

# Bangladeshi Students Association at the University of Alberta

## Newcomers guide

### *Preparing for life in Edmonton*

University of Alberta is at the heart of city of Edmonton, which is the provincial capital of Alberta. This is probably the last big city you will find on your way to North Pole!! Edmonton is a nice place to live and study and socialize. Since we live so up north, we have the toughest and coldest winter in Canada. But don't let the winter horror stories change your mind; we also enjoy beautiful summer here. Based on our personal experiences we have put together some important information for new students coming to Edmonton for the first time, to help them with their travel plan and preparation.

### *How to reach Edmonton*

You can travel to Edmonton using either Pacific or Atlantic route. Depending on which route you are taking, your port of entry (the city in Canada where you land first) can be Vancouver or Toronto. You have to meet the immigration authority at the port of entry and get your study permit. From there you have to fly by domestic airlines to get to Edmonton.

### *Before you leave home and on the way...*

- If you are coming to Edmonton to attend University of Alberta and you need assistance with transportation after your arrival, please inform us (bsaua@ualberta.ca) well before you arrive in Edmonton. We will be happy to help you. We will make the arrangement to pick you up from the airport and take you to your destination. Please visit international handbook <http://uaistudenthandbook.pbwiki.com/> for detail information provided by U of A International Center about when to arrive and how to prepare before you depart. You should arrange for temporary accommodation before you arrive in Edmonton.
- If you are coming from Bangladesh, don't pack too many winter clothes, most probably they will not be helpful to survive through the winter here. You have to buy the right stuff here (e.g. winter jackets, gloves etc.). If you are coming in September, you will have enough time to prepare for the winter. But if you are coming in January (middle of winter!), come prepared with proper clothing. If you use glasses remember to bring at least an extra pair, they are very expensive here. Bring the essential medicine (which you use frequently) and the prescriptions. You can bring your favorite movies or music CDs and books. Text books are also very expensive here; you can bring essential reference books.
- Before you come to Canada, make sure that you have sufficient funding to support yourself throughout your degree program. As an international student you will need special work permit and finding a well-paid job is highly competitive. Working without work permit is illegal here. You can find detail info from Immigration Canada website.
- During the journey keep your important travel documents (passport, tickets, etc.) in your handbag, you will need them on the way. Take USD\$100 (small bills) cash with you to

meet expenses on the road and the rest of the money can be brought in the form of travelers cheques.

***After you arrive:***

During the last week of August the UofA International Center Staff will set up a welcome booth inside Edmonton airport for new international students. After your arrival you can talk to them for help. They can guide you to Sky Shuttle Service (charges \$13 one way to the city) which can take you to the university area. A taxi ride to the city from the airport will cost a minimum \$35, depending on the location of your destination.

**Settling down:** You will face some extra cost during the initial period of settlement, e.g. security deposit when you rent an apartment, buying household stuff, etc.. Usually the security deposit for any apartment is equal to one month's rent. So you should be prepared for that extra cost. If you are receiving funding from the university or your supervisor, usually you will get your first pay check by the end of the first month. During that initial period you should be able to support yourself. After your arrival you should open an account in the local bank (CIBC has a branch on campus) to deposit your traveler's cheque and for your future transaction. Talk to people at the International Center about Health Insurance and Dental Coverage Plan

**Housing:** You can find information about housing facilities (both on-campus and off-campus) at Housing and Food Services, UofA. Usually you have to wait around 6 months to get an accommodation on any on-campus residence and generally students prefer to stay on-campus. Rates and description of different on-campus housing are listed at Housing and Food Services. If you are applying for any of this on-campus housing, you have to pay a deposit of \$175 with your application. Contact the responsible person (check their website for email) by mail and ask how you can pay the application fee. Again, you can find all the information at their website and feel free to contact us if you have any confusion. Until you get into accommodations on campus or if you decide to live off-campus, you have to find a suitable place which has easy bus link to the university. You will realize this hard fact in winter (waiting at the bus stop in -25C is no fun!). Keep this in mind when you are looking for a place off campus, find a place which is close to the bus route or the LRT (train service). After you arrive, get hold of city map and learn to read the maps for bus route (very important!). The maps are available at the Students Union Building and probably at the International Center as well. You can also find them at the website of ETS(<http://www.edmonton.ca/transportation/edmonton-transit-system-ets.aspx>)

**Estimated cost of living in Edmonton:** The cost of living shown below is an average estimate for a single person. Rent of any accommodation depends on the location and facilities available in that accommodation. Cost for food depends on individual food habit. Same applies for phone bill, the monthly charge for fixed phone is around \$25 and the rest depends on your number of international/non-local calls.

House/Apt Rent(shared) CDN \$400~500  
Food \$150~250  
U Pass (Bus Pass Per Semester) ~\$123  
Telephone \$30~50  
Electricity \$30~40  
Total (Approx.) \$750~950

**Food:** You can find almost every ingredient for Bengali food. All sorts of “mashla” are available in the Indian stores here. All you have to do is to learn how and when to use the right one, in other words learn how to cook. It’s essential if you don’t want to change your food habit. Almost everyone had to go through that cycle of learning, take it easy! You can also find lots of fast food joints (McDonalds, Wendy’s etc.) on campus, but usually after a few days your heart will cry for “daal-bhat”. Surprisingly, you can find “Hilsha” fish here in Edmonton, great news if you love ilish! You can buy most of the utensils necessary for cooking at the local stores. Edmonton offers a great variety of restaurants catering all sorts of cuisine (Indian, Italian, Chinese, you name it!), but eating out there can be expensive.

**Getting used to:** The International Center arranges for orientation programs for the new students. Attend those programs and try to participate in different activities. These programs are great opportunities to meet people from different corners of the world and to know about different cultures (also to introduce your own). Most of the people are friendly and helpful. To be respectful of other cultures is very important; you can expect the same from others if you follow the rules. Other than the international community, you will find lots of deshi people on campus and you will know most of them within short time.

We will be happy to answer if you have more questions in mind. Just send us an email: [bsaua@ualberta.ca](mailto:bsaua@ualberta.ca) .

Enjoy your journey and we are waiting to welcome you to Edmonton.