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Life in Canada

The OVCMT Registered Massage Therapy Diploma is not eligible for the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program following graduation.

Laws and Police

Vernon has a Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachment located at 3402 30 St. The local police telephone is 250-545-717.

The local emergency number in Vernon is 9-1-1

The Laws of British Columbia can be found on the British Columbia government website.

Transportation

The school is located in downtown Vernon with great walkability. There is an extensive bus system within the Okanagan for those wishing to travel between towns. The town of Vernon also supports ands bus and scooter rental system during the months when there is no snow. These can aid simple transportation around town for a reasonable cost.

Hospital and emergency

The Vernon Jubilee Hospital is located at 2101 32 St. This hospital has a full-service emergency room and ambulance service is also in the area.

The local emergency number in Vernon is 9-1-1

Housing information

Vernon remains an affordable option within the Okanagan area, with many students renting apartments, suites, or houses—often sharing to reduce expenses and gain study partners. Within the area are the smaller municipalities of Lake Country, Armstrong and Coldstream also great options for accommodations. Average rental rates in Vernon:

• One-bedroom: \$800 - \$1100

• Two-bedroom: \$1200 - \$2000

• Three-four bedrooms: \$1750+

OVCMT has great support from the community with many locals offering rental space to students for the duration of the program. The OVCMT website hosts housing ads specifically from locals looking to only rent to OVCMT Students (LINK). All rental agreements are outside of OVCMT, and OVCMT is not responsible for managing or assisting in rental disputes. In the event of rental issue please contact the correct authority office. (Tenants BC)

OVCMT does not have any on site or dorm housing available through the institution.

Tenancy Rights in BC

Within British Columbia Tenants have rights while renting a space. The government is the authority for tenancy issues and up to date information can be found on the government of BC website found online here. The website also has resources in the event you require assistance with a tenancy issue.

Overdose and Drug Information

Information regarding drug and alcohol use, and support for dealing with someone else's drug or alcohol use, self-tests, and other supports can be found on the <u>BC Health link</u> government website.

If someone is overdosing, call 9-1-1 or your local emergency help line immediately. If available, administer naloxone, a medication that can temporarily reverse an overdose. However, naloxone can wear off before full recovery, and multiple doses may be needed. Always seek professional help, even if naloxone has been given. Follow the instructions in your naloxone kit and any guidance from emergency responders.

Personal Safety

- **Emergency Services:** In case of an emergency, dial **911** for police, fire, or medical assistance.
- Safe Travel Tips:
 - Avoid walking alone late at night, travel in groups or use public transportation or ride-share apps.
 - Let someone know where you are going, especially if meeting someone new.
 - Be aware of your surroundings and keep valuables secure.
- **Reporting Incidents:** Report any incidents of harassment, theft, or suspicious behavior to the administration office immediately.
- Health Services
 - Medical Insurance: All international students must have valid health insurance.
 Most are enrolled in the BC Medical Services Plan (MSP) after a 3-month waiting period. In the interim, ensure you have private insurance coverage.
 - Local Clinics & Hospitals:
 - CareConnect I.D.A Pharmacy at 5301 25th Ave. in the Landing Plaza, is the only walk-in clinic in the city.
 - Urgent and Primary Care Centre (same day appointments)
 101-3105 28th Avenue, Vernon, BC V1T 8Y4
 - Emergency care is available at Vernon Jubilee Hospital emergency 2101 32st.ph (250) 545 2211.

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Overdose Awareness & Prevention

• **Understanding the Risk:** BC has been affected by the opioid crisis, and even recreational or experimental drug use can be dangerous. Fentanyl, a highly potent substance, is often found mixed with other drugs.

Naloxone Training & Kits:

- Free Naloxone (Narcan) kits are available through BC pharmacies and community organizations.
- Training on how to use Naloxone is provided through the pharmacy when you receive your kit.

Living Costs in BC

As a college student in Vernon, British Columbia, managing your cost of living is crucial for financial stability. On average, a single person in Vernon spends approximately \$3,000 - \$3,500 per month, encompassing housing, transportation, groceries, and entertainment. Overall, while Vernon offers a relatively affordable cost of living compared to larger British Columbia cities, it's essential to budget carefully to accommodate all expenses.

The government of BC has a <u>cost of living calculator</u> that can be utilized when planning for your education.

Employment Rights and Conditions in BC

Please see the BC government <u>website</u> for the most up to date information regarding employment laws, hiring laws, and other resources for any employment support resolution.

Medical Services Plan

Please see the Government of BC Medical Services <u>website</u> for information on the services available and eligibility and enrollment. International students enrolled in programs for longer than 15 weeks will be required to provide OVCMT with proof of sufficient health care coverage.

Support Information

You may also contact the OVCMT Liaison Support Coordinator for additional support or someone to assist you within the community. Please see below for some organizations you may find helpful.

Ambulance, fire, police: 911

If you need immediate emergency help always call 911.

BC Drug and Poison Information Centre: 1-800-567-8911

Offers a 24-hour telephone information service which provides immediate information about the effects of drugs and poisons and treatment to health care providers and the public. A toll-free number is staffed by nurses, pharmacists, and physicians.

Website: www.dpic.org

Other help lines or websites

Toward the Heart https://towardtheheart.com BCCDC Harm Reduction Services

Here to Help https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca

CMHA - Canadian Mental Health Association https://cmha.ca

- · Have resources for all, including healthcare workers
- · Bounce back, community counselling, mental health check-in, peer support

CMHA – Bounce back https://bounceback.bc.ca 1-800-639-0522

A free skill building program designed to help adults and youth 15+ manage low mood, mild to moderate depression, stress, or worry. Delivered online or over the phone with a coach, you will get access to tools that will support you on your path to mental wellness

Wellness Together Canada https://wellnesstoghether.ca/en-CA

Immediate Crisis Support for Frontline - text FRONTLINE at 741741

Adults text ADULTS or WELLNESS at 741741

Free virtual mental health and substance use support for youth and adults; supported by the Government of Canada, Bell Let's Talk and Blue Cross. Support offered: text support by trained counsellors, self-guided courses on mental health and coping strategies, communities of support, guides for more 1 to 1 support.

Hope for Wellness Help Line https://hopeforwellness.ca 1-855-242-3310

This service offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention by phone or online chat to all Indigenous people across Canada. They can help if you want to talk, are distressed, have strong emotional reactions or are feeling triggered by painful memories.

HealthLink BC: Anywhere in BC: 8-1-1 TTY (Deaf and hearing-impaired): 7-1-1

A 24-hour resource that provides health care advice for non-urgent concerns. BC residents can call from anywhere in the province to speak with a registered nurse, dietitian or pharmacist or to find a health resource close to their home.

Website: www.healthlinkbc.ca

BC Crisis Line Association

As a community of 14 crisis lines across the province, CLABC members respond to over 175,000 calls annually addressing a wide array of concerns including homelessness, mental health and addictions, abuse, poverty and suicide.

Website: www.crisislines.bc.ca

Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre: If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, call or text 9-8-8. Support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433) (Deaf or hearing-impaired: 1-866-872-0113)

Confidential, non-judgmental, free emotional support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including feelings which may lead to suicide.

Website: www.crisiscentre.bc.ca

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868 Website: www.kidshelpphone.ca

Immediate and caring support, information and, if necessary, referral to a local community or social service agency.

Youth in BC Distress Line: 1-866-661-3311 Website: www.youthinbc.com

24-Hour Distress Line staffed by counsellors and trained volunteers who are committed to helping youths in crisis.

Problem Gambling Help Line: 1-888-795-6111 Website: www.bcresponsiblegambling.ca

Deaf and hearing-impaired, call collect: 1-604-875-0885

The Problem Gambling Help Line is a province-wide information and referral service for anyone who is adversely affected by their own, or another's gambling habits.

Mental Health Info Line: 1-800-661-2121

Provides 24 hour taped information on provincial mental health programs as well as symptoms, causes, treatment, support groups and publication relating to a number of mental illnesses. For life-threatening situations, please call 911.

Alcohol and Drug Info Line: 1-800-663-1441

Provides information and referral services for people across BC needing help with any kind of substance abuse. Includes information and referral to education, prevention and treatment services and regulatory agencies

Grief & Loss:

BCCSU - Grief and Loss Booklet - https://www.bccsu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2081/11/Grief_Handbook.pdf

BC Bereavement Helpline https://www.bcbh.ca/index.php

Grief Support https://www.mygrief.ca

People in Need- www.peopleinneed.ca 250-542-3114

Family Resource Center - www.vernonfrc.ca 250-545-3390

College of Psychologists of BC www.collegeofpsychologists.bc.ca 1-800-665-0979

BC Psychological Association 1-800-730-0522

Vernon & District Hospice Society 250-503-1800

Recurrent Pregnancy Loss Program <u>www.bcwomens.ca</u> (BC Women's Hospital - miscarriages and still-births)

RCMP Victim Service - North Okanagan www.rdno.ca (Referrals for support services)

Community Organizations and Resources:

The following support resources have been selected by our Liaison Support Coordinator who is willing to help connect students with these resources.

- **First Nation's Friendship Centre** 250 -542-1247 offers social opportunity, nutritional classes, mental health and addictions counseling, and family support groups.
- Vernon & District Metis Association 250-307-4651
- **North Okanagan Sikh cultural society** 250-542-5151. Community events, foster family support for students, cultural holiday events, temple services.
- Okanagan Chinese Canadian Association 778-484-6222. Language classes, public events for holidays and festivals.
- Okanagan Jewish Community 250-862-2305. offers library, Hebrew school, religious services, Philosophers Cafe evenings, Hebrew lessons, and multiple family and single events.
- South Okanagan Hindu Society 250-494-0851. Temple services and cultural event celebrations.

- **Vernon and District Immigrant Society** 250-542-4177. Offering language support in French, German, Russian, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hindi and Arabic.
- **Vernon Islamic Centre** 250-549-7442 offering religious services, Resources for Halal meat and products, Family potlucks, education classes and small group socialization
- **Vernon Japanese Cultural Society** 250-545-4162. This offers support for children and seniors, social engagements in Japanese language, and a Vernon Buddhist temple group.
- Family Resource Centre for the North Okanagan 250-545-3390. Post-partum depression group and counseling, sexual abuse recovery programs for both men and women, healthy family's program, community short-term couple and individual counseling, access to products and services for children.

OVCMT Student Life

Progression through the program

In each term, in order for the student to progress to the next term through the Registered Massage Therapy Program the following must be satisfied:

- a) A weighted Term mark of 70% or higher, both Academic and Practical, with a minimum grade of 65% in each individual course. There are the following considerations:
 - I. In cases where a weighted Term mark of less than 70% and greater than 65% is attained, an alternative learning experience may be granted for one course. Except in extenuating circumstances no more than one alternative learning experience shall be allowed per course to a maximum of two alternative learning experiences per program year.
 - II. Alternative learning experiences may include a rewrite or other experience, such as an alternative oral practical exam, acceptable to the Director and must result in a replacement grade.
- III. Extenuating circumstances may include documented medical or personal reasons for which the assessment mark, in the opinion of the Director, was outside the normal range for that student.
- b) A pass/conditional pass for those courses of a pass/conditional pass/fail nature only.
- c) Successful completion of all clinical practicum requirements and hours for graduation.

The OVCMT Registered Massage Therapy Diploma is not eligible for the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program following graduation.

Attendance

OVCMT attendance is required to succeed in the program.

If a student's attendance falls below 80% in academic courses, the Academic Director will contact the student to undergo a review of their current academic standing in the course(s) and decide the outcome, considering the best interest of the student.

Students are required to complete all tests, quizzes and assignments as noted on the course outline.

If a student's attendance falls below 80% in practical courses, the student will be examined more thoroughly in oral practical (O-P) examinations. In an O-P situation a student may be asked to perform one treatment or assessment, randomly selected from the 10 that have been taught. A more thorough exam would mean the student may be examined on three, four or more.

If a student falls below an 70% attendance rate in any Practical course, the college reserves the right to review the student's situation to determine if they are eligible to write the exams for the course or be dismissed from the program.

Attendance at all assigned shifts is mandatory and must be made-up if a shift is missed.

OVCMT Policies

Please also refer to the Current Student Policy and Procedure Manual for all OVCMT Student policies. A copy of the current student policy and procedure manuals is located on the student resources Moodle, a copy is sent with your contract, and a hard copy is available on site.

Academic Dispute

Students may appeal a final course or oral practical exam grade under the following circumstances:

- If grading criteria were not clearly specified at the beginning of the class.
- 2. If grading criteria were not followed as stated or were not consistently followed for all students.
- 3. If an individual student believes that their class grade was based on or impacted by something other than stated grading criteria.

It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor, or the examiner in the case of oral practical exams, to clarify how the grade was determined and to express any concern the student may have within 72 hours of receiving the grade. If the instructor's explanation does not resolve the question, the student may submit a grade appeal to the appropriate Director using the OVCMT Reporting and Investigation Form. A record of the grade appeal and resolution will be maintained in the student file.

An appeal must consist of the following:

- 1. It must be made in writing, dated, and signed by the student.
- 2. It must include the course name, instructor's name, final grade, and the reason why the student believes the grade is not accurate.
- 3. A grade appeal must be made within seven (7) days of the reporting of the final mark. All appeals will be resolved within fourteen (14) days of submission.

Non - Academic Dispute

OVCMT encourages the use of the following four-step communication model for both staff and students. However, students may at any time access the formal dispute resolution process described further below:

- 1. In cases where you feel in conflict, angry, unhappy, or uncertain with someone, the first step is to discuss this with the person involved. If you feel you cannot address the person for some reason such as a power imbalance, or if you have strong emotion, then the first step becomes to seek the assistance of someone who can give you positive support in preparing to talk to the person with whom you have the concern.
- 2. If you feel unresolved after step one, you may communicate this to the individual involved within 10 days of your first meeting, and move to step two, which is to involve a mediating third party from within the college, a person mutually agreed upon. If no request for a college mediator is made within the 10-day period, the matter should be considered as resolved.
- 3. If you feel unresolved within 10 days after step two, step three would be to create a committee of no fewer than three and no more than five mutually agreed upon people from within the college to mediate the situation and propose a solution. If no request is made for the mediation committee within the 10-day period, the matter should be considered resolved.
- 4. If the matter is unresolved after step three, the formal dispute resolution process should be followed.

Harassment and Anti-Racism Policy

OVCMT is committed to fostering a respectful, inclusive, and discrimination-free environment. Harassment and racism—whether verbal, physical, written, or digital—are not tolerated in any form. This includes racial slurs, hate speech, bullying, microaggressions, and any behavior that creates a hostile environment.

All students are expected to treat others with dignity and respect, both on and off campus. Reports of harassment or racism will be taken seriously, investigated confidentially, and may result in disciplinary action. Support services and educational resources are available to promote a safe and equitable college community.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

At OV, we are committed to creating a community where equity, diversity, and inclusion are not just values—but everyday practices. We stand against racism in all its forms and are actively working to build a more inclusive and respectful environment for all.

To support this commitment, we are:

- Sharing stories on our website and social media reflect the diversity and lived experiences
 of the OV community.
- Partnering with and supporting organizations that promote fairness and inclusion in health and health education.
- Making sure our health and wellbeing programs are accessible, inclusive, and supportive of people from all backgrounds.
- Providing training for our senior leadership to build skills in diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Creating space for open conversations and working with others to bring equity and inclusion into our curriculum and program design.
- Improving orientation clearly shows our commitment to equity and inclusion from day one.

Accountability:

- Progress will be measured through continual staff and student survey feedback (at the end of each course, term and year).
- Based upon survey feedback and societal trends, training beyond senior leadership to include all staff, faculty, and students as appropriate.
- The community of Vernon shares and offers multiple opportunities to participate in events highlighting opportunities for students and staff to participate in EDI initiatives or advisory groups.

We know this work takes time, effort, and continued learning - and we are dedicated to moving forward with purpose and accountability.

Tutors and Educational Supports

Every year OVCMT compiles a list of tutors for the current students. This list may be past or current students. All tutoring arrangements are between the individuals, OVCMT does not directly facilitate tutoring. If individuals need additional supports for spaces outside of the standard student study space please speak to admin.

International students having difficulty working with a tutor or finding a suitable tutor are encouraged to reach out to the Liaison Support Coordinator or the department director for assistance,

Banking

For international students in Vernon, BC, banks like RBC, Scotiabank, and TD offer student banking packages with no monthly fees for full-time students, along with features like unlimited debits and free Interac e-Transfers.

Here's a breakdown of banking options for international students in Vernon, BC:

Key Features to Look For:

No Monthly Fees: Many banks waive monthly fees for full-time students.

Unlimited Debits: Some accounts offer unlimited debit transactions in Canada.

Free Interac e-Transfers: Free Interac e-Transfer transactions are a convenient way to send and receive money.

ATM Access: Check the network of ATMs you can access without fees.

International Money Transfers: Consider banks that offer easy international money transfer options.

Banks and their Offers:

RBC (Royal Bank of Canada):

- RBC Advantage Banking for Students: Offers no monthly fees for full-time students, unlimited debits in Canada, free Interac e-Transfers, and no RBC fee to use another bank's ATM in Canada.
- RBC International Money Transfers: Allows international money transfers.
- RBC Mobile App: Bank anywhere, anytime with the RBC Mobile app.

Scotiabank:

- <u>Scotiabank StartRight</u>: Offers student banking packages.
- No Monthly Fees: Scotiabank offers no monthly fees for full-time students.

TD Bank:

- <u>TD Student Chequing Account:</u> Offers no monthly fees and no minimum balance requirements for the TD Student Chequing Account.
- International Student Banking Package: TD offers an International Student Banking Package with specific requirements.
- <u>TD International Student GIC Program:</u> TD also offers an International Student GIC Program.

CIBC:

• <u>CIBC Smart for Students</u>: Offers student banking options.

Simplii Financial:

 Simplii Financial No Fee Chequing Account with Student Banking Offer: Offers a no-fee chequing account with student banking benefits.

Requirements for Opening a Bank Account:

- Study Permit (IMM 1442) or Temporary Resident Visa (TRV).
- One additional piece of government photo ID: (e.g., passport or Canadian driver's license).
- Proof of enrollment from your Canadian Educational Institution: (e.g., student ID card or course timetable).
- Be the age of majority at the time of account opening.

• For students studying in Quebec, a Quebec Acceptance Certificate (CAQ) is also required.

Childcare

For international students in Vernon, BC, childcare options include the Sunflower Childcare Centre at Okanagan College's Vernon Campus, operated by Maven Lane, a non-profit provider, which prioritizes student needs.

Sunflower Childcare Centre:

- Located at Okanagan College's Vernon Campus.
- Operated by Maven Lane, a non-profit provider with experience in childcare.
- Prioritizes childcare needs of students.
- Offers programs like the \$10-a-Day childcare initiative or the Child Care Fee Reduction initiative.
- Features welcoming and calming spaces, natural materials, and a large outdoor play area.
- Contact (250) 558-9963 for inquiries about the Sunflower Childcare Centre.

Maven Lane Childcare:

- Maven Lane operates multiple childcare and early learning centers in Vernon, Coldstream, Lavington, and Armstrong.
- Offers Infant/Toddler & 3-5 Programs, after-school, and out-of-school care programs.
- Has a history of providing childcare since 1994.

School District 22 (Vernon):

- Offers Early Learning & Child Care programs at various locations.
- Registration is ongoing throughout the school year as space permits.
- Contact earlylearning@sd22.bc.ca or 250-260-4490 for questions about School-Age Child Care Programs.

BGC Okanagan:

 BGC Okanagan operates programs in Vernon, and you can contact vernon@bgco.ca for registration.

Other Resources:

- City of Vernon's website has a community childcare resources page.
- Okanagan College's website has information about childcare.
- Vernon Matters has information about the new childcare facility.
- www.vernoninternational.ca has information about the international student program.

Transportation

For international students in Vernon, BC, public transit via BC Transit offers a convenient and affordable way to get around, with routes to Kelowna, Enderby, Armstrong, Lumby, and Salmon Arm, including the Route 90 UBCO Connector.

Here's a more detailed breakdown of transportation options:

Public Transit (BC Transit):

- Vernon Regional Transit: Provides bus service to most areas of Vernon, Coldstream, and surrounding communities like Enderby, Armstrong, Spallumcheen, Lumby, and Electoral Areas D and F.
- Route 90 UBCO Connector: Connects Vernon, the Kelowna International Airport, and the UBC Okanagan campus.
- Interregional Routes: BC Transit offers routes to Kelowna, Enderby, Armstrong, Lumby, and Salmon Arm.
- **Semester Pass:** Full-time high school and post-secondary students can purchase a discounted Semester Pass for long-term travel.
- Where to Buy: Semester Passes are available from select in-person retail vendors, according to BC Transit.
- Fares: Concession fares (discounted prices) are available for eligible students.
- **BC Transit Website:** Visit bctransit.com/vernon for schedules, routes, and fare information.

Other Transportation Options:

- **Cycling:** The Okanagan Valley promotes alternative transportation, with many accessible trails and paths for cycling.
- Okanagan College Campuses: Three of the College's campuses are serviced by city transit with specific bus routes.
- **Shuttle Services:** Consider shuttle services for airport transfers to and from Kelowna International Airport (YLW), which is 30 minutes from Vernon.
- Okanagan College Mobility Grants: Okanagan College students participating in international activities, study tours, or exchange programs may be eligible for financial assistance through Airline Travel Grants and Extended Mobility Grants.
- A1 Bus Ltd: Offers various transportation services, including bus/van rentals, shuttle services, and on-call availability.

Community integration supports

Vernon & District Immigrant & Community Services Society

Since 1989, VDICSS has offered many services for newcomers, immigrants, refugees, and naturalized citizens, helping with settlement and integration into Canada and Vernon, British Columbia.

https://www.vdicss.org/

250-542-4177 - booking an appointment is recommended

Pathways Central Okanagan

- Community Services Directory
- Settlement services include employment and Immigrant and Refugee Services
- (Through the VDICSS)
- Settlement Program
- Community Connection
- Employment Services
- Language Services
- Childminding

250-542-4177

Public email: vdiss@shaw.ca

Website: https://www.vdicss.org/settlement...

#100, 3003 - 30th Street, Vernon, British Columbia, V1T5E2 https://central-okanagan.pathwaysbc.ca/programs/1710

211 British Columbia

Provides a variety of services to immigrants, refugees, newcomers, visible minorities, and first-generation Canadians and their families. Offers settlement and integration services and language instruction. Also provides employment services. Serves Vernon. Office hours are 8:30 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday. Nonprofit society, registered charity.

vdicss.org

250-542-4177 <u>vdicss@vdicss.org</u>

100-3003 30th Street

Vernon, BC, V1T 9J5

OVCMT Liaison Support Coordinator

Please contact Tanya, our Community Liaison Support Coordinator, at Tanya@ovcmt.com if you need additional supports outside of what's been provided.

International Student Complaint Process

In the event an international student is having difficulties, please utilize the OVCMT communication model for disputes as referenced in the student policy and procedure manual, the International Student Complaint Form, or speak to staff directly. Please submit this form to the Community

Liaison Support Coordinator. This form is available on Moodle, there is a printed copy attached to the back of the international student handbook, or it can be collected from admin.