

N·S·C·A·D  
UNIVERSITY

ULTIMATE GUIDEBOOK FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENTS

2025/2026



Pjila'si! –Welcome! –Bienvenue!

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

NSCAD University is located in K'jipuktuk, the district of Sipekne'katik, Mi'kma'ki, which since time immemorial, has been the unceded traditional territory and ancestral homelands of the Mi'kmaq Nation. We pay respect to the historic and contemporary Mi'kmaw artists who have, over millennia, created unique artforms and designs, and through generations, passed down ways of being, knowing, and doing that are valued and respected. NSCAD University is committed to forging a relationship based on reciprocity as we move forward together in a good way, based on the foundational aspirations in our collective treaties, dating back to 1725. In Nova Scotia, we recognize we are all Treaty People.

Mi'kma'ki: Traditional Territory of the Mi'kmaq people geographically making up what can be referred to as Nova Scotia. K'jipuktuk: Meaning “The Great Harbour” in the Mi'kmaq language, geographically making up what can be referred to as the city of Halifax. This Land Acknowledgment should not function as acceptance of the structural conditions of settler colonialism that remain in effect today. We hope that it sparks a desire to learn about our shared history, provoke thought, reflection and change, which are the starting point of creating respectful, reciprocal relationships, and a step on the journey to reconciliation.

## PEOPLE'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT

NSCAD acknowledges the historical and contemporary presence of people of African descent. It offers this People's acknowledgement in solidarity with the Indigenous people of Turtle Island in the efforts and deliberate intentions toward decolonization. African Nova Scotians have existed and persisted on the traditional land of the Mi'kmaq for more than 400 hundred years. We acknowledge and express deep gratitude. Their significant presence and contributions on this land have contributed to the existence of Nova Scotia.

Their labour and skills, used without their explicit consent and without reciprocity, have shaped the structural stability and were instrumental in the creation of the intergenerational wealth of today's Nova Scotia. They are resilient, brave, and spiritual and express pride in their Ancestors on whose shoulders they stand. They are the founders of the more than 50 historical African Nova Scotian communities across Nova Scotia. This acknowledgement brings with it a call to action to reconcile the harms acted upon African Nova Scotians, a distinct People and the Mi'kmaw People.



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# STAFF INFORMATION



## **Admissions**

D207, Fountain Campus, Office of Student Experience (OSE), Floor 2

Hours: Monday –Friday 9:00 AM –4:00 PM

Phone: 902 494 8241

Email: [admissions@nscad.ca](mailto:admissions@nscad.ca)

## **Opportunity & Belonging**

D310, Fountain Campus, Office of Student Experience (OSE), Floor 3

Hours: Monday –Friday 9:00 AM –4:00 PM

Phone: 902 494 8260

Department webpage: <https://nscad.ca/current-students/belong/>

Email: [belong@nscad.ca](mailto:belong@nscad.ca)

## **Registrarial Services**

D200, Fountain Campus, Office of Student Experience (OSE), Floor 2

Hours: Monday –Friday 9:00 AM –4:00 PM

Phone: 902 494 8260

Email: [registrar@nscad.ca](mailto:registrar@nscad.ca)



# New Student Pre-Arrival Checklist

## Your NSCAD Username and Password

By now, you should have received an email from Admissions and Recruitment with your NSCAD username and password. This information allows you to access the online resources you'll need throughout the academic year, via the [NSCAD Navigator](#)

- **Student Email Account and Office 365:** The only email account where the institution and your instructors will send you important instructions and notices, so it's crucial that you check this email often. You'll also find your personal calendar and other online apps here.
- **NSCAD Self-Service:** Your student information hub, where your registration, course schedule, course catalog, and financial information are all kept.
- **Brightspace:** NSCAD's Online Learning Platform, where your instructors will share important information about your courses and assignments.
- **NSCAD Library:** Where you can access library journals from off-campus.
- **NSCAD Wireless:** Where you can access secure the wireless network EDUROAM while on campus.

## Orientation RSVP & Student Documents Form

In the first email you received from the Office of Opportunity & Belonging, we asked you to complete an RSVP form as part of your registration process. If you have not yet done so, please complete this form now (regardless of whether you'll be attending the Orientation Day event).



# Class Registration

Registration for new incoming students began on June 7, 2025. All new students have been sent information to their NSCAD email account regarding how to navigate and register for classes in Self-Service. If you are not yet registered for classes and required guidance, do not delay! Schedule an appointment with an academic advisor as soon as possible.



# Your Student ID Card

Every NSCAD student will be issued a photo ID card, which identifies you as a current NSCAD student. This card must be validated by the Office of Student Experience at the start of each semester. To help us prepare for your arrival, please upload an appropriate ID photo to your RSVP form for Orientation Day.

## Here are some photo guidelines:

- File naming convention: StudentID\_lastname\_firstname
- Proportion: 2.5cm x 3.3cm (1:1.32 — this matches most smartphone cameras with no additional editing required)
- Image format: JPG
- Image size: Maximum 2MB
- Background: Solid and neutral (blue/grey/white). Take the photo up against a neutral-coloured sheet or wall.
- Image quality: The image should not be pixelated or blurred.
- Subject appearance: Ensure even lighting in the image. The subject's eyeline should be parallel to the top edge of the photo, and the face must be upright—no tilting or looking over the shoulder. The subject must face the camera directly with eyes open.  
**Note:** Tinted glasses, anything covering the eyes, or face masks are not permitted.

## Your ID card will contain the following stickers:

- **Library Barcode:** A barcode will be placed on the back of your NSCAD ID to provide access to the library. Please complete Step 2 of the Orientation RSVP to ensure we have the necessary information.
- **Halifax Transit Sticker:** If you are a full-time student (enrolled in 9 or more credits), or a student registered with the Accessibility Office taking 6 or more credits, you are eligible for a Halifax Transit sticker. This sticker gives you unlimited access to public transportation throughout the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM).
- **WHMIS Sticker:** For safety reasons, all students must complete WHMIS training before entering workshops and studios. The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) training is offered online, free of charge, through your Brightspace account. It will be available in the days leading up to the start of classes.
- **AGNS Sticker:** NSCAD students receive free admission to the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (AGNS) through a special partnership. Your AGNS sticker provides access to the museum throughout the year.





# Building Card Access

Separate from your student ID, the NSCAD Building Access Card allows you secure, 24/7 access to all campus buildings. It is a white tap card that you hold near proximity scanners located throughout campus. Be sure to complete Step 3 of the Orientation RSVP form so we can prepare your access card in time for orientation.

# Study Permit

Each semester, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) requires Designated Learning Institutions (DLIs) to report on the enrollment status of international students. To remain in compliance with your study permit, you must be actively pursuing studies at a DLI and at the level and in the field of study specified on your permit.

To ensure accurate reporting, **please send a copy of your current valid study permit to [belong@nscad.ca](mailto:belong@nscad.ca), or bring a physical copy to the Office of Student Experience (located on the second floor of the Fountain Campus, opposite the elevator) by September 30.**



# Emergency Contact Information

Please log in to Self-Service and complete your student profile by submitting your current address and emergency contact information. We require your current Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) address, as this will be used for any postal communication (rare, but important). You must also provide **contact details for two emergency contacts:**

- **A local contact in Nova Scotia** – This can be a friend, roommate, coworker, residence staff member, etc.
- **A personal emergency contact** – This can be anyone you trust, located either within or outside of Canada.

## Conditional Offers

IRCC policies and processing requirements can change at any time. It is your responsibility to stay informed by regularly communicating with the NSCAD Admissions and Recruitment Office for the most up-to-date information regarding conditional offers and deferral requirements. You should also consult official Canadian government and local visa office websites to understand what is required to enter and study in Canada, and to remain compliant with the conditions of your visa and study permit.

- All successful international applicants who receive an offer must confirm their place in the selected program by paying a non-refundable \$2,500 commitment fee and submitting a signed commitment statement by the deadline stated in their offer.
- Applicants who do not meet NSCAD's English Language Requirements at the time of admission will receive a conditional offer. Please contact [admissions@nscad.ca](mailto:admissions@nscad.ca) to discuss your plans for meeting these requirements, the issuance of a Provincial Attestation Letter (PAL), and your anticipated start date.
- Once one of the accepted English language conditions is met, NSCAD Admissions will issue a full acceptance letter along with the Provincial Attestation Letter (PAL). Both are required to apply for a new study permit under NSCAD's Designated Learning Institution (DLI) number.

Further details are available at: <https://nscad.ca/admissions/international-applications/>.



# Names and Legal Names

Some students choose to use names other than their legal name (these can sometimes be referred to as preferred names or chosen names).

Students may use their name of choice on ID cards, email addresses, class lists, and other official communications. Please note that your legal name must still be used on certain legal documents, including Confirmations of Enrollment, Academic Transcripts, and your parchment (the official paper certificate of your degree issued upon graduation).

If you would like a name that is different than your legal name to be used in official university communications, please email [OSE@nscad.ca](mailto:OSE@nscad.ca).



# Health Insurance

## StudentVIP

- All international students at NSCAD are automatically enrolled in the **NSCAD International Student Health Plan** through StudentVIP. Participation in this plan is mandatory.
- If your study permit is valid for at least 12 months, you may become eligible for MSI, the Nova Scotia provincial health care program. Eligibility typically begins on the first day of the 13th month following your arrival in Nova Scotia as a student. Full details are available [on the MSI website](#).
- If you become eligible for MSI and would like to switch from the StudentVIP plan, you must book an appointment with Haoming (Jim) as soon as possible after becoming eligible.
- For a breakdown of international health plan costs per semester, please visit the [NSCAD Tuition & Fees page](#).
- More information about your StudentVIP health plan is available [here](#).

## Coverage

StudentVIP provides a well-designed and organized summary of all coverage available to NSCAD international students, including medical, mental health, transportation, pregnancy and maternity, travel, accident, dual citizenship, and exclusion services. You can easily navigate these details on the [StudentVIP Coverage page](#).

- If you need to opt out of StudentVIP because you are, or will become, eligible for MSI, you must first book an appointment with Haoming (Jim) as soon as possible.
- Please note that if you opt out and switch to MSI through NSCAD's domestic student health plan, you will still be required to pay for the [StudentVIP companion plan](#), this plan covers travel outside of Nova Scotia and costs a one-time fee of \$51, which will be added to your student account.



# Health Insurance

## Medical Service Insurance (MSI)

- If you remain in Canada for 12 consecutive months, you become eligible to apply for a Nova Scotia Health Card (MSI) starting on the first day of the thirteenth month following your arrival in Nova Scotia.
- You must present your MSI card to health care providers before receiving insured health services.
- MSI coverage includes hospital stays, medical services, dental care, and optometry, though some restrictions apply. More detailed information can be found [here](#).
- If you qualify and wish to switch from the StudentVIP plan to MSI with the domestic Greenshield Health Coverage, you must first consult with the Coordinator of the Office of Opportunity & Belonging (O&B) staff before contacting StudentVIP to opt out.



# Canadian Culture

Canada is often described as a “Cultural Mosaic” — a multicultural society that celebrates and promotes the coexistence of diverse identities, languages, and cultures within one country.

- Generally, Canadians are informal and friendly, but politeness remains very important.
- Much like in the movies, Canadians often say “sorry” for almost anything — even when it’s not their fault!
- Canada is a bilingual country using English and French. French is spoken primarily in the province of Québec, parts of New Brunswick, and even in certain communities in Mi’kma’ki (The Indigenous name of Nova Scotia).





# Common Courtesies

- Hold the door open for others.
- Smile and make eye contact when greeting or speaking.
- It's common to chat briefly before doing business—usually about the weather.
- Always give up your seat on the bus to elderly people, pregnant individuals, people with disabilities, and those with small children.
- When dining at a restaurant, tipping at least 15% of the bill is expected. Failing to tip is noticed and considered rude.
- Avoid asking direct personal questions unless you know the person well—it can be seen as impolite.
- Do not wave, snap fingers, or yell to get your server's attention in restaurants; this is considered rude.
- Gifts are typically reserved for special occasions like birthdays or holidays. When invited to dinner, it's customary to bring a small gift such as wine or chocolate (usually under \$25).
- Prices are generally fixed, so avoid lengthy negotiations to lower the price.
- The drinking age in Nova Scotia is 19+. Please note that cannabis is also legal in Canada. The age of consumption is also 19+. Drinking alcohol and smoking cannabis in public spaces, including parks, is illegal in Canada.



# Culture Shock

Moving to a new country can be challenging and balancing this adjustment while attending school is not always easy. It's very natural to experience something called "culture shock." Culture shock refers to the psychological disorientation people feel when living in a new environment. Since it's a process, everyone experiences it differently and at their own pace. Feelings can range from mild irritation to deep anxiety or depression. Remember, culture shock is a normal experience—and you're not alone. At NSCAD, we have a dedicated team of counsellors who offer confidential, short-term, one-on-one counselling for various concerns, including culture shock. They can also help connect you to additional supports.

- If you have concerns about moving to a new country or simply want to talk, virtual counselling appointments can be booked in a variety of different ways:
- With a NSCAD Counsellor: <https://nscad.ca/student-experience/belong/>
- With Good2Talk 24/7 Counselling: <https://good2talk.ca/novascotia/>
- To access a counsellor in multiple languages: <https://imwell.ca/> (password: NSCAD)

Some common activities and solutions to help you go through culture shock:

- Spend time with friends and your host family—try not to isolate yourself.
- Go to a NSCAD student life event (there are even some specifically for international students!). Find updates on Instagram: [@nscadstudentexperience](https://www.instagram.com/nscadstudentexperience)
- Reach out if you need help or someone to talk to.
- Keep a journal to reflect on your feelings.
- Exercise regularly—even a simple walk can help!
- Stay busy and get involved in activities you enjoy.
- Take up a hobby and plan special treats for yourself.
- Avoid excessive drinking or drug use.
- Make comfort foods that remind you of home.
- Consider **volunteering** as a way to build community and get some work experience.
- Set realistic goals—don't expect to become fluent in English in just one month.
- Be gentle with yourself and practice self-care.
- Try relaxation techniques and meditation (visit a Mindful Campus event at NSCAD).
- Allow yourself to feel sad about what you've left behind but focus your energy on moving forward.
- Keep a good sense of humor and laugh at your mistakes!



# Planning for Canada Overview

## Important Pre-Arrival Information

Please note that the immigration information provided in this document is reviewed and updated only once a year. NSCAD does not currently employ an on-site Regulated International Student Immigration Advisor (RISIA) or Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC). Since IRCC processes and requirements can change at any time, it is your responsibility to regularly consult official Canadian government and local visa office websites to stay informed about entry and study requirements, and to maintain compliance with the terms of your visa and permit.

## Study Permit & Visa from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

- International students studying in Canada for longer than 6 months require a study permit.
- You will receive a provincial attestation letter (PAL) from the Admissions Team if you are not under one of the exemptions
- Your study permit application requirements may depend on your country of origin. Be sure to review the application guide, supporting documents and processing times associated with your country of origin before applying for your study permit.
- Depending on your country of citizenship, you will be issued a temporary resident visa (TRV) or an electronic travel authorization (eTA) to enter Canada.
- We highly recommend keeping photocopies of all documents you submitted as part of your study permit application, your letter of acceptance, and a screenshot of your class registration handy, either digitally or physically, when travelling to Canada. A Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) customs officer might request this information when you arrive in Canada to request your study permit at the Port of Entry (POE)
- Once your study permit and visa are approved by IRCC, you should receive a Letter of Introduction from the visa office. This letter is important as it is required to board your flight to Canada, it indicates to the CBSA officer that you are approved by IRCC to come to Canada.
- Your study permit should be issued at the border when you arrive with your Letter of Introduction in hand. The CBSA officer processing your entry to Canada has the final authority to determine whether you are admissible, therefore, you may still have a chance to be denied entrance to Canada



# Planning for Canada Overview (Continued)

- If you are a transfer student from a Canadian education institution to NSCAD University, you are responsible to familiarize yourself with the policies set by IRCC, as well as the Immigration Act and Regulations related to transferring between Canadian education institutions. It is your responsibility to communicate with NSCAD Admissions and do your own research on the Canadian government's official websites to help you understand what is required to enter and study in Canada and to comply with the terms of your visa and permit at all times.
- These regulations can change quickly, so please become familiar with navigating the IRCC website and learning of any new regulations and requirements during your studies at NSCAD.
- **Effective November 08, 2024, international students must apply for and be approved for a new study permit before changing DLIs. Regulation R217(1) has been identified and amended. You can find details [here](#).**

## Visas and Work Authorization

- Your study permit may authorize you to work in Canada. You are only authorized to work once classes begin. IRCC has rules in place that determine the number of hours that you can work off campus and when you can work full time. It is your responsibility to know those rules. Refer to the IRCC website for more details.
- If you need to complete ESL (English Second Language) courses in Canada, you may not be eligible to work off-campus. Please refer to the condition section on your study permit to find this information.
- Full-time international students at NSCAD with valid study permits can work off campus up to 24 hours per week during academic semesters, as long as their permit allows it. To be considered full-time for immigration purposes, students must be enrolled in at least 9 credits (or 6 credits for MA Art Education students).
- If your study permit doesn't have work conditions on it, you can request an amendment to your study permit to have these conditions added if you're eligible to work off campus.
- During scheduled academic breaks, full-time NSCAD students can work full-time if their study permit allows it. Immigration considers reading weeks in Fall/Winter and the Summer term (May–August) as scheduled breaks.
- You must stop working on the day you no longer meet the eligibility requirements on your study permit (e.g., if you are no longer a full-time student during an academic semester).



# Planning for Canada Overview (Continued)

## Accompanying Family Members

\*Please note the information regarding immigration in this document is only reviewed and revised once a year. It is your responsibility to research the Canadian government official and local visa office websites to educate yourself on what is required to enter and study in Canada and to be in compliance with the term of your visa and permit at all times.

- Your spouse/partner and children may be eligible to come to Canada with you. Accompanying spouses/partners are eligible to apply for an open work permit.
- Effective January 21, 2025, only spouses of certain international students and foreign workers will be able to apply for a family OWP, including studying in a master's degree program of 16 months or longer.
- You can check the Ministerial announcement on January 14, 2025, here. Detailed eligibility requirements and process can be found here. Comprehensive Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) exemption -- spouses or common-law partners of study permit holders – [R205(c)(ii) – C42] – Canadian interest – International Mobility Program (IMP) details can be found here.





# Social Insurance Number

- After you have obtained your study permit from the point of entry and have entered Canada, you need to apply for a Social Insurance Number as soon as possible. A Social Insurance Number (SIN) is a 9-digit number and document you need to work in Canada and file taxes. You can apply for a SIN with a valid study permit (be sure to check for the permission to work notation at the port of entry when you receive your study permit. If your study permit doesn't have work condition on it, you must request an amendment to your study permit before you can apply to Service Canada for a SIN).

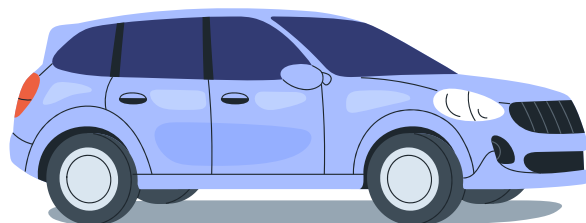
You may apply for a Social Insurance Number via:

- The Service Canada office at the airport OR
- Any other Service Canada location. For more information, please visit the Service Canada website OR
- Apply online



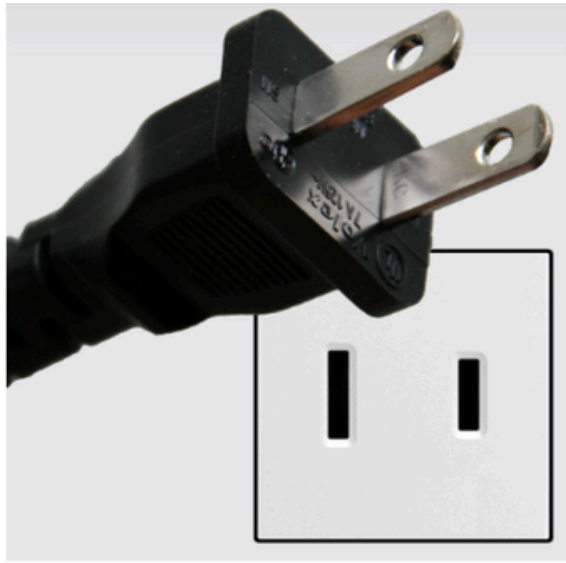
# Additional Information

- **For emergencies:** Call 911
- **Non-emergency number for police:** 902-490-5020
- **Medications, health documents and prescriptions:** Check [import limits](#) for [medication](#) you may bring to Canada.
- **For non-emergency health advice:** Call 811: Registered Nurses are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to offer reassurance concerning general health issues and questions. Health information and advice may include self-care at home or a recommendation to see a care provider or visit a local emergency department.
- Callers may also obtain information about health-related services available in their community. Services are available in French through bi-lingual staff or many other languages through a third-party language interpretation service. For more information about 811, go to [811.novascotia.ca](http://811.novascotia.ca)
- **Driving Licenses:** If you have a valid license from your home country, you may be able to use it with a translation into French and English for a short period after arrival (usually 3 months). Click [here](#) for more information.
- To use this service, you must
  - Be at least 16 years of age
  - Take a vision screening test
  - Disclose all medical conditions or physical disabilities that may affect your ability to safely drive a motor vehicle
  - Provide an English translation of your license (if the licence being exchanged is not in English or French). Translation services can be offered through the [Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia \(ISANS\)](#)
  - Pay normal fees for the issuance of a licence.
  - Depending on the licence class from your originating jurisdiction or how long you have held a Nova Scotia Driver's License, you may be required to enter the Graduated Driver Licensing system. Information on obtaining a Nova Scotia Driver License can be found [here](#).



# Power Standards

Power Standards: Type A & B plugs and sockets. Standard Voltage is 120V and the standard frequency 60Hz.



## Type A

- ⚡ mainly used in the USA, Canada, Mexico & Japan
- ⚡ 2 pins
- ⚡ not grounded
- ⚡ 15 A
- ⚡ almost always 100 - 127 V
- ⚡ socket compatible with plug type A



## Type B

- ⚡ mainly used in the USA, Canada & Mexico
- ⚡ 3 pins
- ⚡ grounded
- ⚡ 15 A
- ⚡ almost always 100 - 127 V
- ⚡ socket compatible with plug types A & B



# Clothing

From December to May, Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia) can be extremely cold, with snow, freezing rain, and harsh temperatures that may feel shocking if you're not used to winter weather. Because the weather can change quickly—sunny and warm in the morning, and a blizzard by afternoon—it's important to be prepared. Here are some helpful tips:

- Always bring a sweater! Even in warmer months, evenings can get chilly, especially near the water.
- Raincoats are your best friend! A reliable, waterproof rain jacket will protect you in many weather conditions.
- Avoid heavy wool jackets in winter. Due to frequent wet weather, waterproof outerwear is more practical and comfortable.
- Wear practical shoes in spring. There's often a lot of water and mud, even on warm and sunny days.
- Winter boots are essential during the coldest months to keep your feet warm and dry.

The types of clothing you should wear according to different seasons can be found [here!](#) Keep in mind the weather in K'jipuktuk (Halifax) is oftentimes more wet than the rest of Canada! Be sure to plan accordingly. The monthly weather averages can be found [here!](#)





# Housing

- Please be reminded that it is your responsibility to secure accommodations in K'jipuktuk (Halifax). Consider the best type of accommodation for you by researching costs, locations, roommates, and other important factors!
- You will find more information from NSCAD Admissions email with subject “NSCAD Housing Information” or check [NSCAD Housing page](#).
- If you have any questions or concerns about finding accommodation, please contact [housing@nscad.ca](mailto:housing@nscad.ca).

# Community Resources

- Beyond what is available here at NSCAD, there are a variety of community resources available for you in and around K'jipuktuk (Halifax). Calling 211 or visiting their [website](#) can connect you with services in your community.
- NSCAD University has created a comprehensive overview of available services and resources that can be found [here](#) or visit [NSCAD Support and Resources page](#).



# Banking

If you are planning to stay in Canada for a longer period, it may be a good idea to open a bank account. Each bank will have different fees, transaction limits, card options, etc. associated with the account you open.

Popular banking options:

- [Scotiabank](#) (Bank of Nova Scotia)
- [BMO](#) (Bank of Montréal)
- [CIBC](#) (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce)
- [RBC](#) (Royal Bank of Canada)
- [TD](#) (Toronto-Dominion Bank)
- [CUA](#) (Credit Union Atlantic)

# Phone Plans

Cell phone plans in Canada tend to be extremely expensive compared to the same types of plans in other countries. It is recommended to explore as many different options as possible and find the cheapest one. Sometimes there are discounted bundle options available if you are purchasing internet and other services from the same provider.

Providers include:

- [Bell](#)
- [Eastlink](#)
- [Fido](#)
- [Koodo Mobily](#)
- [Purple Cow](#)
- [Rogers](#)
- [Telus](#)
- [Virgin Plus](#)

Photo Identification (Passport or Driver's Licenses) as well as a second piece of ID (credit card, SIN, cheques) will likely be required to open an account.



# EduNova Programs

EduNova is a co-operative industry association of education and training providers in Nova Scotia. They offer programs that focus on professional development and providing educational and support resources to international students in post-secondary institutions.

## Study and Stay Foundations

The Study and Stay Foundations program helps participants study, stay, work, and thrive in Nova Scotia. It consists of four modular learning levels and uses app technology to teach cultural and professional competencies, knowledge development, and pre-employment skills. This program is ideal for international students navigating the transition from academic life to professional careers.

If you are interested in learning more about EduNova and its programs, click [here](#).



# Living in Nova Scotia /Mi'kma'ki

Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia) is located on the East coast of Canada. The province has more than 7,400 kilometres of coastline, and multiple sandy beaches at which you can swim! The highest tides in the world are in Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia)! The land has been inhabited by Indigenous peoples for over 13,000 years, more information about the Mi'kmaq people can be found [here](#).

## Transportation

- **Air Travel:** There are three major airports in Nova Scotia, located in K'jipuktuk (Halifax), Sydney, and Yarmouth. The [Halifax Stanfield International Airport](#) (known as Stanfield) is located 35 kilometres northeast of Downtown Halifax, it takes about 30 to 45 minutes to get there by car. You can get to and from the airport [via public transportation, shuttle bus, taxi, Uber and Driver Dave's](#).
- **Train Travel:** You can access Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia) by train via [VIA Rail Canada](#). There is a train station located in Downtown Halifax, conveniently surrounded by public transportation.
- **Bus Travel:** [Maritime Bus](#) has over 50 locations throughout the Maritimes (New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia) and Québec (Montréal and Québec City). Maritime bus is a cost-effective way to explore outside of K'jipuktuk (Halifax).

## Lifestyle

- Life here is more relaxed compared to larger urban areas. Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia) is surrounded by breathtaking scenery—clean air, cool breezes, open spaces, and the calming sound of the ocean.
- Mi'kma'ki is part of Atlantic Canada, a region made up of four eastern provinces: New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island (the Maritimes), and Newfoundland and Labrador (often called Newfoundland).
- People from Mi'kma'ki often identify as Maritimers, reflecting the shared history and culture among these provinces.
- Cozy cafés are found throughout the province—especially in K'jipuktuk (Halifax), where you can likely find a café within a five-minute walk in any direction.
- Mi'kma'ki is famous for its fresh seafood. Many restaurants offer multiple dishes featuring local catch such as lobster, fish and chips, chowder, fish cakes, mussels, scallops, and oysters.
- Outdoor adventures abound—from the lush Acadian farmlands of the Annapolis Valley to the spectacular Cape Breton Highlands and the stunning Fundy Coast.



# Living in Nova Scotia /Mi'kma'ki (Continued)

## **Festival, Music, Arts and Entertainment**

As a major cultural hub of the Maritimes, Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia) sees hundreds of live festivals, parades and concerts throughout the year, attracting performers and audiences from around the world. K'jipuktuk (Halifax) hosts a variety of fun events and festivals; the most popular ones are included below!

- [Halifax Burger Bash](#)
- [Taste Asia - Halifax Asian Food & Culture Festival](#)
- [Lebanese Cedar Festival](#)
- [Halifax Greek Fest](#)
- [Royal Nova Scotia Tattoo](#)
- [Halifax Jazz Festival](#)
- [Halifax Pride Festival](#)
- [Nova Multifest Society](#)
- [Halifax Buskers Festival](#)
- [Atlantic International Film Festival](#)
- [Nocturne Halifax](#)
- [Evergreen Festival](#)
- [The Parade of Lights](#)

## **Important and Commemorative Occasions**

Canada celebrates and commemorates a variety of significant heritage months, weeks and days. These special occasions can range from days of remembrance or celebration to days set aside for learning and action. It is very important to understand the importance of these occasions. The full list of important and commemorative days can be found [here](#).

For example:

The month of June is National Indigenous History Month, during this time it is important to recognize and commemorate the rich history, heritage, resilience and diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples across Canada.

Some commemorative days will be statutory holidays as well. This means that most retail stores are required to close, and some services will not be available or operating at reduced capacity for the day.





# Living in Nova Scotia/ Mi'kma'ki (Continued)

## Food and Restaurants

Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia) is home to hundreds of restaurants that serve food from all around the world! You can find authentic Japanese, African, Filipino, Middle Eastern, Chinese and Indian all within a 10-minute walk from NSCAD! There are many vegan and vegetarian restaurants and kitchens too! We even have a vegan butcher! Locally sourced restaurants and markets are popular as well! K'jipuktuk (Halifax) is lucky to have many speciality markets and grocers that carry a wide variety of food and ingredients from around the world:

- Central & South American
- Chinese
- Italian
- Korean
- British
- Filipino
- Middle Eastern
- Indian
- African
- Persian



# Living in Halifax/ K'jipuktuk

K'jipuktuk's (Halifax) coastal location is part of its unique charm. It's a city that isn't afraid to do its own thing at its own pace. This means artists, musicians, and makers of all kinds have the freedom to experiment and explore. Coastal hikes, pristine lakes and forests, and fantastic beaches for swimming or surfing are just around a 15-minute drive outside downtown K'jipuktuk's (Halifax).

## Transportation

K'jipuktuk's (Halifax) is a very walkable city with a robust public transit system. Most destinations can be easily reached on foot or via public transportation. Driving in K'jipuktuk's (Halifax) is very straightforward; however, the downtown area can be quite busy with traffic during certain times of day such as rush hour (8:00am-9:00am & 4:30pm-6:00pm).

**Public Transportation:** There are several ticket options to ride the bus, ferry and Access-A-Bus. Tickets can be purchased at a retailer location, or you can purchase monthly bus passes. In a pinch, you can always pay the regular cash fare- 3\$ CAD. All NSCAD students registered in a full-time course load will be issued a student bus pass on their NSCAD ID card, these passes are included in your tuition.

- Here, passengers can find advice on navigating the public transit system in K'jipuktuk (Halifax), such as bus routes, schedules, maps, where to purchase transit passes/tickets, and much more.
- Halifax Transit has routes that travel locally as well as to suburban and outer areas of the city. Visit Regional Express Service to find out about these services. Halifax transit provides Accessible Services that can be found here.
- Urban Express provides a limited-stop service within the urban core to make your commute on time.
- Google Transit or other third-party APP's can give information about when your next bus will come or if there are any unexpected delays.
- The Harbour Ferry Service has two routes between downtown K'jipuktuk (Halifax) and Dartmouth. The ferry is wheelchair accessible and connects to the bus and Access-A-Bus systems.

**Taxi:** Here you can find the taxi service in Halifax.



# Living in Halifax/ K'jipuktuk (Continued)

**E-Scooters:** As a short-distance transportation, e-scooter is a nice eco-friendly within the district. When you are e-scooter riding, please follow the **bylaw** for your own safety. In May 2025, the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) launched a two-year shared micromobility pilot with Bird Canada. More details can be found on the HRM website here.

**Uber:** Uber is a ride-hailing company that you can use to submit a trip request automatically sent to an Uber driver near you, alerting the driver to your location. The accepting Uber driver will then come and pick you up and drive you to your requested destination. Click here to check out availability in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) area.

**Car Rental/ Car Sharing:** Short-term transportation helps you move around the city, enjoy the view or help your apartment move. Click here to see the list of car rental companies and their websites. Communauto is a cheaper alternative to traditional car rental services. They offer short-term rentals ranging from minutes, hours, days and longer!



# Living in Halifax/ K'jipuktuk (Continued)

## Shopping

**Groceries:** Sobeys, Atlantic Superstore and Walmart are the main grocery stores located in K'jipuktuk (Halifax). Each one has several locations, so be sure to find out which one is closest to where you will be living!

**Furniture Stores:** Ikea is usually the most low-cost store to shop for furniture and other home goods. The Brick, Leon's and Structube are also reasonable options. If you are comfortable with second-hand options, many people will often sell their furniture on classifieds such as Kijiji or Facebook Marketplace.

**Art Supply Stores:** NSCAD University has an art supply store on site! Orders can even be made online and then picked up! In the downtown K'jipuktuk (Halifax) area, there are several other art supply stores as well, including DeSerres, Michaels Stores and Yu Yo Craft Supply + Tea House.

**Pharmacies:** There are two popular pharmacy chains in Halifax, Shoppers Drug Mart and Lawton's Drugs, you will be able to find both of these options in many locations across the city. Grocery stores will oftentimes be able to fill prescriptions from their in-store pharmacies as well!

\*Boyd's Pharmasave is a 2SLGBTQ+ inclusive pharmacy that provides gender-affirming hormone administration. Located in the North End of K'jipuktuk (Halifax) and very accessible by foot or public transportation\*.

**Clothing & Retail:** K'jipuktuk (Halifax) has two large scale shopping malls where you can find a variety of convenient retail stores and services. The Halifax Shopping Centre is located in the West End of K'jipuktuk (Halifax) and Mic Mac Mall can be found in Dartmouth.

**Thrifting:** Buying second hand clothes or "thrifting" has become a very popular activity in K'jipuktuk/Halifax, there are several second hand/vintage clothing stores, includes Value Village, Elsie's Consignment Clothing, The Loot Vintage and KingsPIER vintage.



# Living in Halifax/ K'jipuktuk (Continued)

**School Supplies:** Educational supplies such as stationary can be found at stores like Staples and Dollarama as well as larger stores like Walmart.

## Everyday Activities

- Kayak, Canoe, or Paddle Board at the Saint Mary's Boat Club
- Explore the Halifax Public Gardens
- Spend an afternoon at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. NSCAD students have free access!
- Explore a wide variety local cafés.
- Discover wonders of Nova Scotia at the Museum of Natural History or Discovery Center
- Take a walk in Point Pleasant Park
- Skate on the Emera Oval
- Catch a play at Neptune Theatre
- Explore the Discovery Centre
- Play some games and grab some food at the Board Room Café
- Check out some books at the Halifax Central Library
- Learn about the ongoing story of Immigration at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21.

**Nightlife:** K'jipuktuk (Halifax) is home to live music, summer patios, historic pubs, and chic cocktail bars. You will likely come across Ceilidh's (pronounced Kay-Lees) also known as "Kitchen Parties", they are a unique part of Nova Scotian culture that traditionally consists of music, step dancing and telling stories!



# Closing Thoughts

We're so glad you've chosen to study at NSCAD University and to make Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia) your home away from home. As you begin this exciting journey, remember that support is always available—from faculty and staff to fellow students, we're here to help you succeed both academically and personally.

Take your time settling in, stay curious, and don't be afraid to ask for help or explore new opportunities. We can't wait to see all the creativity, growth, and connections you'll experience during your time at NSCAD.

Welcome to our community. You belong here.

