN website has information on the three options. Check the ‘Ontario students’ pages for details.
- Students accepted into the program are awarded a scholarship of between \$2000 and \$3500, depending on the option they choose.

APPLICATION PROCESS & TIMELINES

SEPTEMBER

It is advisable to begin by reading the information posted on the OIN website. You may then either speak with your international office or email the OIN academic director (sukeshi.kamra@carleton.ca) about the process, of application, and the types of programs, as well as about going on exchange to India. You could also take a look at reports filed by former students, on their time in India, and posted on the OIN website as well.

- Students interested in the Regular Exchange program should also consult: [Ontario-India Student Exchange: Information on Partner Institutions in India](#) (document posted under “Ontario Students” subtab “Programs”).
- Students interested in the Short Term Study Program (SSP) should consult: [Ontario-India Student Exchange: Information on the Short Term Study Program](#), posted under the same subtab.

- Students interested in the Study India Program (SIP) should consult: [Ontario-India Student Exchange: Information on the Study India Program](#), posted under the same subtab.

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

- Information Sessions and Advising: **usually in late September to end October of every year, Ontario universities hold an international fair for their students. At this fair, representatives from Ontario Universities International may be present and/or your international office will have pamphlets provided by OUI on display.**
- The OIN Academic Director arranges to be present on campus for a dedicated information session between October and November. It is advisable to attend such a session, if one is held, as you will meet others who are thinking of going on exchange in the same academic year from your institution and will have an opportunity to ask questions about the academic culture in India, travelling to India, living in India, and so on.
- Between September and January, the OIN Academic Director is available, on email and telephone, to assist in matching your interests with the appropriate partner institution in India.

DECEMBER

- Ontario universities have their own internal deadline for submission of applications from students interested in applying for OIN. [The deadline is usually some time in December for the regular Exchange Program and the Short Term Study Program.](#) The Study India Program has a later deadline. Interested students should check with their university's international office.
- **IMPORTANT:** applications to OIN/OUI [must be submitted to a university's international office.](#) It is the university that submits the OIN application to OUI. Direct applications are not accepted by OUI.

JANUARY

- The OIN deadline for submission of applications for: (1) the Regular Exchange; and (2) Short Term Study Program is [31 January.](#) International offices at Ontario universities are aware of the deadline.

FEBRUARY-MARCH

- The process of matching student with Indian partner institutions (for both Regular Exchange and Short Term Study Program) begins in mid-February. In these two months, there is much communication between the student and the Academic Director of the OIN exchange program.
- The aim is to have students placed by the end of March, if not earlier.
- By end March or early April, students receive an official Letter of Acceptance from the OIN program via email. Both host institution and home institution are copied on the email. This letter must be included in the application for an Indian visa application (details below).

- Accompanying the letter are the following: (i) a release statement which **MUST** be sent back to the OUI office; (ii) a document with relevant information; (iii) a 'next steps' document which contains information provided by the host institution in India.
- Once students have received the letter of acceptance into the OIN exchange program, which states where they have been placed, they should contact the host institution in India and request a similar letter, of acceptance, from them. Host institutions are aware they have to provide OIN students with such a letter on letterhead.
- Finally, home institutions are required to provide students with a letter that contains the following information for (Indian) visa purposes: (i) details regarding standing, (ii) program of study, (iii) a statement that they are aware the student has been accepted into the OIN exchange program; (iv) start and end dates of the exchange (for example—that the student will be at the host institution in India from July-Dec or that they will be there on a Short Term Study Program for two months starting in August).
- Regular Exchange: students placed in an Indian university for a semester or year should start the process of settling the courses (which ones, how many) they will take at the host institution. This process can take some time. **IMPORTANT:** students are advised to read the document they are sent along with the letter of acceptance into the OIN exchange program for information regarding course selection and equivalencies.
- Short Term Study Program (SSP): Information regarding correspondence with faculty at the host institution and discussing the SSP (hours per week of meeting time; topic of study, and so on) is included in the document students are sent along with the letter of acceptance into the OIN exchange program.
- NOTE re. STUDY INDIA PROGRAM: the deadline for the Study India Program (SIP) applications to be received by OIN at the OUI office is **1 March**. Once again, it is the university's international office that forwards the application to OUI.

APRIL

- The process of placement for the Regular Exchange Program and the Short Term Study Program is completed.
- The SIP students are sent letters of acceptance by OIN and Symbiosis University.

MAY

- In early May, an orientation for Ontario students headed to India on exchange takes place at York University in Toronto. Students are advised to attend for a number of reasons: they get to meet one another, which frequently results in students travelling together when in India; the OIN director meets with the students to go over some important information and answer questions; students meet and interact with other students from Ontario universities who are headed out to France, Germany, and China; and, finally, students get to interact with representative(s) from the Indian consulate.

IMPORTANT: if students going to India on the Short Term Study Program are leaving in May itself they should make sure they have their Indian visa by end April. For the rest, who are leaving either in time for the August

SIP or the Regular Exchange (which in most instances would be for a July start of the first semester in India), the Visa application process will start later, approx. a month before departure.

- In May, Regular Exchange program students, SIP students, and SSP students who are headed out to India in June and later should begin preparations for departure.

PREPARATIONS for INDIA

VISA

- Canadian citizens and residents need a visa to visit and/or study in India. Check <http://www.cgitoronto.ca/content/visa> for details.
- Visa applications are submitted to BLS (<http://www.blsindia-canada.com/visa.php>).
- Students are advised to apply for the visa ('student' visa; subcategory "exchange student") at least a month before departure. As mentioned in the paragraph under February-March, students need to submit the following along with the application: (i) the OIN letter; (ii) letter from the home university; (iii) letter from the host university. If students are planning on spending a significant amount of time in India they may be asked to prove they have sufficient funds in a bank account in Canada. **Word of Advice:** call BLS before going to their office, inform them that you are an 'exchange student' and mention the length of time you will be in India. Ask them what you need to provide other than the three letters mentioned above.

VACCINATIONS

- Check the Health Canada website for a list of recommended vaccinations.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

- Students are advised to have travel insurance in place before leaving for India (that, at a minimum, covers trip cancellation and hospitalization). Travel CUTS (<https://www.travelcuts.com/insurance>) has been used by students in the past.

PASSPORT-SIZE PHOTOS

- Students are advised to carry a minimum of six passport-size photos with them just in case these are required for host university forms and the like. The Indian passport photo is of a different size than the Canadian one. Most photo shops in Canada have the capability of generating the correct passport photo for any country.

INDIAN RUPEES, CREDIT and DEBIT CARDS

- Students are advised to make sure they have some Indian rupees with them. Any bank in Canada should be able to provide rupees. Exchanging Canadian dollars in India is easy to do, either at a bank or at shops that display the sign 'currency exchange'. There will be recognized currency exchange kiosks at the airport as well.
- Canadian debit cards can be used at a number of banks (such as HDFC and Citibank as well as the State Bank of India) which display the 'Plus' sign.

- The standard credit cards are widely accepted as well (VISA, Mastercard, American Express) and safe to use.

REGISTERING ON THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT'S TRAVEL WEBSITE

- **IMPORTANT:** Students are strongly advised to register at the travel.gc.ca website.

ARRIVING in INDIA

- Students going to Delhi will arrive at Indira Gandhi International Airport. ,
- Students going to Mumbai will arrive at Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport in Mumbai. (Pune students can fly to Pune or to Mumbai).
- If the host institution does not offer an airport pick up service students can:
 - (i) get a 'pre-paid taxi'. There will be a booth past Baggage pick up where customers state their destination and will be charged accordingly in rupees. The customer is then given a chit that needs to be handed over to the driver of the taxi, at the taxi stand just outside the terminal. Follow the taxi signs to get there. **Once outside the airport building you will not be allowed to return to the building so make sure you have all your belongings with you.** Taxis at the taxi stand are first come first serve. It would be appropriate to give the driver a tip.
 - (ii) Students arriving in India at night and who do not wish to take a taxi at the time are advised to stay at the airport and take a taxi when it is light.
 - (iii) Another option is to stay at an airport hotel and take a shuttle to the same. Book the hotel online before leaving for India. Many major hotel chains have hotels within or just outside the airport complex. Delhi: check the IGI airport website for details and/or check expedia, booking.com for hotels in Gurgaon. Holiday Inn, Ibis, Sheraton, Marriott, and other similar chains have hotels near the IGI airport. Mumbai: a similar search of the Chhatrapati Shivaji airport should turn up a list of hotels near the airport.
- **Foreigners who stay in India for more than 180 days** are required to register themselves with the Foreigners Regional Registration Officer (FRRO) which has jurisdiction over the place in which the foreigner plans to stay. This process must take place within 14 days of arrival in India. Students need to bring the following with them:
 - a copy of the passport and Indian visa (you will need to show the original and give them a xerox copy),
 - a document signed by the Indian host institution after registration at the latter,
 - passport size photo, and
 - proof of accommodation/residence in India (landlords are required to fill out a form which can be found on the website mentioned in the next sentence).
 - Please check <http://www.boi.gov.in/content/general-instructions-registration-foreigners> for details as there may be updates not captured above.
 - **IMPORTANT:** (i) some institutions, such as Symbiosis, register foreign students regardless of the length of stay; (ii) if students are planning on travelling in India, such that their stay in India exceeds the 180 day limit, they must ensure that the host institution is aware so

that the latter can provide forms to take to the FRRO office; (iii) if the course of study at the host institution is more than 180 days, students must ensure that the host institution (international office) registers them with the FRRO.

CAMPUS INFORMATION

- Most campuses have wi-fi available for their students. Students can access it when they have been given a student number/ID. NOTE: the process can take a few days.
- Most campuses also have eateries (usually called 'canteen') and do not permit alcohol on the premises.
- Universities may or may not have gyms.
- Campuses are usually well connected by bus, three-wheelers (which are a cheap and safe way to get around), and the metro (in Delhi and Mumbai).
- Some institutions offer an airport pick up service (Jindal, Symbiosis, IISER). See below for information on the taxi system in Indian airports.
- The International Office, and /or the Dean's Office at the host institution is your contact on campus. Students must ensure that they are in touch with the International Office at the host institution at all times and inform them of travel plans (make sure they have contact information).
- Residential universities (such as BITS Goa; Symbiosis; Shiv Nadar; Jindal) have a medical clinic on campus.

ACCOMMODATION

- Some institutions have hostels (usually segregated by gender) on campus, which are open to exchange students, while others do not. Check the overview information on individual institutions provided in the document titled Information for Ontario Students: on Partner Universities for details.
- **IMPORTANT: many university hostels have a curfew policy.** Students are not permitted to leave the campus after the stipulated time (usually around 9 pm) unless they have authorization from the warden of their hostel. There may also be a limit on the number of days per term a student can be absent from campus (outside of university holidays).
- If there is no on-campus housing, students can (i) check with the international office/contact person listed in the overview documents that follow to see if the host institution has a list of paying guest accommodations or a list of rental flats. If they do, it is more than likely that the rentals and other forms of accommodation are in use by international students. (ii) Look up the YMCA and YWCA on the web. Both have hostels in most cities in India. They can also refer you to other hostels frequented by international students and tourists. (iii) OIN may be able to put students in touch with former students who may have some leads.
- *Check the listings for the city in which you will be based on the following website (there are many more similar websites):* <http://property.sulekha.com/rentals>; or check facebook pages such as the following (for Delhi; there should be similar pages for other cities):
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/southdelhihousing/>;
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/expathelpinedelhi/>

- We may be able to put you in touch with former OIN exchange students who may have some leads.

MEDICAL FACILITIES: ON CAMPUS AND OFF CAMPUS

- Medical facilities: Most residential universities have a medical clinic on campus. Check with the international advisor/office at the host institution about the same. Indian cities have state of the art hospitals with “outpatient” and emergency services. Most of them also have pathology labs, CT Scan, MRI, and other diagnostic facilities available for a fee. If you have a doctor’s note requesting a scan or MRI, X-ray, or lab tests, take it to the reception desk at the hospital (clinics also offer similar services) and they will provide you with information and/or set up a time for you to have the tests done.
- Students are advised to inform the international advisor/office at the host institution and contact the OIN director if they are facing a medical situation or emergency. The following hospitals are very well equipped private hospitals with several branches throughout India: Max, Fortis, Medanta. It is important to carry travel insurance and to be aware of the coverage it offers—whether it will cover hospital stays, at which hospitals, and how reimbursement will work.
- General Practitioner: If universities have a medical clinic, exchange students may consult a general physician there. Indian cities and towns have numerous clinics with general practitioners. Ask the international advisor at the host institution, for references. Medical attention is on a fee-per-use basis and the average consultation fee is in the range of \$20-30.