

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT REFERENCE GUIDE

THE ART INSTITUTE OF VANCOUVER

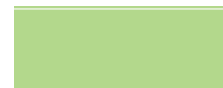
Renfrew: 2665 Renfrew St Vancouver, BC V5M7A0 Phone 604.683.9200	• • • • • •	Culinary: 609 Granville St. Vancouver, BC V7Y 1G5 Phone 778-373-8905
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* *A reference guide for students new to Canada and Vancouver.*

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CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

1-888-242-2100
(within Canada)

INFORMATION

CITY HALL
(CITY OF VANCOUVER):
604-873-7011

INFORMATION SERVICES VANCOUVER:
604-875-6381

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT INFO:
604-660-2421

RESIDENTIAL TENANCY
OFFICE: 604-660-1020
(24 hr. info line)
www.rto.gov.bc.ca

LEGAL ADVICE/DISCRIMINATION

BC HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION: 604-775-2000
LEGAL SERVICES SOCIETY
604-601-6000

LAWLINE
604-408-2172

LIBRARY, VANCOUVER PUBLIC

Main Branch, 350 W. Georgia St.,
604-331-3600
www.vpl.ca/general/hours.html

PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

604-257-8400

TRANSPORTATION

BC FERRIES
1-888-BC FERRY (223-3779)

TRANSLINK (BUS
INFORMATION): 604-953-3333

VIA RAIL CANADA (TRAIN)
1-800-VIA-RAIL

TOURISM

VANCOUVER TOURIST
INFORMATION: 604-683-2000

VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEER VANCOUVER
604-875-9144

Starting a new school is exhilarating and exciting but it can often be overwhelming; especially when you are attending school in a different country. Even the most independent students need help at times, which is what this International Student Handbook is for. Familiarize yourself with this guide so that you can better adjust to life in Canada and school life at The Art Institute of Vancouver.

ABOUT VANCOUVER

- Population: 2 million (Greater Vancouver Area)
- Time zone: Pacific
- Largest Port on the West Coast of North America
- Largest city in British Columbia
- 3rd Largest City in Canada (Largest = Toronto; 2nd Largest = Montreal)
- Annual Rainfall: 1219 mm (48 inches) 10% of that during the summer months (For comparison: Seattle gets 36 inches a year; San Francisco 21 inches)
- Average Temperatures: 3°C (37.4°F) in January 18°C (64.4°F) in July
- Daylight: 16 hours in June / 8 hours in December
- A person who lives in Vancouver is called a *Vancouverite*

NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS

- The Globe and Mail:
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com>
- The National Post:
<http://www.canada.com/nationalpost/>

VANCOUVER NEWSPAPERS

- The Vancouver Sun:
http://www.canada.com/vancouver_sun/
- The Vancouver Province:
<http://www.canada.com/theprovince/>

FREE DAILY NEWSPAPERS

- Metro: <http://www.metronews.ca>
- Dose: <http://www.dose.ca/vancouver/>
- 24: <http://vancouver.24hrs.ca>

For a more comprehensive listing, go to:

<http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/newtovancouver/telephone.htm>

VANCOUVER'S RADIO STATIONS

93.7 JR FM: New Country
94.5 FM The Beat: Vancouver's Hit Music
95.3 Virgin Radio: Top 40 Hits
97 Kiss FM: Adult Contemporary
99.3 FM The Fox: Rock
103.5 QM FM: Soft Favourites
104.9: Clear FM

AM RADIO

650 AM: CISL Oldies
1130 AM CKWX: All News
1410 AM CFUN: Talk Radio

THINGS TO DO AND SEE

- **Capilano Suspension Bridge:** One of Vancouver's most popular tourist attractions.
- **Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Gardens:** A cultural experience in the downtown area.
- **English Bay:** A stunning place to take a walk.
- **Gastown:** Take some time to wander the streets of this historic area.
- **Granville Island:** Farmer's market with shops, art, culture, theatre.
- **Grouse Mountain:** A stunning view for tourists and skiers.
- **Imax Theatre:** Check out the impact of Imax movies on the big screen.
- **Jericho Beach:** Lay in the sun or get into a game of volleyball.
- **Vancouver Lookout at Harbour Centre:** Stunning 360 views of the city.
- **Lynn Valley Canyon:** A beautiful place to go hiking.
- **Robson Street:** One of Vancouver's busiest streets. Shopping and more shopping!

LOCAL TV STATIONS

BC CTV:
www.vancouvertelevision.com
CBC British Columbia:
www.vancouver.cbc.ca
Channel M:
www.channelm.ca
City TV Vancouver:
www.citytv.com/vancouver
Global BC:
www.canada.com/vancouver/globaltv

- **Science World:** Explore the exhibits and watch one of the world's largest dome screens.
- **Space Centre:** See the stars and planets in a light show. www.spacecentre.ca
- **Stanley Park:** Over 1000 acres of outdoors close to Downtown.
- **Van Dusen Botanical Gardens:** Spend an afternoon in these beautiful botanical gardens.
- **Vancouver Aquarium:** Check out nearly 40 000 animals at the aquarium.
- **Vancouver Art Gallery:** Art from around the world. www.vanartgallery.bc.ca
- **Vancouver Maritime Museum:** www.vancouvermaritimemuseum.com
- **Vancouver Museum:** Learn about the history of Vancouver. www.vanmuseum.bc.ca
- **Whistler Blackcomb:** Regardless of the season, there is always lots to do.

RESOURCE DIRECTORY

EMERGENCY SERVICES: 911

Police, Fire, Ambulance
E-COMM (DISASTER EMERGENCY):
604-215-5000

TERASEN GAS EMERGENCY SERVICES:
604-298-1400

B.C. HYDRO EMERGENCY
SERVICES: 1-888-769-3766

CRISIS CENTRE/SUICIDE
PREVENTION: 604-872-3311
(24 hours a day)

FAMILY & CHILD ABUSE
604-660-4927

HELP LINE FOR CHILDREN
604-310-1234

EMERGENCY FOOD & SHELTER LINE:
604-660-3194
(24 hours a day)

POISON CONTROL CENTRE
604-682-5050

RAPE RELIEF & WOMEN'S SHELTER:
604-872-8212

FIRE PREVENTION
604-873-7595

POLICE (NON-EMERGENCY)
604-717-3321

AUTOMOBILES

ICBC CLAIMS (CAR
ACCIDENTS): 604-520-8222

DRIVER LICENSE
INFORMATION
ICBC www.icbc.com
604-661-2255

PARKING TICKETS,
453 W. 12th Ave., 604-873-7642

BUSTER'S CAR TOWING
604-685-8181

BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES

B.C. VITAL STATISTICS AGENCY
604-660-2645

DOGS AND CATS

ANIMAL CONTROL/CITY POUND:
604-871-6888

DOG LICENSES & PERMITS
604-873-7568

GARBAGE AND RECYCLING

CITY GARBAGE COLLECTION
604-323-7710

B.C. RECYCLING HOTLINE
604-732-9253

Vancouver Tourist Information for more ideas: 604-683-2000

DON'T LET THESE CONFUSE YOU

Some newcomers to Vancouver are confused by some of the following:

VANCOUVER AND VANCOUVER ISLAND

- Vancouver is the largest city in British Columbia, located on the mainland.
- Vancouver is not the capital of British Columbia.
- Located in the Pacific Ocean, Vancouver Island (occasionally and incorrectly referred to as “Victoria Island”) is the largest island off western North America.
- Victoria, the capital of British Columbia, is located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island. To get from Vancouver to Victoria, you can fly or take a ferry.

THE LOWER MAINLAND

- Includes Vancouver and its surrounding communities: the North Shore (North and West Vancouver), Burnaby, Richmond, New Westminster, Surrey, Cloverdale, Abbotsford, Langley, Fort Langley, Coquitlam, Maple Ridge and numerous other towns.

THE SUNSHINE COAST

- Not far from Vancouver is the Sunshine Coast. What makes the Sunshine Coast confusing is that you have to take a ferry to get there despite the fact that it is NOT an island, but is, in fact, on the southwest coast of British Columbia, not very far north of Vancouver. You have to take a ferry to get there because the area around it is so rugged there are no roads to it.

WEST SIDE, WEST END AND WEST VANCOUVER

- The West Side is the west half of Vancouver. It runs from the University of British Columbia at the western tip of Vancouver to Ontario Street.
- The West End is a residential and commercial neighborhood just east of Stanley Park, bordered by Stanley Park, Georgia Street, Burrard Street and the beach beyond Pacific Avenue.
- West Vancouver is across the Lions Gate Bridge on the North Shore, and is the richest community in Canada.

SEABUS

- The SeaBus is not a real bus. It is a ferry that goes between Canada Place and the Lonsdale Quay in North Vancouver and connects Vancouver to the North Shore.

STATUTORY HOLIDAYS*

THANKSGIVING DAY
REMEMBRANCE DAY
CHRISTMAS DAY
BOXING DAY
NEW YEARS DAY
GOOD FRIDAY
VICTORIA DAY
CANADA DAY
BC DAY
LABOUR DAY

**Check your calendar or check with the school to find out what day the school will be closed due to a statutory holiday.*

SHOPPING

IN VANCOUVER, STORES ARE USUALLY OPEN DURING THESE HOURS:

Monday to Saturday: 10:00 am to 6:00 pm.
Sunday: 12:00 pm to 5:00 pm.
Large stores & grocers (ie. Safeway, Save-On Foods, etc.): usually open until 9:00 pm or later.
Offices: Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.
Banks: Generally open from 10:00am to 4:00pm.
Bank machines open 24 hours a day.

TIPPING

It is common in Canada to give tips to people who provide you with a service, including servers in restaurants and bars, taxi drivers, and hairstylists. If the service is acceptable, a tip of 15% of the total bill (before taxes) is appropriate. For superior services, a larger tip (20%) is appropriate. Tips are common because the wages in some service occupations are low so tips help improve these workers' incomes.

GROCERIES

It is usually cheaper to buy groceries at large supermarkets like Safeway or Save-On Foods than at convenience stores like 7-11. Large supermarkets also have a greater selection of items. It is also generally cheaper to buy food items in bulk (larger quantities). Some bulk stores are Superstore and Costco (Costco requires you to buy a membership for approximately \$50).

SALES TAX

There are two sales taxes in BC:

*Provincial Sales Tax (PST) = 7%, ☹
Goods and Services Tax (GST) = 5%*

Both taxes will be added to the price of most retail goods and services you purchase.

SAFETY

Vancouver is a safe city to live in. Violent crime is not common and not very likely to occur to a resident or student. However, thefts, pick-pocketing, and small crimes do happen, as in any other big city. The most common type of crime is theft. Do not leave your purse, backpack or other property unattended in public places.

ON THE STREET:

- Be alert. Walk with confidence. Walk with your head up.
- Plan your route. Know where you are going and how to get there. Check a map ahead of time if necessary.
- Ask advice for the best routes to events, restaurants or shopping.
- Be aware of who and what is around you.
- Trust your instincts.
- Leave strange or uncomfortable situations.
- Change direction if you feel you are being followed. Go to the nearest store, restaurant, or pay phone.
- Walk on well-lit, busy streets at night. Try to be with someone.
- Walk in the middle of the sidewalk.
- Avoid isolated areas such as parks where there are no other people around.
- Carry a whistle or other personal safety device.
- Scream or yell loudly if attacked.
- Tell your roommate or host family where you are going and when you will be back.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash. Do not show money in public.
- Use bank/debit cards. Never share your PIN (Personal Identification Number) or let others see it.
- Keep your passport at home. Carry a photocopy of your passport and other ID.
- Do not go out alone or accept rides with strangers.
- Do not hitchhike.
- Do not use headphones when walking/jogging. They make it difficult to hear an approaching car or stranger.
- Do not carry weapons. They are illegal and can be used against you.
- Do not argue or fight if robbed. Yell loudly. (Fight back to protect yourself if you are attacked. Try to stop or distract the attacker so that you can escape).

STRANGERS AND STREET PEOPLE

Street people who ask you for money are called “panhandlers.” Many of them suffer from drug and alcohol addictions. If you give them money you will be encouraging their addictions. There are many social agencies in the community to help them by giving free meals, shelter and counseling. If you want to help poor people, contribute to a good charity. Please ignore panhandlers. Do not give them money. If they continue to bother you, talk to your local Community Police Office.

BUSES AND SKYTRAIN

- Know your route and schedule before you leave.
- Choose busy, well-lit stops after dark.
- Sit at the front of the bus near the driver.
- After 9pm you can ask the bus driver to stop at the street closest to your destination (between bus stops).
- On the SkyTrain sit in a car with lots of people. Change seats if someone bothers you.
- All the SkyTrain platforms have a yellow safety area monitored by cameras.
- Use the emergency phone on the platform or emergency button on the train if you are harassed.

Visit www.translink.bc.ca for more information on transit safety

STUDY TIPS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

READING

- Do not translate each word or you will lose track of the general idea and you will never finish your readings. Instead, read in chunks and try to get the general idea of each paragraph. Do not stop if you are confused by a word or even a sentence. Many times, the meaning will become clearer as you read on. If you are still confused at the end of a paragraph, stop at that point and use your dictionary for an important word or two.
 - Before reading a chapter, take a few minutes to look at the chapter outline (if there is one) and flip through the pages, trying to see the organization and most important ideas of the chapter.
 - As you read, stop at the end of each section (between headings or paragraphs). Ask yourself the main idea of that section and then write a brief note in the margin or underline a few words of the text.
 - Pay attention to charts and diagrams and make sure you understand them.
 - Review the main ideas of the chapter after you finish reading.
 - Write vocabulary cards for the most important new English words (write English on one side and your native language on the other side).
- ### LECTURES/LISTENING
- If you miss something when writing notes, skip a line or two. After class, get the information from a classmate or from the instructor.
 - Go over your notes as soon as possible after class, making sure everything is clear and trying to understand the most important ideas.
 - If you have trouble with the instructor’s accent, tape a short section of the lecture and listen to it several times. You will get used to the accent and will eventually learn to understand it better.

SPEAKING ENGLISH

- Strive to overcome fears that others are judging you or laughing at you. Accept that for the present, you will communicate in English in a less sophisticated way than you do in your native language. It’s OK if you don’t sound like a native English speaker. People will appreciate your efforts to speak English, and are usually very helpful.
- Laughing at yourself when you make mistakes usually eases the situation and helps you and others to relax and enjoy conversations more.
- Agree on at least half an hour each day in which you will speak English with your friends – maybe over lunch or after watching the news together.
- Force yourself to chat with Canadians. Find a person who isn’t very busy and talk – maybe with a librarian, another person waiting for a bus (ask directions), the owner of a small shop (talk about the weather or an item in the shop), etc.
- Listen in on the “small talk” of Canadians and try follow the conversation, and then imitate that style of conversation.
- Make a list of words you have said that native speakers of English have not understood. Ask a native speaker to pronounce the words for you (maybe into a tape recorder) and then practice saying these words. Ask the native speaker to correct you if necessary.

SOLUTIONS FOR CULTURE SHOCK

Even though some people may not be able to eliminate culture shock, there are ways to ease the stress. Some of these activities are:

- Be active: by getting out of your room or apartment, you are able to experience first-hand what Canadians are doing. If you visit public places, such as shopping malls or sporting events, you will be able to observe how Canadian customs are practiced.
- Make Canadian friends: by having friends you can talk to, you are able to ask them questions about what you do not understand.
- Exercise: by finding an activity that you can enjoy, you will be able to reduce stress and depression.
- Community activities: talk with your host family, friends or other Canadians about community events, religious services, or volunteer opportunities to help you become a member of the community while you are in Canada. Check out www.govolunteer.ca
- Work on your English: it is much easier to understand a culture when you can understand the language being used. Ask about slang or words you do not understand.
- Introduce yourself to other international students: other international students may be experiencing the same problems that you are. By talking to them, you may be able to find out ways they are coping with problems.
- Be patient: many international students experience culture shock in some way while they are here. Just recognize the problem and give yourself time to get over it. If you need to, keep reminding yourself that this is not permanent. If culture shock continues, contact The Art Institute of Vancouver's counselor at counselor@aii.edu

OUT AT NIGHT

- Taxis are a good way to get home. Learn the number of the taxi company.
- Drinking age in B.C. is 19 yrs. ID/Passport is required to buy liquor or enter a bar.
- Drinking in public places such as parks, beaches, in cars or on the street is illegal.
- Do not let someone in a bar give you a ride home.
- Do not accept drinks from strangers or leave your drink unattended. Date Rape drugs are sometimes put into drinks when women are not paying attention.
- Drugs such as cocaine, heroin, marijuana and nightclub drugs such as Ecstasy, are illegal. Do not use or possess drugs at any time. Foreign students caught possessing drugs may be deported.

APARTMENT SECURITY

- Do not let people into the building if you don't know them. If someone wants into the building, (i.e. repairmen, deliveries, salesmen) refer them to the manager.
- Never hold the door open for someone you don't know or prop doors open. This is a major security problem.
- Look through the peephole before answering the door.
- Don't leave notes on the door saying you are not home.
- Use only your last name on the entry panel.
- Use locks on your windows.
- Get to know your neighbors.

BICYCLING

- Traffic rules for bikes are the same as for cars. Observe signs and traffic signals.
- Do not ride on the sidewalk or in crosswalks.
- You must wear a helmet.
- Front and rear light are required at night.
- Lock your bike at all times. Lock frame and wheel to the bike rack.

**From the Vancouver Police Department's website:
www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/police/StudentSafety*

911: POLICE, FIRE AND AMBULANCE – EMERGENCY ONLY*

- Call 911 if you are in trouble or see a crime happening. It is a free call from a pay phone.
- Try to relax and tell the operator your language. Interpreters are available in 140 different languages.
- Try to speak clearly. Keep calm and the operator will ask for the information needed.
- Help will arrive sooner if 911 knows where you are. Find out the city and address.
- The operator will need to know what service you want and for what city.
- Typically, they will answer the phone, "Police, Fire or Ambulance?" After you answer that question, they will ask, "For what city?"
- They will then place you on hold and transfer you to the appropriate agency. During this hold, you are still connected and the operator can still listen to you. All you will hear when this transfer occurs is a click as the lines are connected. Some people think this clicking is a hang up and will disconnect and call back. **DO NOT DO THIS! Stay on the line!**

NOTE: If you get disconnected from 911, help will still come to help you. The police will attempt to call back, but if they can not reach you, they will only try a few more times.

- Let the operator control the call. The Police Non-Emergency number is 604-717-3321. If you are a victim of a crime, no matter how small, report it to the police. Police in Canada are very helpful and can help you to find services which help students.

PHONE CALLS

- For local calls at a pay phone, the charge is 25¢. For long distance calls, it is most economical to buy a long distance calling card at a convenience store. These cards offer low calling rates and are much cheaper than dialing directly from a pay phone or cellular phone.
- When dialing a phone number, you must include the area code (i.e. 604, 250, etc) and you must always dial at least 10 digits.

HOUSING

Depending on what kind of accommodation you are looking for and which part of the city you want to live in, the price range for housing in Vancouver will greatly vary. The following resources can offer some help as you begin your search:

THE ART INSTITUTE OF VANCOUVER HOUSING GUIDE
Includes pricing, links to useful web sites and tips for finding accommodation in Vancouver.

<http://studentaffairs.artschool.com> (Click on Housing)

TENANT RIGHTS

Make sure that you are informed about the rights that you have as a tenant (renter).

www.tenants.bc.ca/factsheets/index.html

RESIDENTIAL TENANCY OFFICE: 604-660-1020
www.rto.gov.bc.ca

UTILITIES AND TELEPHONE

After moving in, you may have to hook up one (or all) of the following:

BC HYDRO: ELECTRICITY PROVIDER
<http://www.bchydro.com>

SHAW CABLE:

TV CABLE AND INTERNET PROVIDER
<http://www.shaw.ca>

TELUS: PHONE (LANDLINE AND CELLULAR) AND INTERNET PROVIDER
<http://www.telus.ca>

PASSPORTS

Keep photocopies of all important documents (including your credit cards, passport, immigration documents, bank information, and health insurance cards) in a safe place in case they become lost or stolen. If you lose your passport or if it gets stolen:

- Report your lost or stolen passport to the nearest Vancouver police department or RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) office. Keep any file numbers or documents they provide as proof that you contacted them.
Phone: 604-717-3321.
- Contact your country's embassy or consulate in Canada and ask for instructions on how to apply for a new passport. For a list of consulates in Vancouver, visit: www.virtualvancouver.com/services_frame.html
- Apply to replace your study permit. Download the application form from Citizenship and Immigration Canada: www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/student.asp

USEFUL SITES FOR NEWCOMERS TO VANCOUVER

Canadiana: Canadian Resource Page: www.cs.cmu.edu/Unofficial/Canadiana

About Canada: General information: www.canada.gc.ca

British Columbia Government Sites: www.gov.bc.ca/bvprd/bc/home.do

Medical Services Plan (MSP): www.hlth.gov.bc.ca/msp/index.html

Citizenship and Immigration Canada: www.cic.gc.ca

Statistics Canada: www.statcan.ca

Newcomer's Guide to Vancouver :www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/newtovancouver

City of Vancouver: www.vancouver.ca

Travel around BC: www.bcbassport.com/index.php

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES: COPING WITH CULTURE SHOCK

Some cultural differences you may experience due to change in customs are:

- Friendship: Most people you come in contact with will be friendly. Canadians generally talk about current events, politics, hobbies, and sports. However, personal matters, such as finances or family problems are often not spoken about.
- Dress: The attire worn in Canada is usually informal, unless otherwise told to wear formal clothing. It is not necessary to wear Western-style clothing. Clothing you have brought from home is acceptable.
- Greetings: When Canadians greet each other, whether male or female, a handshake is generally the custom. Spatial distance is a very important aspect of nonverbal communication. Most Canadians stand approximately three feet apart when talking.
- Schedules: Canadians place a high priority on being punctual. The phrase "time is money" is very common. You will be expected to be on time to events that have specific starting times, such as class, dinner arrangements, appointments, etc.
- Instructors: The relationship between student and instructor is usually open and informal. Most instructors want their students to talk directly to them about any questions or concerns they have, in order to resolve them quickly.

SYMPTOMS OF CULTURE SHOCK:

- Feeling very angry over minor inconveniences
- Withdrawal from people who are different from you
- Irritability
- Extreme homesickness
- Sudden intense feeling of loyalty to own culture
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Depression or crying easily
- A need for excessive sleep
- Feeling sick: headaches or upset stomach
- Marital or relationship stress
- Exaggerated cleanliness

You don't need to have every symptom on the list to have culture shock. It is possible that only a few may apply to you. These symptoms may also appear at any given time.

STUDY PERMITS

International students must obtain Study permits prior to entering Canada to begin studies. Obtaining proper Study Permits is the student's responsibility. The fee for a Study Permit is currently \$125 CDN. For more information, contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada at 1-888-242-2100, or check their website at: [www/cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)

To extend your study permit, contact the nearest Canadian Immigration Centre at least two months before the expiry of your Study Permit. If you let the permit expire before mailing the extension application, you will have to apply for restoration and then renewal which will cost \$325.00 instead of \$125.00. As long as you mail your application before your permit expires, you will be able to continue to study until a decision on the application is mailed to you.

APPLYING FOR/EXTENDING YOUR STUDY PERMIT:

- Go to www.cic.gc.ca
- Click English
- On left side, under Visas, click Studying in Canada
- Click on Study Permits
- Click on How to apply or Extending your stay
- Scroll down to Application kit to study in Canada (Click)
- Under Extending your stay, click on related link:
- Application to change conditions or extend your stay
- Print: Application to change conditions or extend your stay
- Print: Document Check list
- Click on Pay your fees online or order an original receipt

You will need a letter of status from the registrar. It generally takes 4 – 6 weeks to process a request. If you plan to work during your stay in Canada, you will need to obtain a separate Work Permit. When an international student on a study permit has been dismissed or withdraws from the program for which the study permit is/has been issued, The Art Institute of Vancouver is obliged to provide notification to Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

WORK PERMITS: WORKING IN CANADA

Because the Art Institute is not authorized by the province to confer degrees, our students are not authorized to work on campus or off-campus if they hold a student visa. Please refer to the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website for more information:

www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work.asp or visit the Career Services Advisor for your program.

Some types of work are exempt from work visa requirements. For details, please refer to www.cic.gc.ca/english/work/apply-who-nopermit.asp

MEDICAL INSURANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

In British Columbia, Medical Insurance is offered through Medical Services Plan. MSP insures medically required services provided by physicians and supplementary health care practitioners, laboratory services and diagnostic procedures. Residents of Canada are not automatically covered under MSP. If you have coverage in your own province, it will not cover you in BC. MSP premiums are \$54 for one person; \$96 for a family of two; \$108 for a family of three or more. International students must have a valid Study Permit upon entering Canada to be eligible for medical coverage under the BC Medical Services Plan. Individuals with student authorizations for six months or longer must be covered under the province's medical service plan. International students should purchase private medical insurance for the first three months, as there is a three month waiting period. After three months, it will be mandatory to have MSP coverage.

Students should apply upon acceptance at Ai.

TO APPLY FOR MSP, CALL 604-683-7151
OR APPLY ONLINE: www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/msp

NOTE: All students at AiVancouver - Dubrulle Culinary Arts require health coverage.

PRIVATE MEDICAL INSURANCE

Until you are eligible to apply for MSP (after the first three months you reside in B.C.), you will need to purchase private medical insurance. The following organizations provide insurance for international students:

- Bridges International Insurance Services: www.iiacanada.com/e/study.html
- Student Guard: www.studentguard.com

POST OFFICE

Post offices in Canada generally provide the following services: parcel pick-up, postage retail, postcard and envelope retail, post office box sales, change of address services and many others.

For more information on Canada Post or to find a post office close to you, visit: www.canadapost.ca

TRANSPORTATION

WALKING

The City of Vancouver encourages people to get around by walking as much as possible. Unlike many cities in North America, Vancouver has no highways through the city. It is possible to walk almost anywhere in Vancouver and the many parks and tree-lined streets make walking a pleasure. While it's always important to pay attention to traffic and follow signs for pedestrian crossings, it's especially important at night and in rainy weather when motorists can have difficulty seeing people on foot crossing the street. It's a good idea to wear reflective clothing or carry a flashlight when walking on dark streets at night. It is illegal and dangerous to walk across a street anywhere but at an intersection. Crossing in the middle of the street (jaywalking) is against the law in Vancouver.

CYCLING

The City of Vancouver has developed an extensive system of bikeways for cyclists in the city. The Cycling in Vancouver map has information on bicycling and the best ways to cycle to any part of the city. You can pick up the map from City Hall, or by calling the City's Bicycle Hot-line at 604-871-6070. Maps are also available at Vancouver libraries, community centres and the following web site:

<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/engsvcs/transport/cycling/routes.htm>

PUBLIC TRANSIT

TransLink, a local transportation authority, provides an integrated public transportation system of buses, SkyTrain, SeaBus and the West Coast Express, a commuter rail service. Riders can use the same tickets for different modes of travel in the system and buy books of tickets and passes. Riders need to have exact change to pay for bus fare. Change is not available on buses, the SkyTrain or the SeaBus. Schedules are available in Vancouver Public Library branches, at City Hall, as well as information booths at some shopping malls. For schedule information, call 604-953-3333. Also check TransLink website:

www.translink.ca

DRIVING A VEHICLE

You must have a valid BC driver's license to drive a motor vehicle in Vancouver. The Province of BC is responsible for licenses, insurance, speed limits and road safety. For more information, contact the Driver Service Centres in the Lower Mainland. They are listed in the White Pages of the telephone book under "ICBC". For accident claims, call the Accident Claim Centres in Vancouver, also listed in the telephone book. You can also check the ICBC's website at: <www.icbc.com>

EMERGENCY VEHICLES

When a police car, fire truck or ambulance has its lights and siren on, you must get out of the way as quickly and safely as you can. Move your car to the right lane, and stop until the emergency vehicle has passed you.

SPEED LIMITS

The speed limit on all Vancouver roads is 50 kilometers per hour (km/h), unless you see a sign for another speed. The speed limit on lanes behind houses and buildings is 20 km/h. Any park or school area has a speed limit of 30 km/h to keep children safe. Police give out tickets with heavy fines for people who go over the speed limits in the city.

STREET PARKING

Never block a fire hydrant, a bus stop, a cross-walk, a road, an alley or a driveway when you park. Make sure you pay parking meters, or you can be fined. Parking meters operate every day of the week, from 9:00 in the morning to 8:00 at night.

RESIDENTS PARKING ONLY AND RESIDENTS PERMIT PARKING

Some residential areas have signs which say Resident Parking Only. This means that the street parking is intended for people who live on that block or in that area. If you are not a resident and park your car in that area, you may get a ticket. If you see the sign Residents Permit Parking, you will need to display a special permit from the City to park your car in that area. Cars with no permit can be ticketed. For more information, call:

Residential Parking Permits at 604-873-7338.

Web site: <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/engsvcs/parking/admin/index.htm>

TRANSPORTATION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Vancouver has special buses and sidewalk ramps to make it easy for people with disabilities to get around. TransLink's handyDART service has small buses that are easy for people in wheelchairs to use. HandyDART buses pick people up at their homes and take them where they want to go.

Phone: 604-430-2692

Web site: www.translink.bc.ca/Transportation_Services/Accessibility/handydart.asp

About 60% of Vancouver's curbed streets and lane corners have curb ramps to make it easy for people in wheelchairs to cross the street and get back on the sidewalk on the other side. To inquire about curb ramps, call the City's Engineering Department at 604-871-6131.

Web site: <http://vancouver.ca/engsvcs/streets/admin/curbs.htm>

For more information about accessibility for people with disabilities, call the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities at 604-875-0188.

Web site: <http://www.bccpd.bc.ca>

Taken from The Newcomer's Guide to Vancouver

www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/newtovancouver/part3/around.htm