Getting started with an IRCC secure account:
A GUIDE FOR INITIAL STUDY PERMIT APPLICANTS

Creating an online account with IRCC (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada) allows you to apply for immigration documents like study permits, work permits, and temporary residence visas.

This guide walks you through the creation of an IRCC secure account, including answering the IRCC questionnaire.

This guide is intended to help **first-time users** who are applying for their **initial study permit** online.
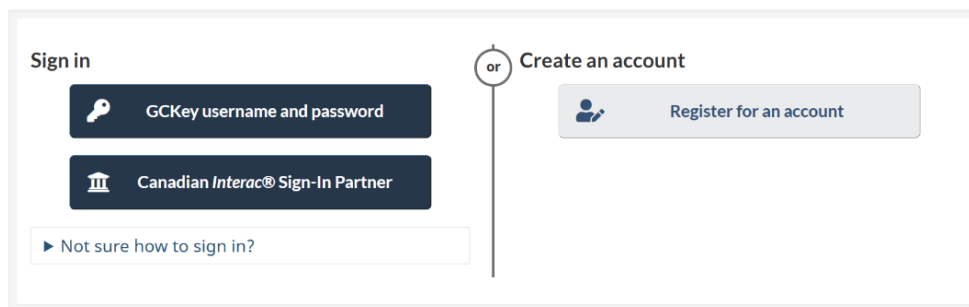
This guide has 4 parts:

- Part 1: Register using the GCKey option

- Part 2: Create your IRCC secure account

- Part 3: Complete the IRCC questionnaire

- Part 4: Understand the "Your document checklist" page

The information in this guide may change.

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Last updated February 2025 • Page 1 of 10

Part 1: Register using the GCKey option

1. Go to the IRCC secure account webpage at https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/account.html

2. You'll see two options for registering:
   a. GCKey username and password
   b. Canadian Interac Sign-in Partner

3. Click the **GCKey username and password** option.

4. You'll be directed to the "Welcome to GCKey" page. Select "**Sign Up**".

5. You'll be guided through 4 steps to create your GCKey:
   a. Review the "Terms and Conditions of Use" and click "I accept" if you agree.
   b. Create your username.
   c. Create and confirm your password.
   d. Create your recovery questions, answers, and hints.

6. When you've successfully created your GCKey, you'll see a page that says "GCKey Sign Up Complete". Click "Continue".

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Last updated February 2025 • Page 2 of 10

Part 2: Create your IRCC online account

1. After you have created your GCKey, you'll be prompted to accept "Terms and Conditions" again. Review the info and click "I Accept" to continue.

2. On the "Create an account" page, enter your name, email address, and preferred language of notification.

3. Create your security questions and answers.
   a. You'll need to answer one of your security questions every time you sign in to your IRCC account.

Once you complete the above steps, you will be brought to the **home page of your account.** This is the page that you see each time you sign in.

Part 3: Complete the IRCC questionnaire

1. From your account homepage, click on "Apply to come to Canada".

Start an application

Apply to come to Canada
Includes applications for visitor visas, work and study permits, Express Entry and International Experience Canada. You will need your personal reference code if you have one.

Refugees: Apply for temporary health care benefits
Use this application if you are a protected person or refugee claimant who wants to apply for the Interim Federal Health Program.

Students: Transfer schools
For approved study permit holders only. Tell us if you are changing designated learning institutions. You will need your application number.

Personal checklist

Personal Reference Code

If you have already completed the Come to Canada or the Express Entry wizard, you would have received a document checklist and/or a personal reference code, based on the answers you provided.

Please enter your personal reference code to begin your application. (required)

[   ] ❓

[Continue] [Cancel]

I do not have a Personal Reference Code

If you do not have a personal reference code, you may answer a series of questions to find out if you are eligible to apply for a visa and/or permit, apply for Express Entry, and begin an online application.

If you begin your application **after you have logged into your account**, you will not receive a personal reference code, as the system will save your document checklist right into your account.

Determine your eligibility and apply online:

[Visitor visa, study and/or work permit]

[Express Entry (EE)]

[International Experience Canada (IEC)]

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Last updated February 2025 • Page 4 of 10

3. Your screen now says "Find out if you're eligible to apply".
   a. You'll be guided through a series of questions to determine your eligibility to apply for your initial study permit.
      i. Click on the blue question mark if you need help understanding a question.

4. When you've answered all the eligibility questions, you'll see a screen that indicates your eligibility to come to Canada as a student. Click "Continue".

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Last updated February 2025 • Page 5 of 10

5. Next, you'll be guided through another series of questions that will generate your personal document checklist.

    a. Click "Continue" on the "Create your personal checklist" screen to begin.

    b. **Important:** There are two questions that commonly confuse students:

        i. **"Is work an essential component of your studies?"**
            - Select "No".
            - Mount Allison does not have official co-op programs where work is a required component of a program. This is what this question refers to.
            - Note: selecting "no" does not impact your work authorization as part of your study permit. You can read about work authorization as a student on the [IRCC site](#).

        ii. **"Have you visited or lived in any one of the designated countries for 6 consecutive months in the last year?"**
            - See the list of designated countries: https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/medical-police/medical-exams/requirements-temporary-residents/country-requirements.html
            - Select "Yes" if the statement applies to you. Select "No" if it does not.
            - If you answer "Yes" you will require a medical exam for your application. For more information on how to arrange a medical exam for a study permit application, please see the IRCC website: https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/medical-police/medical-exams/requirements-temporary-residents.html

6. After completing the IRCC questionnaire, you will see a screen that says "Review your answers".
    a. **Double-check** your responses because they determine your document checklist.
    b. Make any corrections if necessary. Then click "Continue".

7. The next screen, "Submitting your application", provides technical information to help you during your application process.
    a. Review this information.
    b. Click "Continue" on the bottom right.

8. You will now see the "Your document checklist" page.

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Last updated February 2025 • Page 6 of 10

Part 4: Understand the "Your document checklist" page

1. This page lists your required documents and links to any forms you need to fill out.

   a. Review your list of required documents.
      i. **Important**: you still need to check for **any additional documents** required by your country's visa office (see page 9 of this guide).

   b. If you need further information or instructions for an item, click on the blue question mark icon in the "Instructions" column to the right of the document name.

   c. Download applicable forms by putting your cursor over the document name. You'll see a note that says "(Opens a new window)", which indicates a form can be downloaded.

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Last updated February 2025 • Page 7 of 10

c. **If you see a "Please wait…" message when you're downloading a form:**
   i. Click on the download arrow at the top right to save the file onto your computer and then open it with Adobe Reader.
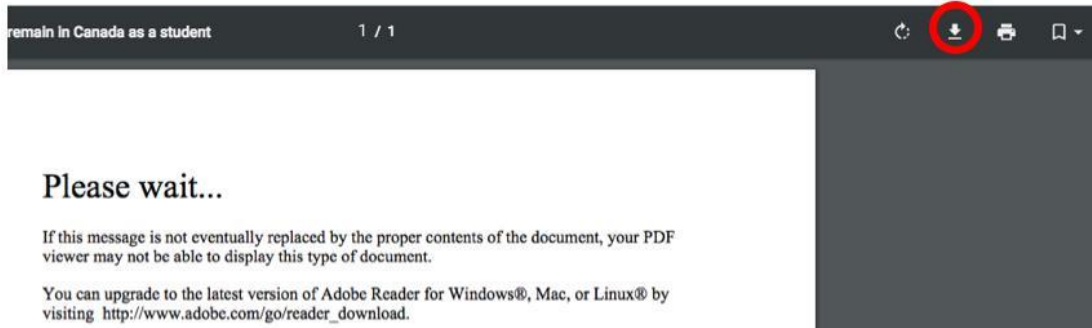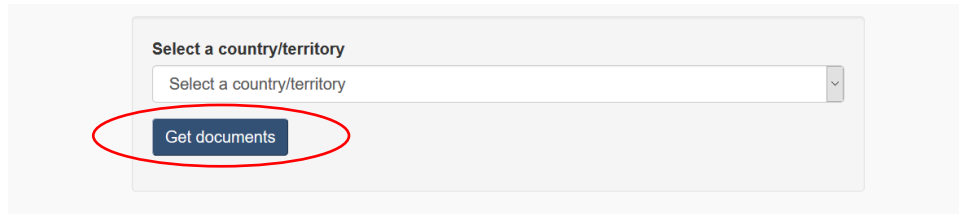

2. All students will see the following documents in their "document checklist":

- Letter of Acceptance or Letter of Enrollment / Registration
  - You will receive your Letter of Acceptance by email. It is a two-page document which includes a letter addressed to *Canadian Immigration Officers*. Upload this two-page document for your study permit application.

- Passport
  - Provide a copy of the bio-data page (the page with your name, date of birth, passport number, expiration date, etc.). Also include a copy of every page of your passport that has stamps, visas, or markings.

- Provincial or Territorial Attestation Letter (PAL or TAL)
  - A PAL is issued by the Province of New Brunswick for prospective Mount Allison University students. Once your registration deposit has been received and processed by Mount Allison Admissions, you will receive your PAL by email.

- Proof of Means of Financial Support
  - Check the IRCC website to find out how much money you need to show for your study permit application, and how to provide proof.

- Digital photo
  - Find digital photo specifications on the "Your document checklist" page by clicking on the question mark, in the "Instructions" column, for "Digital photo".

Additional documents applicants may require include *Birth Registration/Certificate, Family Information Form, Custodianship Declaration, etc.*
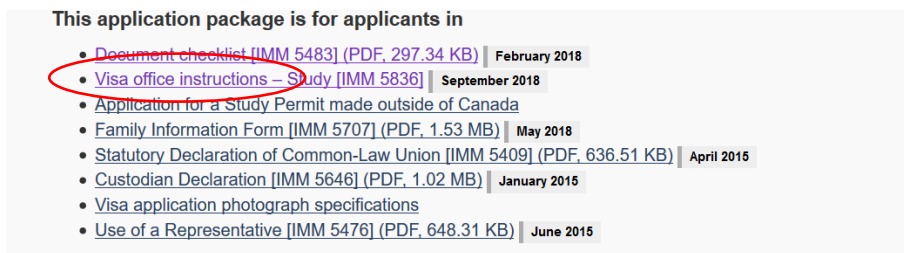
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Last updated February 2025 • Page 8 of 10

3. Documents specific to your visa office:

   a. Check the visa office instructions for your country or region for local requirements.

      a. Go to the IRCC website and select the country/territory **from which you will be applying**. Click "Get documents".

      b. Select "Visa office instructions" from the list, which will launch a PDF specifying requirements for your visa office. Review this list for any additional documents required by your visa office that were not shown in "Your document checklist".

      c. You can merge all visa office specific documents into one file and upload in the "Client Information" field on the "Your document checklist" page.

Letter of Explanation

Please note: A *Letter of explanation (or Study plan)* is required by some visa offices and will be noted in the Visa office instructions on the IRCC website. Even if it is not required, students are recommended to include a Letter of Explanation with their study permit application. This letter helps the visa officer understand you and your goals. It should be a one-page letter written by you which may address some of the following questions:

- Why do you wish to study in Canada in the program for which you have been accepted?
- What is your overall educational goal?
- Why are you not pursuing a similar program in your country of residence?
- How will this program enhance your employment opportunities in your country of residence or citizenship?
- What ties do you have to your country of residence or citizenship?

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Last updated February 2025 • Page 9 of 10

4. Uploading your files

- Once you've gathered your required documents, you will upload them to the "Your document checklist" page using the corresponding "Upload File" button on the right.
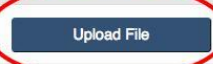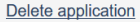

5. Once you have started your online application, you have 60 days to complete it. You can continue your application (and return to your "Document checklist") by selecting "Continue application" from your account homepage.

NEXT STEPS: Biometrics (fingerprints and photo) requirement

Most study permit applicants will need to appear *in person* to have fingerprints and photograph (biometric information) taken at a biometric collection service point. Exceptions include US citizens or nationals. For more information visit the IRCC website: Facts about biometrics.

After you have submitted your study permit application online, you will receive a Biometrics instruction letter (BIL) which will direct you to a list of biometrics collection service points you may choose from. The letter will go to your IRCC account message box. You will have up to 30 days to go in person to an official biometrics collection service location. For a full list of biometrics collection points, please visit the IRCC website: Where to give biometrics.

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62 York Street, Sackville, NB • Tel: 506.364.2124
Last updated February 2025 • Page 10 of 10