

HOW TO WRITE A STUDY PLAN

These instructions are for new applicants only and not for extensions of study permits.

Being admitted to Concordia University and receiving a CAQ does not guarantee that a study permit will be issued. It is recommended that students include a cover letter with their study permit application detailing their study plan and addressing the issues below. Where possible, students should include documents that corroborate any information provided. Your Study Plan should be clear and concise, but complete. Note that this is not a format to be followed and that the questions below are not to be included in your letter. They are meant to provide you with insights into the types of issues you should be addressing. Each letter must be unique and adapted to your specific circumstances. Do not include irrelevant information in your letter.

Purpose of Visit

Why do you want to study at Concordia University specifically? What distinguishes Concordia University from other learning institutions you could have applied to?
Why have you chosen your program of study? What distinguishes this program from those being offered at other learning institutions in Canada or elsewhere?
What is your educational goal?

Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is going to assess your study permit application to determine if you are a genuine student. In their assessment they analyze whether your program of choice demonstrates a “logical career progression”.

You will want to demonstrate the unique benefits of pursuing your program of choice at Concordia University. Explain what your academic and professional goals are and how they will be met by your program of choice. Discuss the career opportunities that will be made available to you by completing your program at Concordia University. Be specific and be descriptive.

Show, don't tell. If you know what employment opportunities would be available to you in your home country, describe how your studies will prepare you for these positions. Where possible, support the information provided with documentary proof.

For example, you could submit job offers that demonstrate how your studies meet the requirements for the industry of the field you are pursuing.

If there are similar programs of study available closer to your place of residence at a more competitive cost, it is imperative to address how the benefits of the study program outweigh the costs. If your program of choice is unrelated to prior studies or employment history, explain the change in your career trajectory.

When addressing these issues, applicants often discuss why they want to study in Canada. It is important to focus on the competitive edge that studying in Canada might give you and not on Canada's status as a democratic society. For example, discuss Canada's internationally recognized education system rather than Canada's human rights records. Focus your explanations on acquiring an international education and the benefits thereof rather than comment on Canada generally.

If you are pursuing a degree in a field that you may have already completed studies in, or pursuing a second degree at the same level (such as a second Master's), make sure to explain what is unique or different about the studies you wish to pursue at Concordia and what you stand to gain professionally. Be very specific and descriptive and support your explanation with documentary evidence where possible.

Personal Assets and Financial Status

How are you funding your education? Is anyone supporting you financially? Have you already paid your tuition?

IRCC requires that applicants demonstrate that they can support themselves and their families who come with them while in Canada. Proof of financial sufficiency can be provided with the following:

- proof of a Canadian bank account in your name, if you've transferred money to Canada
- Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC) from a participating Canadian financial institution
- proof of a student or education loan from a bank
- your bank statements for the past 4 months
- a bank draft that can be converted to Canadian dollars
- proof you paid tuition and housing fees
- a letter from the person or school giving you money or
- proof of funding paid from within Canada, if you have a scholarship or are in a Canadian-funded educational program

Students in Quebec must demonstrate the following funds¹:

Persons coming to Canada	Amount of funds required per year (additional to the tuition)	OR Amount of funds required per month (additional to the tuition)
You (the student)	CAD\$15,078	CAD\$1,257
You and a person under 18 years of age	CAD\$22,619	CAD\$1,885
Two people aged 18 and over (you and your partner)	CAD\$22,115	CAD\$1,843
Two people 18 and over and one person under 18	CAD\$24,773	CAD\$2,064
Two people over 18 and two people under the age of 18	CAD\$26,737	CAD\$2,228

¹ The financial requirements are subject to change. The amounts here were listed by IRCC on 2021-05-06. Please verify the latest information here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/study-permit/get-documents/financial-support.html>

Example

If you and 2 family members (over the age of 18) want to come to Quebec for a year, you will need

- living expenses: \$11,000 (for the student)
- living expenses: \$5,100 (for the first family member)
- living expenses: \$5,125 (for the second family member)

Total: \$21,225

If your country uses foreign-exchange controls, you must prove that you'll be allowed to export funds for all of your expenses.

Applicants should provide the documents required by their personalized checklist. They should also consider providing additional evidence of financial capacity, if it is available such as evidence of assets, employment and income, and bank letters showing savings.

Family Ties and Country of Origin

What ties you to your home country? What factors ensure that you will return once you complete your studies? What relatives are you leaving behind that you will return to? If you have relatives in both your home country and Canada, how are your ties to your relatives in your home country stronger? What obligations or responsibilities pull you back to you to your home country?

IRCC assesses whether an applicant will leave Canada at the end of their authorized stay by taking into account an applicant's ties to their home country. Applicants should detail and document these ties and explain how these ties ensure they will leave Canada at the end of their authorized stay. They should also explain how these ties are stronger than any ties they may have or develop in Canada. For example, if you are on leave from your job pending your studies, provide a letter from your employer; if your spouse will not accompany you to Canada and will be working in your home country, provide their Attestation of Employment; if you have a job offer upon your return, provide a copy. Applicants can also demonstrate that they have financial ties to their home country by providing a deed of their property or the incorporation of a family business. If you have no ties to Canada, state so explicitly. If you have a relative with temporary status in Canada, such as a work or study permit, be explicit that their status is temporary.

Travel History

Have you travelled internationally? How often?

Do you have visas for the USA or European countries?

IRCC considers an applicant's travel history when assessing whether or not they will respect the conditions of their stay. A history of international travel indicates that an applicant is likely to respect the conditions of their stay in Canada, as they have done in any previous international travel. Applicants should consider providing copies of their visas and the travel stamps in their passport as proof that they have traveled and explicitly state that it demonstrates that they will respect the conditions of their stay in Canada.

Conditions in Your Home Country

Is there civil unrest in your home country? Is the political situation unstable? Is your home country perceived as providing few economic opportunities to its citizens?

IRCC may consider whether the conditions in an applicant's country are such that they may have incentives to come to or remain in Canada that would suggest that they are not genuine students or would not respect the conditions of their stay. These motives may be economic or political, for example. It is important to address the conditions in your country and to discuss how you are insulated from, or why, despite these conditions, you are still motivated and likely to return to your home country.

IRCC is concerned that applicants may not be genuine students and may instead be using studying as a pretext to enter Canada in "search of a better life". Where possible, it is important to demonstrate your employment and financial status in your home country and address how the current political, economic, and security situation do not deter you from returning to your home country.

Do not discuss Canada's political or economic climate unless it is directly related to your choice of program or how this improves your prospects in your home country.

If You Have a History of Refused Study Permits

If you are reapplying for a study permit, it is important to address the reasons for your prior refusal(s) otherwise your application will likely be refused again. It is also important to go above and beyond the documents requested by the checklist in order to demonstrate the genuineness of your intentions and the likelihood that you will return to your country at the end of your stay.

Note that the reasons stated for your refusal are the conclusion reached and not on what basis that conclusion was reached. As such, there are two ways you can proceed:

1. You can do an Access to Information Request (ATIP) to obtain a copy of the deciding officer's notes so that you can see the analysis that led to the conclusion reached. With that information, you can modify your study plan and cover letter to explicitly address the very specific concerns that IRCC has in the hopes of assuaging them sufficiently to get a positive decision on a second application.

The advantage to doing the ATIP is that you get to see exactly why you were refused. The reasons stated in your refusal letter are the conclusions reached, but not the analysis that led to the conclusions. The disadvantage to doing the ATIP is that it takes some time to obtain (30-60 days under normal circumstances,) and that only individuals in Canada can do them, which means that if you do not have any contacts in Canada who can do it on your behalf, you would need to hire a lawyer or consultant.

OR

2. You can rework your study plan on the basis of an educated guess regarding what IRCC's concerns might be. An ISO Advisor, based on their expertise and experience, can help you make an educated guess after analysis a complete copy of your original study permit application.

The advantage to simply reworking your study plan is that you can begin to do so immediately. The disadvantage is that you do not know exactly what IRCC's concerns are and are merely making an educated guess.