

Canada - Nova Scotia

STRUCTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Description:

Higher education in Canada is the constitutional responsibility of the Provinces. The three main types of institutions are universities, community college and private career colleges. The universities are independent, degree granting institutions, with full autonomy on admission policies and all other academic matters. The Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) provides a variety of post-secondary programs usually leading to a Certificate or Diploma. It is a self-governing institution operating under the direction of a board of governors with a mandate to meet the Province's occupational training needs. The NSCC is accountable to government for matters of public concern, such as the appropriate use of tax dollars, admissions policy and tuition. Private career colleges are independently operated for profit business institutions that operate under regulations established by the province.

Stages of studies:

University level first stage: Bachelor's Degree

University level education in Nova Scotia is delivered through 11 publicly supported degree-granting institutions. Some of the Province's degree-granting institutions are highly specialized; others offer a broader range of undergraduate and graduate programs. General undergraduate degrees at most universities in Nova Scotia require a minimum of 3 years of full-time study. Honours degrees, involving a higher level of concentration in the honours discipline and a higher level of academic performance generally require 4 years of full-time study. Most universities also offer diploma and certificate programs in various specialized fields. These vary in length depending on the program and the institution.

University level second stage: Master's Degree

The Master's Degree may take one or two years after an Honours Degree (or equivalent) depending on the field of study. Some programs require both course work and a thesis, while others require only course work. Degrees awarded include Master of Arts, Master of Science, Master of Business Administration and Master of Education. This stage also includes graduate level, or intermediate, diplomas (between a Bachelor's Degree and a Master's Degree).

University level third stage: Doctorate Degree (Ph.D.)

The Doctorate is the highest qualification awarded by Canadian universities and, in all provinces except Quebec, it comprises the third stage of university-level studies. This degree normally requires at least three years of study beyond a Bachelor's Degree and the submission and defence of a dissertation. Course work is also usually required. The degree "Doctor of Philosophy" (Ph.D.) is a designation most commonly used to signify the Doctorate.

Distance higher education:

The private career colleges, community college and universities are active in providing distance education opportunities that lead to a Certificate, Diploma or Degree in a variety of program areas through a number of different modes of delivery.

ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission to non university higher education studies:

Alternatives to credentials: For entry to Community College: Secondary School Diploma. Alternatives: High school equivalency, mature student status, prior learning assessment.

Numerus clausus: The Nova Scotia Community College sets aside seats in each core program for African-Nova Scotians and Mi'kmaq.

Other requirements: The name of the Secondary School Diploma in Nova Scotia is High School Graduation Diploma. Individual programs have other admission criteria such as specific high school subjects, universities degrees for some advanced diplomas).

Admission to university-level studies:

Alternatives to credentials: Secondary school diploma. Alternatives: Students are sometimes admitted with “mature student status”. Prior learning assessment practices are also being introduced as an alternative means of assessing applicants.

Other requirements: 60% average in final year of secondary school studies in 5 appropriate academic subjects (most programs have minimum grade point average). Universities set their admissions policies. Highly selective programs require admissions qualifications that are higher than specified minimum. Proof of proficiency in language of instruction may be required. Some universities offer remedial courses or preparatory programs.

Foreign students admission:

Definition of foreign student: Foreign (International) Students are students who are neither Canadian citizens nor permanent residents of Canada, and are enrolled full-time in a recognized academic, professional or vocational training course at a university, college or other educational institution in Canada.

Admission requirements: Generally, as for domestic students, a high school diploma or equivalent will be required. A lack of proficiency in English or French will be taken into account by the Canadian immigration office in the evaluation of the application.

Entry regulations: Before you come to study in Canada, you will need: a “Study Permit” if the program of study you will be admitted to is longer than six months in duration, regardless of the length of your stay in Canada; a letter of acceptance from the school of your choice; proof that you have enough money to pay school fees and living expenses; to establish that you will return home at the end of your studies; to pass a medical exam if required; and to qualify as a temporary resident in Canada, including holding a temporary resident visa (required for citizens of many countries). A small number of students do not require a Study Permit by virtue of their status in Canada (e.g. diplomats and their children).

Health requirements: Most education institutions require international students to buy health insurance in addition to their tuition fees; those that do not will require proof of independent health insurance coverage. Medical examinations are not required by institutions but are required by Citizenship and Immigration Canada for students from many countries.

RECOGNITION OF STUDIES

Quality assurance system:

The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission assesses program quality through a quality assurance process for new programs and monitors the institutions to ensure a quality assurance process is in place for existing programs. Individual educational institutions are responsible for recognition/accreditation for credit transfer. As a result, practices vary by institution and program. In general, the institutions use information from a variety of sources to assess academic credentials

Special provisions for recognition:

Recognition for non-university level studies: In general none. Any restrictions on admission to the Nova Scotia Community College are determined by the College itself, given available teaching and other resources, but in some instances are a result of government policy. Priority is usually given to provincial residents first, other Canadian residents, then foreign students.

Recognition for university level studies: In general none. Universities establish their own admissions criteria and make their own admissions decisions in response to individual applications. Any restrictions on admission are determined by the institutions themselves, given available teaching and other resources, but in a few instances are a result of government policy. Priority is usually given to provincial residents first, other Canadian residents, then foreign students.

For access to advanced studies and research: In general none. However, in some high cost, limited enrolment programs, e.g. medicine and dentistry, qualified applicants outnumber available enrolment capacity, then most universities will establish special admissions committees and provide for proportionately more domestic than foreign applicants to be admitted.

For exercising a profession: In general none. For each profession, both Canadians and non-Canadians who studied abroad have to meet specified educational and experience requirements, and usually pass registration examinations. Non-Canadians may sometimes also need to pass language tests.

PROVINCIAL BODIES

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Role of national body: To provide the leadership, coordination and services necessary to achieve excellence in education and training for personal fulfillment and for a productive, prosperous society.

Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents - CONSUP

Chairperson: Tom Traves
Executive Director: Peter Halpin
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Private Colleges Association of Nova Scotia

President: Heather Sophocleous
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Source: IAU from The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC), a unit of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), on behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia, 2008