



Risio Institute for Digital Dental Education International Student Handbook

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International Student Handbook

Contents

International Student Services	4
Work Integrated Learning and Sponsoring Dental Office Requirements	4
Overview of the Work Integrated Learning Component	4
Sponsoring Dental Office Requirement and Scope of Work During Placement	4
English Language Requirements	5
International Applicant Admission Requirements	5
International Support and Resources	6
Before You Arrive	6
Arrival and Orientation	6
Academic Support	6
Living in Canada	7
Health and Wellbeing	7
Work and Immigration Information	7
Ongoing Support	7
Continuous Improvement	7
Student Health Care Coverage	8
Student Guide to Applying for AHCIP	8
Personal Services	10
Cell Phone & Internet Providers	10
Banking in Canada	10
Sending & Receiving Money Internationally	11
Working in Canada as an International Student	12
Adjusting to Life in Canada	13
Housing and Accommodation in Alberta	14
Where to search for housing:	14
Types of housing commonly available:	14
Before signing a lease, students should:	14
Counselling and Mental Health Support	15
Health and Social Service Support	15

Academic Support, Including Academic and Career Counselling.....	15
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International Student Services

Risio Institute provides dedicated administrative and student support services to meet the needs of international students from application through to program completion. These services are designed to support academic success, compliance with immigration requirements, and overall student well-being.

International students receive support throughout the admissions process, including Letter of Acceptance issuance, and pre arrival information related to relocation, housing, and Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP) eligibility. Upon enrolment, students are supported through an orientation that covers academic expectations, institutional policies, and student services available during their studies.

Ongoing support is provided by Risio Institute team members who assist with administrative inquiries, program navigation, and referrals to appropriate resources. Students are also provided with clear information regarding academic progression, attendance expectations, and institutional policies relevant to international learners.

Work Integrated Learning and Sponsoring Dental Office Requirements

Overview of the Work Integrated Learning Component

The Work Integrated Learning (WIL) component (minimum of 14 hours per week) is a required academic element of the Risio Institute dental assisting program. It is designed to provide students with exposure to clinical dental environments where theoretical knowledge is applied in practice under appropriate supervision.

International students must reside in Alberta, Canada, for the duration of the program and complete required work-integrated learning in an Alberta dental clinic. The program cannot be completed from outside Canada.

Sponsoring Dental Office Requirement and Scope of Work During Placement

Employment opportunities are identified through:

- Risio Institute's networks
- Dental placement agencies
- Student initiated connections

Allowable activities include:

- Dental office administrative tasks
- Sterilization and infection prevention support (steri tech duties in accordance with office protocols)
- Chairside assisting activities (no intra-oral skills until permitted by the College of Alberta Dental Assistants regulatory body)
- Clinical observation of dental procedures

- Completion of structured learning tasks assigned by Risio Institute

English Language Requirements

Applicants must demonstrate sufficient English language proficiency to support success in the Dental Assisting Program.

Applicants applying under the General Admission or Mature Admission pathways may satisfy the English language requirement by providing one of the following:

- A Grade 12 English course completed with a minimum grade of 60%; or
- A minimum score of 100 on the Duolingo English Test.

Applicants who do not meet the English language requirement will not be eligible for admission until acceptable proof of English language proficiency has been provided.

International Applicant Admission Requirements

International applicants must meet the following requirements to be considered for admission to the Dental Assisting Program:

- Be eligible to apply for a Canadian study permit.
- Reside in **Alberta, Canada**, while completing the program.
- Be legally authorized to work in Canada and able to work in an **Alberta** dental clinic a minimum of **14 hours per week** once work authorization has been obtained.
- Be prepared to secure employment in a dental office to complete the program's work integrated learning requirements.

International applicants must also meet **one** of the following academic admission requirements:

Option 1: General Admission

Submit an international high school transcript along with an Educational Credential Assessment (ECA) completed by a recognized credential assessment service. Risio Institute accepts assessments completed through the **World Education Services (WES)** to verify that international educational credentials are equivalent to a Canadian Grade 12 education, including a minimum grade of **60% in English**.

<https://www.wes.org/evaluations-and-fees/education/risio-institute-credential-evaluation-requirements/>

Option 2: Mature Admission

Applicants who do not meet the academic admission requirements or who have not completed an Educational Credential Assessment (ECA) may apply under the Mature Admission pathway by successfully completing the Institute's online entrance assessment.

International Support and Resources

Risio Institute is committed to supporting international students in successfully transitioning to life and study in Canada. The following resources and guidance are provided to help students adjust academically, socially, and practically throughout their program.

Before You Arrive

Students are encouraged to prepare for their transition to Canada by reviewing key information, including:

- Housing options and cost of living in Calgary
- Weather and appropriate clothing for all seasons
- Banking, mobile phone plans, and transportation options
- Health care coverage, including Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP)
- Required documents for travel and entry into Canada

Students should refer to official government resources ([Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#)) for the most accurate and up to date information regarding study permits and entry requirements.

Arrival and Orientation

All students will participate in an orientation at the start of their program. Orientation is designed to help students understand:

- Academic expectations and program structure
- Attendance, professionalism, and communication standards
- Institutional policies and student responsibilities
- Available student services and support resources

Students will also receive guidance on settling into life in Canada, including accessing health care, understanding local services, and navigating daily life.

Academic Support

Risio Institute supports students in adapting to the Canadian learning environment by providing:

- Clear expectations for coursework and participation
- Guidance on effective study habits and time management
- Support from instructors and academic staff
- Early feedback to help students stay on track

Students are encouraged to communicate with instructors or student services if they require additional support.

Living in Canada

Adjusting to life in a new country can take time. Students will be supported with general guidance on:

- Cultural norms and communication styles
- Workplace expectations in Canadian dental offices
- Transportation
- Accessing community resources and services

Students are encouraged to explore local opportunities and connect with their community.

Health and Wellbeing

Students are responsible for maintaining valid health insurance coverage while in Canada. Information about AHCIP eligibility and how to apply is provided in this Student Handbook and through official Alberta resources.

Risio Institute recognizes that adjusting to a new environment can be challenging. Students are encouraged to seek support if needed.

Work and Immigration Information

Risio Institute provides general information and directs students to official resources regarding studying and working in Canada. The Institute does not provide immigration advice.

Students should refer to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada for accurate and up to date information regarding:

- Study permit conditions
- Working while studying
- Post graduation opportunities

For personalized immigration advice, students must consult a licensed immigration consultant or authorized representative.

Ongoing Support

International students have access to ongoing support throughout their program. The Registrar and Student Advisors are available to assist with:

- Administrative questions
- Program navigation
- Referrals to appropriate services

Students are encouraged to reach out at any time for support.

Continuous Improvement

Risio Institute is committed to continuously improving student services. Feedback from international students is welcomed and used to enhance the overall student experience.

Student Health Care Coverage

Risio Institute is committed to ensuring that all students are informed about their responsibility to maintain valid health care coverage while studying in Alberta. The Institute provides guidance regarding eligibility for the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP) and directs students to official government resources for application and determination of coverage.

Risio Institute is responsible for providing students with accurate information regarding AHCIP eligibility, directing students to official government resources, and communicating general expectations regarding health coverage.

Students are responsible for understanding AHCIP eligibility requirements, applying for coverage when eligible, and maintaining continuous health insurance coverage throughout their studies.

Student Guide to Applying for AHCIP

Students are responsible for applying directly to the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan through a Government of Alberta participating registry office or online. The process is as follows:

Step 1: Confirm eligibility

Students from outside Canada may be eligible to apply for [Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan \(AHCIP\)](#) coverage if they meet the following condition:

- Hold a valid 12-month study permit issued for an Alberta educational institution and intend to reside in Alberta for 12 months or more.

Step 2: Establish Alberta residency

Students must have a fixed address in Alberta. Proof of residency is required and may include a Alberta driver's license, signed lease or rental agreement, utility bill, or other official documentation showing an Alberta address.

Step 3: Gather required documents

Students must prepare original documents in three categories:

- Identity documents such as a passport or government issued identification
- Proof of Alberta residency such as a lease agreement or utility bill
- Proof of legal entitlement to remain in Canada such as a study permit or other IRCC documentation

All documents must be valid and unexpired at the time of application.

Step 4: Complete the application form

Students must complete the official AHCIP application form available through the Government of Alberta (<https://www.alberta.ca/ahcip-how-to-apply>) or at a participating registry office. The form requires personal details, residency information, and immigration documentation where applicable.

Form: <https://formsmgmt.gov.ab.ca/Public/AHC0102.xdp>

Step 5: Submit application in person

Students can bring the completed application form and original supporting documents to a participating registry office in Alberta (<https://www.alberta.ca/ahcip-registry-locations>). There is no fee to apply. Registry staff will review documents and submit the application for processing.

Step 6: Wait for processing and receive health card

Processing may take several business days. Once approved, an Alberta personal health care card is mailed to the student's Alberta address. Students must present this card along with photo identification when accessing insured health services.

Step 7: Maintain coverage

Students must ensure their residency status and immigration documentation remain valid for the duration of their studies. Any change in status or address must be reported to AHCIP as required.

Personal Services

Cell Phone & Internet Providers

Having a reliable phone and internet connection is essential for online learning, communication with instructors, and staying connected during your studies in Canada.

Most major retail centres carry cell phone providers, and you can also visit electronics retailers such as Best Buy or The Source to compare plans and devices.

Common providers in Canada include:

www.bell.ca

www.rogers.com

www.telus.com

www.freedommobile.ca

www.fido.ca

www.chatrwireless.com

www.koodomobile.com

www.virginplus.ca

www.publicmobile.ca

Tip: Many providers offer student discounts or promotional plans. Ask directly when signing up.

Banking in Canada

You can open a Canadian bank account once you arrive, using a valid study permit and identification such as a passport or Alberta ID.

Most banks offer student accounts with reduced or waived monthly fees. It is recommended to ask specifically for student packages or newcomer banking offers.

Common Canadian banks include:

www.scotiabank.com

www.rbcroyalbank.com

www.bmo.com

www.cibc.com

www.atb.com

www.td.com

Tip: Many banks also offer credit-building tools for newcomers, which can help you establish a credit history in Canada.

Sending & Receiving Money Internationally

Many students need to send or receive money from family members outside Canada. Several secure services are available:

www.remitly.com

A fast and commonly used option for international transfers. Promotions may include reduced fees for first-time users.

<https://www.westernunion.com/ca/en/home.html>

Western Union offers online transfers as well as in-person services at retail locations across Calgary.

www.moneygram.com

Another widely used international money transfer service with online and in-person options.

Tip: Compare exchange rates and fees before sending money, as costs can vary significantly between services.

Working in Canada as an International Student

Working in a dental office is an important component of your learning experience and helps you build practical skills in a real-world setting.

To work in Canada, you'll need a **Social Insurance Number (SIN)**. This is a unique number issued by the Government of Canada that allows you to be paid legally and ensures your employer can process your wages correctly.

Once you're eligible, you can apply for your SIN through **Service Canada**.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin/apply.html>

The process is free and usually quite quick. You'll receive your SIN shortly after applying, and you can begin working once you have it.

A few helpful things to keep in mind:

- You must have your SIN before starting any job
- Your SIN is temporary and will expire when your study permit expires
- Keep your SIN safe and only share it with trusted employers

Adjusting to Life in Canada

Starting your program is an exciting step, and for many of our international students, it also comes with adjusting to life in a new country. It's completely normal to experience some challenges as you get used to your new environment.

You may notice differences in things like the weather, food, social norms, and how education and workplaces operate in Canada. This adjustment period is often called culture shock, and it's something many students experience at different points in their journey.

Some areas that can take time to adjust to include:

- Weather and seasonal changes
- Food and daily routines
- Workplace expectations and communication styles
- Learning in a Canadian education environment
- Building new social and professional connections

You might notice some common feelings during this time, such as:

- Changes in appetite or sleep
- Feeling more tired, overwhelmed, or irritable than usual
- Feeling homesick or isolated
- A sense of uncertainty or lack of confidence

These experiences are normal, and they do pass with time and support.

Here are a few ways to help yourself through the transition:

- Be patient with yourself. Adjusting takes time, and it's okay to have ups and downs
- Stay connected with family and friends back home
- Get involved. Whether it's through your workplace, classmates, or community, building connections makes a big difference
- Keep parts of your routine from home that bring you comfort
- Explore your new surroundings, including local shops, restaurants, and community spaces
- Take care of your physical and mental well-being through rest, nutrition, and activity

At Risio Institute, you're not expected to navigate this alone. Our team is here to support you throughout your program, both academically and personally. Reaching out early can make a big difference, and we encourage you to connect with us whenever you need support.

Housing and Accommodation in Alberta

Students are responsible for arranging their own accommodation; however, there are many safe and accessible housing options available.

Where to search for housing:

Students are encouraged to use reputable rental platforms such as:

- RentFaster
- Rentals.ca
- Kijiji Rentals
- Facebook Marketplace
- Places4Students (student-focused housing listings)
- PadMapper or Zumper (aggregated rental search tools)

These platforms allow students to filter by location, price, and housing type, including apartments, shared housing, and private rentals.

Types of housing commonly available:

- Shared houses or apartments with roommates
- Private or basement suites
- Apartment buildings or condos
- Room rentals within family homes

Before signing a lease, students should:

- View the property in person or request a virtual tour
- Confirm rental terms, utilities, and deposit requirements
- Verify landlord legitimacy and avoid sending money before confirming details
- Understand their rights and responsibilities under Alberta tenancy laws

Counselling and Mental Health Support

Students are directed to professional counselling and mental health services available in the community, including both immediate and ongoing support options. A thorough list of resources is included in the Risio Institute Student Support Services document.

Key resources include:

- Alberta Health Services Mental Health Services: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/>
- Wellness Together Canada (virtual mental health support): <https://www.wellnesstogether.ca>

These services provide access to counselling, crisis support, and mental health care as needed.

Health and Social Service Support

Students have access to a wide range of health care and social services available throughout Alberta. These services support physical health needs, general medical care, and broader social supports such as housing assistance, food resources, and community programs.

Students are directed to publicly available systems and community organizations, including:

- Alberta Health Services (health care system access): <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca>
- Find a Doctor (primary care access): <https://albertafindadoctor.ca>
- 211 Alberta (social, housing, and community services): <https://www.211alberta.ca>
- Alberta Supports (government social programs): <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-supports.aspx>

Academic Support, Including Academic and Career Counselling

Risio Institute provides dedicated academic support to ensure students are successful throughout their studies. Each student has access to Academic Advisors who provide ongoing guidance related to course progression, academic performance, study strategies, and program requirements.

Academic Advisors support students in developing effective learning plans, addressing academic challenges early, and maintaining progress through the program. This includes one-on-one advising, regular check-ins.

Career counselling is also provided through Academic Advisors, who guide students on career pathways within the dental field.