

International Student Handbook 2025

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WELCOME

Welcome to Columbia Bible College! We are pleased that you have chosen to study at Columbia and look forward to journeying with you!

This handbook is full of helpful information to guide you through your time with us, so please take the time to familiarize yourself with the contents.

We look forward to seeing you on campus!

TRAVELLING TO AND ARRIVING IN CANADA

Navigation the YVR Airport

Most of our students arrive in British Columbia at the Vancouver International Airport (locally referred to as YVR). Find your way around YVR with these [terminal maps](#).

Below you can find general guidelines that will help you navigate the airport.

Please refer to posted signage in the terminal when you arrive for more information.

Arriving from another country

If YVR is your port of entry into Canada and you are arriving from an international city (e.g. Atlanta or Frankfurt); these steps are for you!

1. Arrive at your gate
 - a. Proceed to Arrivals Level 2 and follow signs for “All passengers”.
2. Canada Border Services and Immigration
 - a. Wait in the designated areas to see a Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) officer who will inspect your passport.
 - b. You can ask for an interpreter if you need an English translation.

- c. After inspection, follow the signs to Immigration.
3. At the Canadian Immigration Checkpoint, a border services officer will determine if you can enter the country. Make sure you have the following documents ready:
 - a. Valid passport
 - b. Study permit, OR study permit approval letter (letter of introduction)
 - c. A copy of your official letter of acceptance from Columbia Bible College
 - d. Confirmation of enrolment (download from myCBC)
4. Claim Your Baggage
 - a. Pick your luggage up at the Baggage claim section after you have passed through Canada Border Services and Immigration. You can check the display screen to see which baggage carousel corresponds with your flight.

Tip: There are free baggage carts located in the baggage claims area for your convenience.

5. Enter the International Reception Lounge
 - a. After you exit the baggage claim area, you will enter the international reception lounge area where you can find tourism information if you wish.
6. Public Greeting Area and Exit
 - a. Walk through the automatic glass doors to the public greeting area. From there you will need to find transportation to the College.

Getting to CBC

- International students should plan to take a taxi or ride share service (such as [Uber](#)) or have a private pick-up (by family or other) directly to

the College.

- Taxis and wheelchair-accessible vehicles are available at taxi stand located on Level 2 of the Domestic and International Arrivals Area at YVR.

Packing your Suitcase

The Fraser Valley Climate

Abbotsford is located in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia (BC). We are known to be the warmest region across Canada but it still gets wet and cold here too!

Fall Semester – September -December

Expect to see a mix of sunshine, clouds and rain between September to mid November. In late November and December, the temperature begins to drop. Cold rain, and snow is quite common, so be sure to wear warm clothing.

Winter Semester – January-April

It remains cold in the Fraser Valley between January to February. It isn't until March and April when the temperature begins to warm up. The golden rule is to always prepare for rain. It rains a lot here in B.C.

Below are lists of important documents to bring and recommendations for your packing list:

Required list of Important Documents:

- Valid Passport
- [Visitor Visa](#) or [Electronic Travel Authorization \(eTA\)](#), if applicable to your case.
- Study Permit approval letter (also known as a letter of introduction).

- Proof that you have enough money to support yourself while staying in Canada (e.g., bank statement, credit card statements).
- Proof of medical insurance from your home country or from CBC.
- A copy of your official letter of acceptance from Columbia Bible College
- Confirmation of enrolment (download from myCBC)

It is also helpful to review the [Border Reminder Checklist](#) from Canada Border Services Agency to make sure you do not miss anything.

- Umbrella: No joke! It really does rain a lot in BC! That's why we are so green!
- Jacket: We may not be the winter capital of Canada but don't underestimate our cold. If you don't wear layers of clothing underneath your jacket, you can get a chill to you bone.

Recommended List of Personal Items:

- Clothing for fall, winter spring and summer
- Plug adapter for Canada, if needed
- Small amount of Canadian cash and a credit card
- International driver's license and/or your valid driver's license, if applicable
- Medical records
- Bedding (bedsheets), pillow and pillowcase - CBC only provides a bed with mattress. You can also choose to purchase bedding once you arrive in Canada.

Here is how we recommend you split which items go in your carry-on and which should go into your checked luggage:

Carry-On Luggage:

- Travel documents
- Address of where you will be staying in Canada (if you are staying on

campus, then it will be the address of the College)

- List of emergency contacts in Canada or your home country
- Booking confirmation for flights
- Money
- Electronics
- Toiletries in appropriate sizes and packages (see [Liquids, aerosols, and gels](#) requirements).
- Power adaptor
- Any prescriptions medications in original containers (see [Travelling with medication](#)).
- One set of clothes

Checked Luggage:

- All clothing and shoes
- Waterproof clothing for rain
- School backpack
- School supplies (pens, pencils, notebooks)
- Non-prescription medications such as cold and flu medications
- Household items you would like to bring with you

Make sure to know the your airline's weight requirements for your luggage , as well as what you [can and can't bring into Canada](#).

ACCOMMODATION

When you come to study at Columbia you have a choice of on-campus housing or finding something off-campus.

Columbia Housing

Residence Life is a wonderful way to get the full experience of Bible College. It is

a place to build community, have fun, deepen your faith, alongside learning valuable communal living skills.

We believe that transformative learning does not only happen in the classroom, but it also happens when we integrate our learning by living out what we are learning in community. We see this opportunity to grow in everything from the way we relate to one another and the habits we live into, to the way we take care of our spaces and take out the garbage. Dorms is so much more than just a place to eat and sleep.

The following options are available for students who wish to live on-campus:

Junior Housing

Junior Housing is our largest housing type and is designed to support residents to get the most out of their first few years at CBC. This is done through a full meal plan where you do not have to prepare any of your own meals, but can eat in the cafeteria with community, as well as larger units where you can do life with your fellow classmates.

- Intended for most first year students, ages 17-22
- Will usually share a room
- Enjoy meals in the dining hall
- Cost: \$1700 per semester + \$300 damage deposit (refundable) + \$100 res. Programming fee per year
- Meal Plan: Junior Housing LITE (\$2100 + GST per semester) or REGULAR (\$2520 + GST per semester)

Sophomore Housing

Sophomore Housing is designed as an option point between Junior and Senior Housing.

- Intended for second or third year students, ages 20-22
- Will share a room
- Share a full kitchen with 4-6 other students
- Split meals between self-prepared and dining hall

- Separate application required
- Cost: \$1900 per semester + \$300 damage deposit (refundable) + \$100 res. Programming fee per year
- Meal Plan: Sophomore Housing Meal Plan (\$1175 + GST per semester)

Senior Housing

Senior Housing is intended for 3rd-4th year students and mature students who seek more independence while continuing to engage in campus community.

- Intended for ages 23+
- Share a full kitchen with 2-3 other rooms
- Cook most of your own meals
- Separate application required
- Cost: \$2100 per semester + \$300 damage deposit (refundable) + \$100 res. Programming fee per year
- Meal Plan: Senior Housing Meal Plan (\$650 + GST per semester)

Dining Hall & Dining Services

The dining services team at Columbia is passionate about serving healthy, homemade food to our students; incorporating local produce and ingredients into menu items whenever possible. The results will make you smile and give you the energy for juggling everything you have going on. The dining hall accepts cash, debit, MasterCard, visa and the CBC meal card (student card).

Hours: current hours can be found on our website or on the doors of the dining hall.

Looking for Off-Campus Housing?

Columbia has a [Classifieds](#) page where local landlords post rental listings. Another great option is local church classified listings (like this one: [Northview Community Church Classifieds](#)). Other options to try include Craigslist, Facebook Marketplace and Kijiji.

You or someone you know and trust should always view the unit in person (or at the very least via video call) before signing an agreement or paying any money.

CBC assumes no responsibility for agreements about off-campus housing made between students and landlords. We do not screen, inspect, warrant, or approve any landlord, student, or accommodation provided through the rental listing services listed on this page.

Know your rights

The government of BC has information for anyone renting an apartment, suite, or room at its [Residential Tenancies](#) web page.

Preventing fraud

Unfortunately, rental scams do exist. You can learn how to identify potential rental scams:

- [Rental scams](#) (RCMP)

Free legal advice for renters

Below are two organizations that provide free legal assistance for renters covered under the Residential Tenancy Act, including dispute settlements between tenants and landlords.

[Residential tenancy program](#)

[TRAC legal representation](#)

Further resources when looking for off-campus housing:

[Welcome BC guide to finding a place to live](#)

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Options in Abbotsford

Getting to and from the Columbia campus can be achieved by transit, cycling, ride-sharing options or personal vehicle. Visit the [BC Transit](#) website for systems and riders guides for Chilliwack, Mission and [Abbotsford](#).

GETTING NECESSITIES

Addresses to local supermarkets and pharmacies where you can get your basic necessities such as food, hygiene, medication and more.

Superstore

Address: 2855 Gladwin Rd, Abbotsford, BC V2T 6Y4
Distance from CBC: 5 minutes by car, 14 minutes by bus, 26 minutes to walk
Pharmacy: Yes

Save-On-Foods

Address: 32700 South Fraser Way #300, Abbotsford, BC V2T 4M5
Distance from CBC: 5 minutes by car, 11 minutes by bus, 25 minutes to walk
Pharmacy: Yes

Walmart

Address: 3122 Mount Lehman Rd, Abbotsford, BC V2T 0C5
Distance from CBC: 8 minutes by car, 22 minutes by bus
Pharmacy: Yes

Shoppers Drug Mart

Address: 32390 South Fraser Way Unit #1, Abbotsford, BC V2T 1X2
Distance from CBC: 4 minutes by car, 9 minutes by bus, 18 minutes to walk.
Pharmacy: Yes

MEDICAL INSURANCE

As an international student, you are required to have medical insurance for the entire duration of your studies at CBC. Here is a breakdown of the various medical insurance plans that may be applicable to you as a new CBC student.

Guard.me International Insurance

guard.me International Insurance is a private health care plan that is provided as a temporary plan to new international students during the 3-month wait period until they are eligible for provincial health care coverage. This plan covers all new and emergent conditions and medically necessary treatments, including those related to COVID-19. guard.me International Insurance does not cover any services related to pre-existing conditions. For more detailed information about what medical services are covered by guard.me International Insurance, [click here](#).

BC Medical Services Plan

If you are staying in the province of British Columbia (BC) for more than six months, you are required to enroll in the provincial health care plan called the Medical Services Plan (MSP). The waiting period to receive MSP coverage is approximately three months. MSP provides coverage for medically required services. In addition, MSP also pays for diagnostic services including x-rays. Other services that may be covered by MSP include supplementary benefits provided by other health care practitioners.

For more detailed information about what services are covered by MSP, [click here](#).

Determining Your Medical Insurance Needs

Depending on your situation, your medical insurance needs will vary.

Are you a new CBC student but have been in BC, Canada for more than 3 months?

If this is the case, you are likely eligible for the provincial health care plan (MSP) and should have already applied shortly after your arrival to BC. If this is not the case, please apply immediately by [clicking here](#).

Are you a new CBC student and plan to arrive in BC, Canada prior to the start of classes?

If this is the case, you will be advised to apply for the provincial health care coverage (MSP) upon arrival in BC. If you are not eligible for MSP coverage immediately and are required to wait three months until your coverage becomes active, Columbia Bible College will enroll you on a private medical insurance plan (guard.me International Insurance). This process will be dependent on you providing the college with accurate information regarding your arrival date.

ACCESSING HEALTH CARE IN BC

Walk-In Clinics

If you are having non-emergency health issues, please call a local walk-in clinic to enquire about accessing their services. Many walk-in clinics limit the number of patients that can enter their facilities and instead are providing virtual appointments. Whether you meet in person or virtually, the doctor will ask questions about your health concerns and provide the appropriate advice. To find walk-in clinics near you, [click here](#).

Hospitals

If you are having a medical emergency, you should go directly to the emergency room (ER) at your local hospital or call 9-1-1. A walk-in doctor may also refer you to the hospital for various medical services, such as diagnostic services or surgical services. Each community has their own hospital. For more information regarding hospitals in the Fraser Health region, [click here](#).

If you are unsure whether you need to visit a doctor or the hospital, you can call HealthLinkBC at 8- 1-1 to talk to a nurse.

Pharmacies

To purchase medication or personal hygiene items, you can visit a local pharmacy. Some medications may require a prescription, which is a special note of permission that doctors give you so that you can get certain types of medicine. If you need medication that requires a prescription, please meet with a walk-in clinic doctor to request a prescription.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Academics

The [Academic Manual](#) is available on the Columbia website and contains all policies regarding attendance, assignments, examinations and more. Students are expected to inform themselves of all academic policies by reading the manual.

Academic Support

Academic Support desires to better equip students for academic success by creating an open, friendly place for students to learn Columbia's academic

expectations, discuss learning challenges, and receive help so that they can be confident and efficient in their work.

If you have any questions about how to continue your academic success during your time at Columbia, Academic Support would love to assist you.

See the [Academic Support webpage](#) for more information and resources.

Counselling Services

If you are starting at Columbia Bible College for the first year or if you are a returning part time or full-time student, counselling is available at a low cost for you! There are a lot of adjustments and changes that you need to navigate when you go to school. Whether you are on campus or are a commuting student, don't underestimate the adjustments and possible need to talk to someone, even if you have never needed to talk before. The counselling center is here for any difficulties you are having.

To book a counselling session, visit our [counselling services webpage](#) and complete the online booking form as the first step. You will be contacted within a few days to schedule an intake appointment; following this appointment you will be assigned a counsellor. Weekly or bi-weekly sessions are available.

Disability Services

Students living with identified disabilities (including physical, sensory, learning, or mental health), may find it necessary to request some adaptation to reduce barriers in learning or living situations at college. The Student Development department includes Access Equity Services, designed to assist you as an effective self-advocate in the pursuit of equity and reasonable access and accommodation. Access Equity also assists the wider CBC community to develop appropriate responses towards issues of ability, disability and access on our campus.

If a student would like to explore Ability, Disability, and Access Equity Services, they should contact Student Development staff.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

Students can also find support within the local community.

[Crisis Centre](#)

The Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC (Crisis Centre) is a non-profit, volunteer organization committed to helping people help themselves and others deal with crisis. The Centre offers the following services:

[24/7 Distress Phone Services](#)

In addition to four regional distress lines, the Centre also provides two provincial 1-800-SUICIDE lines, two Mental Health Information lines, and a designated Seniors' Distress Line. The provincial 1-800-SUICIDE lines and Mental Health Support Lines are available in over 140 languages using a language service.

[Online Distress Services \(YouthInBC.com, CrisisCentreChat.ca\)](#)

Provides youth and adults with an opportunity to talk openly yet confidentially when in distress, or crisis, seek emotional support, and locate referral services in their community.

[Foundry](#)

Foundry is a province-wide network of integrated health and social service centers for young people ages 12-24, providing a one-stop-shop for young people to access mental health care, substance use services, primary care, social services, and youth and family peer support.

[Phone & Online Chat](#)

Whether it's by phone, online chat or text, connect with a counsellor or trained volunteer to ask questions, help you understand what's going on for you and find resources online

or in your community.

WAYS TO GET CONNECTED: COLUMBIA PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Campus Recreation

Campus Recreation exists to promote and provide opportunities for fitness, fun, and fellowship through participation in a variety of recreation programs including intramurals and tournaments, as well as other recreation events. CBC Athletics & Recreation seeks to offer an opportunity for every student to engage in a lifestyle of physical activity and wellness.

Worship Gatherings

As a regular and intentional part of the week, you are expected to attend chapel when you are on campus.

CHAPEL – Thursdays, 10am: Chapel gatherings are a way for our whole community –

students, staff, and faculty – to worship together through music, listening to speakers and testimonies, and in prayer. These services are designed by a team of staff and students and are led by teams of students musicians. There are no classes during this time as everyone is expected to attend.

VESPERS – Tuesdays, 9pm: Vespers is a weekly evening worship gathering led by students. It is an opportunity for young adults to worship together in a music-driven service incorporating creative expression such as: scripture readings, silence, drama, visual arts and various forms of prayer.

Student Leadership

Developing leaders is part of our 'why' at Columbia. We believe in the leadership potential of our students, which is why we have up to 35 positions available every year. Applications open in the spring and include an interview process. If you're chosen as a student leader, you'll come to campus early and participate in a fun, intense week of training over the last week of August.

Campus Life Team

Many of our student activities are led by the campus life team. Their role is to serve and lead the students of Columbia Bible college by being visible and visionary Christian leaders. Campus life team members seek to demonstrate and encourage Christ like behavior and create an environment that fosters growth, connection, at community.

The *Campus Life Team* provides opportunities for students to get connected and invoved through the following teams:

The *Spiritual Life Team* hosts prayer groups and other events that encourage Christ centred community.

The *Arts Team* promotes creativity! Past events have included paint nights, writing sessions, and student-led art exhibits.

The *Social Life Team*. Just about what it sounds like! Responsible for all the fun on campus. Halloween and Christmas parties, Bearcat games and tailgates, and karaoke nights!

The *Athletics Team* brings people together through participation in semi competitive recreational sporting events including slip and slide, kickball, colour wars, and cheering on Bearcat athletics.

ADMISSIONS AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

General Requirements

Applicants to casual studies, certificate, diploma, and degree programs:

- Must be at least 17 years of age.
- Must be a Christian and willing to grow in discipleship.
- Must hold a high school diploma with a minimum average of 60%. This average will be calculated using the student's top 5 submitted grades from their last two years of high school. 3 of these 5 grades must be academic courses and one of these 3 must be English 12 or provincial/state equivalent. Applicable grade 12 courses take precedence over grade 11 courses
- Must demonstrate the potential for academic success at Columbia Bible College.
- Must arrange for reference form(s) to be submitted on their behalf.
- Must have final grade of 65% in English 12 or provincial/state equivalent* (See below for specific equivalents)
- Must agree to abide by the community standards as defined in the [Student Handbook](#) while a Columbia student

Conditional admission may be granted if:

- The applicant is waiting for final transcripts;
- The applicant has mature student status (must be a minimum of 21 years of age and have been out of school for at least one year. The applicant will be required to write an English entrance exam or enroll in ENGL 105). These applications for admission will be considered on an individual basis.

- The applicant enrolls in ENGL 105 or its equivalent.

[View the Admissions Policy](#)

Please note that international students must also:

- Submit a \$450 application fee (this application fee consists of a \$150 processing fee + \$300 deposit and replaces the \$50 application fee mentioned above for domestic students).
- For September entrance, must submit all required application documentation before June 1. For January entrance, must submit all required application documentation before October 1.

English Language Requirements

- **Must have proof of English competency.** A foreign student must have a minimum score of 550 for the paper based TOEFL or 213 for the computer based TOEFL or 79 for the internet-based TOEFL or an IELTS score of 6.5 (Academic Module).
- Applicants must arrange to be tested by an approved TOEFL or IELTS agency in their country. Applicants should do this at least two (2) months prior to the beginning of the semester at Columbia Bible College. This will allow time for the results to be returned to Columbia. Acceptance at Columbia will be dependent on receiving these test scores.

The requirement for TOEFL or IELTS test results may be waived if the applicant has met the following conditions:

- The applicant has completed three or more years of study at either a secondary or post-secondary institution (in the United Kingdom, The Republic of Ireland, Australia, New Zealand or Jamaica or an accredited international school with a North-American curriculum where English is the primary language of instruction).

- The applicant has successfully graduated from a North American high school and successfully completed ENG 12 (or its equivalent in any other province/state) with a final grade of 65% or higher.
- The applicant has studied for at least one year at an accredited North American post-secondary institution and successfully completed an English Literature, Composition or Writing for College course (or its' equivalent) with a final grade of 60% or higher.

The Admissions Committee may also evaluate English proficiency on an individual basis by requiring that the applicant write an entrance examination.

Please view our [academic catalogue](#) for more program information and requirements.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

If your family or loved ones need to reach you in an emergency and cannot reach you on your cell phone, they can call 604-853-3358 or 1-800-283-0881 Monday to Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

After 6:00 PM each night (emergencies only), you can reach our automated call centre at 604-853-7010.

Additional Emergency Procedures

For safety concerns, call Security 604-853-7010 (24 hours).

1. *In case of minor injury or illness:* Call for, or send person, to one of the Campus First Aid personnel.
2. *In case of accident:* Call the female Residence Director, male Residence Director, or the Dean of Students.
3. *For emergencies related to facilities:* Call the Residence Director.

4. *Immobile Elevators:* Call 604-853-7010 and then call the Campus First Aid personnel.

On Campus Emergency Numbers

For Emergency (Police, Fire, Ambulance), call 911.

Off Campus Non-Emergency Numbers

Non-Emergency Abbotsford Police Number: 604-859-5225 Text: 222973

(Available 24/7)

Poison Control: 1-800-567-8911

WORKING WHILE STUDYING

There are a few important things to know if you're hoping to work while studying at CBC.

On-Campus work

You do not need a work permit in order to work on campus while attending CBC, as your study permit gives you permission to work unlimited hours on-campus as long you are enrolled in full-time studies (*See "Academic Load" on page 4 of the [Academic Manual](#) for CBC's definition of "full-time"*).

Off-Campus work

If you are studying in a degree, certificate or diploma program and meet CBC's definition of full-time studies, you may work off campus up to a maximum of 20 hours per week during the regular academic year (September to April).

(See "Academic Load" on page 4 of the [Academic Manual](#) for CBC's definition of "full-time")

You may work full-time during academic scheduled breaks (summer session, Reading Week, and breaks between terms) if you are eligible to work during a scheduled break.

Working during a scheduled break

You might be eligible to work full-time on or off campus during a scheduled break.

Registered, eligible, or continuing students in CBC degree, diploma, or certificate programs are considered to be eligible to work while on a “scheduled break” if:

- You were full time in the term before the break, and
- Your degree has not been conferred, and
- You will resume full-time studies in the term following the break

If you meet the above requirements, you are permitted to work full-time on or off campus during a scheduled break for a total of 180 days per calendar year, but not more than 150 consecutive days.

If you *do not* meet the above requirements, you are **not eligible to work** during a scheduled break.

Students on a scheduled break who *do not* meet the above requirements may work up to 20 hours a week off campus and unlimited hours on campus during the summer session only if enrolled in a full-time course load. If you are enrolled in a part-time course load you are not eligible to work on or off campus

More resources for working while studying:

[While You are Studying in British Columbia – Work while you study](#)

ADDITIONAL HELPFUL RESOURCES

Student Handbook

Please take the opportunity to check out our Student Handbook for more information on student life at Columbia. The handbook includes more information on topics such as student support services, our facilities, community expectations, safety and more.

Important Policies

Below are links to several Columbia policies that may be important for you to be aware of:

[Student Due Process Policy](#)

[Harassment Policy](#)

[Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)

[Sexual Misconduct Procedures](#)

Resources for adjusting to life in British Columbia

[Daily Life in British Columbia](#) (*provides information on topics such as healthcare, emergencies, education, learning English, driving, public transportation, managing your money and mail*)

[B.C. Newcomers' Guide](#)

[Indigenous Peoples in B.C.](#)

CONNECT WITH US

Columbia is here to support you on your way to success! We welcome you to reach out to us anytime you have a question. We are happy to point you in the direction and provide you support any way we can. Here is how you can remain connected with us!

Email Joel.Kumar@columbiabc.edu



columbiabc.edu

Phone: 604.853.3358

Toll-Free: 800.283.0881

Fax: 604.853.3063

Email: admissions@columbiabc.edu