



Institute of Medical Science  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Temerty  
Medicine

# International Student Welcome Package 2024-2025



# Welcome to IMS



On behalf of the Institute of Medical Science (IMS), I would like to extend a warm welcome to you. International students are an important part of our community, and we are thrilled to have you join us. I hope that during your time at the University of Toronto you will make the most of all that this world-class institution and city has to offer. There are endless opportunities to get involved in student life and find support and community, both within the IMS, the Temerty Faculty of Medicine, and across the St. George campus.

As international students, we at the IMS recognize that you have unique needs. This welcome package is meant to serve as a resource for you and a starting point for familiarizing yourself with the University and life in Toronto. Please let us know if you have suggestions for additional content.

Thank you for choosing the IMS as your place of graduate study. I look forward to getting to know you throughout your time here. If you are ever in need of support, please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or another member of the IMS core team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mingyao Liu'.

Dr. Mingyao Liu  
Director, Institute of Medical Science  
Professor, Department of Surgery  
Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto



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# Student Profile:

## Katie Goke

PhD Student, 3rd Year

Treasurer, [IMS International Community Student Group](#)

**Research Site:** Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

**Home Country:** Germany



### What does your research focus on?

My research focuses on repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) as a treatment for depression in older adults. I'm particularly interested in how cognitive difficulties related to depression in this age group might predict their response to rTMS, or if rTMS can help improve these cognitive deficits. I'm also using structural MRI scans to see how factors like regional brain volume or white matter lesions might influence the effectiveness of rTMS treatment.

### What are some of the highlights of your time at IMS so far?

The amazing events organized by the IMS, IMSSA, the International Community, and other student groups. From roller skating together or picnicking on Toronto Island, to attending the annual IMS Scientific Day with the IMSSA after-party, these events are great for meeting other students, sharing experiences, and chatting about our research. Through taking part in these activities, I've made some of my closest friends in Toronto.

### What advice would you give to incoming students?

Be kind to yourself—adjusting to a new environment takes time, but it will be worth it! UofT offers many free resources to help you settle in as a grad student, like workshops and consultations on UHIP, housing, working as an international student, student permit-related questions, and mental health services. Getting involved in student groups and other extracurricular activities is a great way to make connections and build friendships. And lastly, don't hesitate to reach out to upper-year students with any questions or concerns—everyone will be more than happy to help out!

### What is your favourite thing about living in Toronto?

I love how diverse, multicultural, and lively the city is. There's always something new to do, whether it's trying foods from around the world or exploring all the different neighborhoods. In the summer, you can enjoy a different street festival every weekend or relax at the beaches and parks in and around the city. Even in winter, there's plenty to do, from indoor activities to outdoor adventures like ice skating, tobogganing, or skiing nearby. Toronto never gets boring!

## Social Media

Stay connected with IMS by following our social media accounts.



[LinkedIn](#)



[YouTube](#)



[Instagram](#)



[Twitter/X](#)



# IMS Community - Getting Involved



The IMS-International Community Student Group was founded to facilitate the communication between international students currently enrolled at the Institute of Medical Science at the UofT.

They aim to promote an authentic, dynamic, and supportive international student community, in which students will be able to address any thoughts and concerns that may arise as they navigate their academic experience.

Visit [their website](#) to learn more about scholarship opportunities, the community activities, upcoming seminars and more. They're always happy to help.



All students registered in the Institute of Medical Science are members of the IMS Students' Association ([IMSSA](#)). IMSSA engages graduate students, staff and faculty of the IMS, with their primary mission being to promote the well-being of students. Students are encouraged to participate in initiatives, activities and events beyond the lab setting within the realms of various subcommittees: social, community and outreach, sports, academics and wellness. Contact: [commims@gmail.com](mailto:commims@gmail.com)



UofT Talks is an annual event where we dive into a recent and relevant topic related to human health! In the form of a symposium hosted by students and alumni from the IMS, UofT Talks discusses the current state and emerging trends of a timely topic in relation to health and healthcare. The event features talks from prominent experts in the field, followed by a panel discussion, interactive activities for attendees and a networking reception.

Past topics have included Space Medicine, Climate Change & Health, Migrant Health Experience, the Opioid Crisis, Dying for Change -- the Canadian Healthcare System, and the next chapter for the Baby Boomers & Millennial health landscape. If you are passionate about current health care issues and would like to explore them through a novel lens, UofT Talks is the event for you! Contact: [uofttalks@gmail.com](mailto:uofttalks@gmail.com)



Raw Talk Podcast is a graduate student-run podcast about the journeys, experiences, and perspectives of some of the most accomplished medical researchers and professionals at the University of Toronto. If you are passionate about science communication, want to make research more accessible to a broader audience, and are looking to work collaboratively with a diverse group of graduate students, join the team! Contact: [rawtalkpodcast@gmail.com](mailto:rawtalkpodcast@gmail.com)

# IMSMAGAZINE

THINK. LEARN. DISCOVER.

The IMS Magazine is a student-led science communication initiative showcasing the department's diverse research and the incredible people behind it. Being a member of the IMS Magazine team means getting the opportunity to learn more about science both within and outside of your field. It encourages you to expand your thinking and bridge the gap between basic and clinical, theoretical and applied, science and society. At IMS Magazine, you will learn the importance of storytelling - how to communicate complex ideas and convey key messages to your target audience, whether they are academics, policy makers, or the public. If you're interested in learning more and joining the team, you can email: [theimsmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:theimsmagazine@gmail.com)



We are you! The IMS P2P Mentorship Program is designed by IMS students for IMS students. We know how difficult transition to graduate school can be from first-hand experience and we are here to make it a little less hectic. Modules, PAC meetings, courses, presentations it can all be overwhelming. The Peer-to-Peer mentorship program is designed to partner each incoming graduate student with an upper year graduate student to help them navigate the complex landscape of IMS and for lasting friendships. From getting more involved with IMS Student Association to finding extracurricular activities that of interest to you, we are here for you. Please e-mail us at: [mentorship.ims@gmail.com](mailto:mentorship.ims@gmail.com)





# Student Life Resources



**STUDENT  
LIFE**

**Centre for International  
Experience**

The Centre for International Experience (CIE) at U of T provides an array of services unique to international students. This is the U of T hub for all things international.

## Why Connect with CIE:

- International study, research, internships and awards
- Help with Canadian study permits, work permits and health insurance in Ontario
- Global skills and intercultural communication development
- Tools to build community and succeed in Canadian campus life

Find out more about learning abroad, study permits & visas, adjusting to life in Canada & working in Canada.

# CIE Resources & Programs

## Pre-Arrival Checklist

The CIE has prepared a pre-arrival checklist to help incoming international students start their journey at U of T. Whether you're starting your studies in your home country or here in Toronto, they have got you covered!



## Grad Step Up

Grad Step Up is an extended orientation program designed to support your transition to U of T as an incoming international graduate student by connecting you to key information, resources and communities on campus.



## Intercultural Learning Program

The Intercultural Learning Program (ILP) is a way to build your intercultural skills. The ILP involves discovering how your own cultural identities shape the way you understand and operate in the world and recognize culture at work in your everyday experiences.



## Student Life also offers:

- **Health & Wellness**: provides a range of health services for your physical and mental health, wellness programs and information to help support you in achieving your personal and academic goals.
- **Career Exploration & Education**: supports students and recent graduates as they build their future in our changing world. They help students explore what they can do with their degree, discover job opportunities and further education
- **Academic Success**: helps you identify and achieve your learning goals. You have a lot more going on in your life than just academic responsibilities, so they tailor their learning supports to fit you.
- **Accessibility Services**: navigates disability-related barriers to your academic success at U of T for your on-going or temporary disability. They provide services and supports for learning, problem solving and inclusion.

## School of Graduate Studies - International Portal

This portal helps international graduate students prepare, plan and experience the best that U of T has to offer.

## Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Office (ARCDO)

The ARCDO provides services to support University members in their efforts to foster environments that are intentionally racially diverse and inclusive through the advancement of equitable practices, education and training and the provision of complaints resolution supports on matters of race, faith and intersecting identities as guided by the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

## Family Care Office

The Family Care Office provides confidential guidance, resources, referrals, educational programming and advocacy for the University of Toronto community and their families.





# Awards, Fellowships & Scholarships

Below is a list of awards and scholarships you may be eligible for as an international student. This list is not exhaustive. There may be others depending on your country of citizenship, immigration status in Canada, research area, etc.

- **Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship**
- **Ontario Graduate Scholarship**
- **Adele S. Sedra Distinguished Graduate Award**
- **CAGS/ProQuest-UMI Distinguished Dissertation Awards & John Leyerle-CIFAR Prize for Interdisciplinary Research**
- **China Scholarship Council: Scholarship** \*For citizens of the People's Republic of China
- **Connaught International Scholarship**
- **Delta Kappa Gamma World Fellowships** \*For students identifying as women
- **Doctoral Completion Award (DCA)**
- **Governor General's Gold Medals**
- **Mackenzie King Open & Travelling Scholarship** \*For students who have obtained a degree at a Canadian University
- **Mexico Scholarship: CONACYT** \*For Mexican citizens with an up-to-date firma Certificate



Use the U of T **Award Explorer** site to further browse awards

- **DAAD: German Academic Exchange** - Funding Opportunities
- **Mitacs Globalink Graduate Fellowship** \*For Mitacs Globalink alumni
- **Scholars-At-Risk Fellowship** \*For students with asylum/refugee seeker status anywhere in the world within the past 5 years OR for students whose current or proposed program of study has been impacted by changing political environments in their country of current or future study, including changes in immigration law
- **University-Wide Award: SGS Fellowships and Bursaries for Black and/or Indigenous Students** \*For students who identify as a black and/or indigenous person
- **University-Wide Award: Joseph Bazylewicz Fellowships** \*For students with Polish citizenship
- **University-Wide Award: Kwok Sau Po Scholarship** \*For citizens of Hong Kong or China
- **University-Wide Award: Scace Graduate Scholarship** \*For citizens of South Africa or the United Kingdom
- **University-Wide Award: Professor R. Paul Young Fellowship** \*For students conducting research that addresses a problem which crosses traditional Faculty boundaries (e.g. Music and Medicine)

## IMS Sara-Al Bader Memorial Award

The Sara Al-Bader Memorial Award was established by the IMS to honour the memory of Dr. Sara Al-Bader, a PhD student at the IMS whose thesis was entitled: Science-Based Health Innovation in Sub-Saharan Africa. The award is presented annually at Scientific Day to an international doctoral stream student who shows exceptional academic promise. The recipient is chosen by the IMS Graduate Coordinators.



# SGS Bursaries & Loans

- **SGS Emergency Grant**: assists registered, full-time graduate students who have encountered an unforeseen, urgent, and/or serious financial emergency.
- **SGS Emergency Loan**: alleviates temporary cash flow problems for students who are expecting the release of funds in the near future (i.e., 30 to 120 days) from employment (U of T internal), a major award instalment, teaching assistantship, or research assistantship payment, etc.
- **SGS Accessibility Grant**: supports significant educational expenses not normally covered by the student, the graduate unit, provincial, or federal agencies.
- **SGS Conference Grant**: provides financial support to encourage eligible students to actively present their research at an academic conference during the early stages of their graduate studies.
- **SGS Summer Gym Bursary**: offers students a reimbursement for up to 100% of their campus summer athletic membership or program fees.

## Graduate Centre for Academic Communication (GCAC)

GCAC provides graduate students with advanced training in academic writing and speaking. Graduate students need to be able to communicate sophisticated information to sophisticated audiences. As you prepare to attend your first conference, to write your first proposal, or to publish your first paper, you will need stronger communication skills than those needed in undergraduate work. By emphasizing professional development rather than remediation, GCAC can help you cultivate the ability to diagnose and address the weaknesses in your oral and written work.

GCAC offers five types of support designed to target the needs of both native and non-native speakers of English: non-credit courses, single-session workshops, individual writing consultations, writing intensives, and a list of additional resources for academic writing and speaking.



# LGBTQ+ Support

- **Queer, Trans, and Allied in Medicine (QTAM)**: the Temerty Faculty of Medicine's LGBTQ+ student group.
- **LGBTOUT**: the oldest LGBTQ+ student organization in Canada and has served the U of T community for over half a century.
- **Queer Caucus (QC) of the Graduate Students' Union**: a political and social caucus for U of T graduate students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ).
- **Sexual and Gender Diversity Office**: develops partnerships to build supportive learning and working communities at U of T by working towards equity and challenging discrimination.
- **Centre for Women and Trans People**: provides a safe, harassment-free drop in space for all women and trans people on campus.

## Fraud Prevention

The Community Safety Office (CSO) is available to consult with you on any situation that is causing you to be concerned for your safety or the safety of someone else. If you suspect that you have been targeted by a fraudster we encourage you to make a report to the Campus Safety Office.

**CSO resources** on frauds and scams that specifically target international students:

- Fraud prevention tips
- Examples of common types/methods of fraud
- What you should know and do if you receive these types of calls
- Toronto Police Service Alert on Money Mule Fraud Awareness Targeting International Students

### **University of Toronto Supports:**

- U of T St. George Campus Safety (Available 24/7):
  - 416-978-2222 (Emergency)
  - 416-978-2323 (Non-Emergency)
- Community Safety Office (Available M-F, 9-5):
  - 416-978-1485 or [community.safety@utoronto.ca](mailto:community.safety@utoronto.ca)

# Health & Wellness

- **U of T Health & Wellness**: students may book appointments for primary care services (e.g. family physicians, nurses, dieticians) and mental health care. Visit their Feeling distressed page for contacts/resources to support you through different kinds of distress.
- **UofT Student Mental Health Resource**: this online portal makes it easier for students to find mental health services & resources on campus, and those of partner organizations in the community.
- **SGS Graduate Wellness Services**: SGS and the Division of Student Life have partnered to provide embedded wellness counselling and wellness workshops specifically for graduate students.
- **Graduate and Life Sciences Education (GLSE) Wellness Package**: to encourage us to think about and promote our wellness, GLSE paired up with IMSSA & MBPGSA's Wellness & Wellbeing committees as part of a GLSE-funded initiative, to create a graduate wellness package.
- **Graduate Peer Support Network (GPSN)**: a GLSE-funded initiative founded by graduate students across the Temerty Faculty of Medicine to provide graduate students with timely mental health and wellness support, and resources via educational seminars and peer mentorship.

# Health Services

- **University Health Insurance Program (UHIP)**: for details on coverage see "Service Fees" section of website.
- **General Practitioner (GP)/Family Physician**: to find a GP you can register and browse via Health Care Connect or use The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario's "Find a Doctor" search tool.
- **Walk-in Clinics**: offer same-day non-urgent care without an appointment.
- **Urgent Care Centres**: medical clinics that provide same-day urgent treatment for non-life-threatening illnesses or injuries, such as infections, sprains, earaches, broken bones, and fevers.
- **Specialized Physicians**: to see a specialist you generally first need a referral from a GP.
- **Blood testing and other laboratory services**: you usually need a requisition form from a GP. Various companies and locations. Examples: LifeLabs and Dynacare.
- **Emergency Departments**: hospital emergency rooms provide treatment for severe illnesses and life-threatening injuries 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- **In an Emergency: call 911**





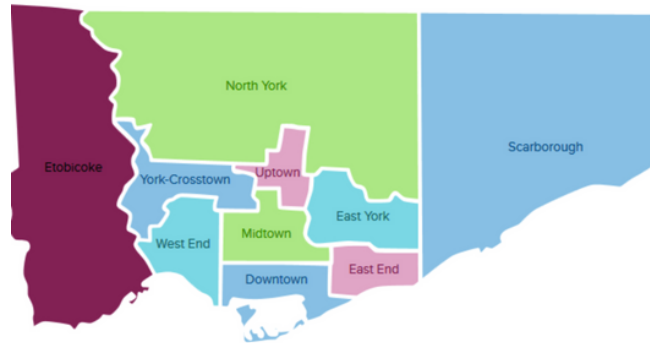
# Toronto Travel Information

- **Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)**: main public transport agency in Toronto operating the subway, bus, and streetcar services.
  - One-ride ticket: \$3.25 (can be used for unlimited transfers for up to two hours)
  - Day pass ticket: \$13.50
  - Post-secondary Monthly Pass: \$128.15
- **GO Transit**: regional public transport service for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area.
- **VIA Rail Canada**: train services across Ontario and Canada.
- **Cost of Driving**: owning a car can be expensive in Toronto.
  - Average gas cost: \$150/month
  - Maintenance: \$100/month
  - Car Insurance: Up to \$300+/month
  - Parking: Street Permit (if available) - \$16/month; fees in private garages, city street parking lots and streets prices vary
- **Taxi Companies**:
  - Beck Taxi
  - Co-op Cabs
  - City Taxi
  - Taxi Toronto (Airport Transit)
- **Ride Hailing Companies**:
  - Uber
  - Lyft
  - Both companies have ride-sharing option to cut costs.
- **Cycling**: a popular mode of transportation in Toronto. There is an extensive bike-lane system, but be careful of the traffic especially if you're not used to cycling in large cities. Remember to always lock your bike when leaving it.
  - Bike Share



# Districts & Neighbourhoods

- [Moving2Canada](#): article on the variety and differences between the various districts and neighbourhoods in Toronto (there are many!).
- [City of Toronto](#): website with extensive list of neighbourhood profiles.
- [Destination Toronto](#): website with information on popular Toronto neighbourhoods.



## Accommodations

- **University Accommodation:**
  - [Graduate House](#): offers shared suites for graduate students.
  - [Massey College](#): requires application for Junior Fellowship, successful applicants are eligible for shared suites with meals and housekeeping service included.
- **Housing Search Platforms:**
  - [U of T Off-Campus Housing](#)
  - [Canada Homestay Network](#)
  - [Kijiji](#)
  - [Viewit](#)
  - [Craigslist](#)
  - [Facebook Marketplace](#)
- **Short-Term Housing:**
  - [AirBNB](#)



# Discover Toronto

## Popular Toronto Attractions:

- [CN Tower](#)
- [The Distillery Historic District](#)
- [Casa Loma](#)
- [Centre Island Toronto](#)
- [Toronto Island Park](#)
- [St. Lawrence Market](#)
- [Kensington Market](#)
- [High Park Toronto](#)
- [Black Creek Pioneer Village](#)
- [Fort York National Historic Site](#)
- [Toronto International Film Festival](#)
- [Allan Gardens Conservatory](#)
- [Toronto Botanical Gardens](#)
- [Scarborough Bluffs](#)
- [Swimming Beaches](#)
- [Canadian National Exhibition \(CNE\)](#)
- [Ripley's Aquarium of Canada](#)
- [Rogers Centre](#) (originally Sky Dome)
- [Toronto Zoo](#)
- [Canada's Wonderland](#)
- [Ontario Science Centre](#)
- [Riverdale Farm](#)
- [Harbourfront Centre](#)
- [Toronto Symphony Orchestra](#)
- [The Second City](#)

## Movie Theatres:

- [Cineplex Theatres](#) (various locations)
- [Imagine Cinemas Market Square](#)
- [TIFF Bell Lightbox](#) (world cinema)
- [The Royal](#) (independent, documentaries, second-run)
- [Revue Cinema](#) (specialty screenings, second-run)
- [Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema](#) (independent films, documentaries)

## Museums and Art Galleries:

- [Royal Ontario Museum \(ROM\)](#)
- [Art Gallery of Ontario \(AGO\)](#)
- [Spadina Museum](#)
- [Bata Shoe Museum](#)
- [Gardiner Museum](#)
- [Mackenzie House](#)
- [Aga Khan Museum](#)
- [Hockey Hall of Fame](#)
- [Gibson House Museum](#)
- [Colborne Lodge](#)
- [Montgomery's Inn](#)
- [Museum of Contemporary Art](#)
- [Toronto Railway Museum](#)
- [Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library](#)

## Theatres:

- [Royal Alexandra Theatre](#)
- [Ed Mirvish Theatre](#)
- [Princess of Wales Theatre](#)
- [CAA Theatre](#)
- [Meridian Hall](#)
- [Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre Centre](#)
- [Tarragon Theatre](#)
- [Buddies in Bad Times Theatre](#)
- [Factory Theatre](#)
- [Bad Dog Theatre Company](#)

### Fun Fact:

The popular TV show Schitt's Creek was filmed in Goodwood, Ontario, a tiny hamlet just an hour's drive from Toronto.



# Important Phone Numbers

- Emergency (Fire/Medical/Police): **911**
- Non-Emergency Medical Issues -  
Telehealth Ontario: **1-866-797-0000**
- Assaulted Women's Helpline:  
**1-416-863-0511 / 1-866-863-7868**
- Crime Stoppers: **1-416-808-8477 / 1-800-222-8477**
- Toronto Police Service Central  
Dispatch: **1-416-808-2222 / 1-416-467-0493**
- Victim Services: **1-416-808-7066**
- Report power outage: **1-416-542-8000**
- Report gas leak: **1-866-763-5427**
- Toronto at Your Service (non-emergency info & help): - **311**

## Major Internet & Phone Providers:

- [Bell](#)
- [Rogers](#)
- [Fido](#)
- [TekSavvy](#)
- [VMedia](#)

# Shopping

## Major Grocery Stores:

- [Loblaws](#)
- [Walmart](#)
- [Metro](#)
- [No Frills](#)
- [Sobeys](#)
- [FreschCo](#)
- [Food Basics](#)

## Major Shopping Centres:

- [CF Toronto Eaton Centre](#)
- [Yorkdale](#)
- [PATH](#)
- [Dufferin Mall](#)
- [Yorkville Village](#)

## Major Pharmacies:

- [Shoppers Drug Mart](#)
- [Rexall](#)
- [Pharmasave](#)

# Student Bank Accounts

- [Scotiabank Student Banking Advantage Plan](#)
- [CIBC Smart for Students Chequing Account](#)
- [RBC Student Chequing Account](#)
- [TD Student Chequing Account](#)
- [National Bank Student Chequing Account](#)

\*This is just a sample. There may be other student bank accounts available.



# Immigration Information

The Centre for International Experience (CIE) at UofT offers immigration advising services to international students. As an international student at U of T, you will need to navigate Canadian immigration requirements.

A CIE immigration advisor can help you:

- Understand your document requirements including study permit, entry visas, work permits, etc.
- Understand the immigration requirements for your dependents.
- Choose the right immigration workshop and/or information session to learn about study permits, entry visas, work permits, permanent residency, USA visas and Canadian income tax.
- Locate additional appropriate services and resources.

**A reminder that you are responsible for your immigration status.**

## Government of Canada Resources

- Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada
- Study Permit Information
- Extending Study Permit
- Permanent Residency
- Post-Graduation Work Permit Program
- Help your spouse or common-law partner work in Canada
- Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA)



## Wish List:

If there's anything else you think should be included in this resource booklet for incoming IMS international students please let us know. We are always looking for feedback in order to improve our support. You can send your suggestions via email to: [int.medschool@utoronto.ca](mailto:int.medschool@utoronto.ca)



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