

Ontario-Maharashtra-Goa (OMG) Student Exchange Program
2010-2011 Exchange Year

Frequently Asked Questions for Maharashtra and Goa Students

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1. *What does the OMG exchange offer me?*

The OMG exchange offers Maharashtra and Goa students the following benefits:

- You do not pay tuition in Ontario, in effect giving you a scholarship worth between \$10,000 and \$16,000.
- A province-wide exchange program covering 16 institutions gives you the opportunity to identify universities with particular academic strengths in your areas of interest.
- The OMG exchange provides advice and support, including a Student Handbook (download from the website), information seminars in Maharashtra and Goa, and Ontario, and the ongoing support of the Ontario Program Office while you are in Canada.
- Through liaison with the Canadian High Commission in Delhi we ensure that your visa application is identified as part of the OMG exchange and processed with due speed.

2. *Which universities participate in the OMG program?*

In Maharashtra and Goa, ten colleges and universities participate and are able to send and receive students. In Ontario, seventeen of the province's universities participate: Brock (St. Catharines), Carleton (Ottawa), Guelph, Laurentian (Sudbury), McMaster (Hamilton), Nipissing (North Bay), Ottawa, Queen's (Kingston), Ryerson (Toronto), Toronto, Waterloo, Trent (Peterborough), Western Ontario (London), Wilfrid Laurier (Waterloo), Windsor, and York (Toronto).

3. *How can I find out which Ontario university is best for me?*

There are three main ways through which you can inform yourself. (1) The Application Information booklet Part-B (downloadable from the OMG website) contains a concise overview, with a listing for each university. (2) The OMG website has links to all participating universities in Ontario. Each university provides information on programs and courses offered. (3) The OMG Program Office in Ontario has information on many Ontario universities, and contacts at those institutions. Please refrain from contacting any partner university directly. The websites and the OMG Program Office should be your first contact and they can give you all the information you need.

The main thing to remember is that each of the Ontario universities maintains high academic standards in teaching and research. Except in special cases, there are probably more than one university which offer course(s) in your field(s) of interest. Just because you have not heard of a university (or the city in which it is located) does not mean it is not a good university. In setting your list of priorities, think about your academic goals for the year, your level of study, prospective universities' course offerings, and the size and location of the city and university you would prefer.

4. *How can I be sure the program will place me at my first-choice university?*

The short answer is: You can't be sure. We at OMG will do our best to accommodate your wishes, and we will not place you at a university at which you cannot carry out your proposed program of study. We may place you at a university that you have not requested, in order to ensure equitable distribution of Maharashtra and Goa students throughout Ontario.

You can increase your chances of being placed at your first-choice university by (1) informing yourself thoroughly about universities and making sure you and your program will "fit" the profile of a prospective university; (2) making clear, in the study plan you enclose with your application, why a particular university is important to you. Please note: Saying that you wish to take particular courses or to study with a particular professor is usually not persuasive. (In any case there is no guarantee, short of an invitation from the professor that she or he will be teaching in a given year.)

The absolute worst way of getting to a particular university is to list only that university on your application form. Applications that do not, in good faith, indicate three possible universities will not be considered (one exception: if you are an aerospace engineer, two will do!).

5. *Do I have to take TOEFL?*

If the medium of instruction in your courses at college/university is English, the participating universities in Ontario do not require TOEFL. If you want to study at Laurentian University, the University of Ottawa or Glendon College (York University) be aware that some courses are offered in French only; you should provide evidence of your competence in French.

6. *What is the difference in Ontario between undergraduates and graduate students?*

The OMG website and the Application Information booklet list, insofar as we have the information, the relevant policies for participating universities. Even if you are admitted as an undergraduate, however, your host university will do its best to see that you enrol in those courses for which you are qualified, your classification as an undergraduate or graduate student notwithstanding. Often there are courses that have both undergraduate and graduate students in them.

7. *Can I earn a degree while in Ontario?*

One of the firm principles of the OMG exchange is that students remain degree candidates at their home university, not at their Ontario host university. In other words, you cannot earn a degree while on the exchange. If you wish to change from non-degree to degree status, you will have to go through the regular admissions

process of the host university and pay full tuition fees. You will also cease to be a member of the OMG Exchange Program.

8. *How long can / must I stay in Ontario?*

When you are admitted to the OMG exchange, you confirm your intention to study for one or more academic terms in Ontario – from the beginning of September through late April or early May or until the end of the summer term sometime in August (depending on examination schedules).

9. *Is it hard to find a place to live in Ontario?*

It depends on the city. In Toronto, Ottawa, and Kitchener-Waterloo it is sometimes difficult to find an off-campus (or in some cases, an on-campus) room at an acceptable price. In smaller cities the situation is less difficult. Many Ontario universities offer residence rooms to Maharashtra and Goa students. Individual universities' policies are listed on the OMG website and the Application Information booklet.

10. *How much will studying in Ontario cost?*

The *Handbook for Maharashtra and Goa Participants* (which will be available shortly in pdf-format from the program's website) discusses the cost factors in some detail. Some of the things to consider are: (1) you do not have to pay tuition in Ontario, but (2) you do need to purchase health insurance in Ontario (in 2008–2009: \$63 per month, \$252 for one term and \$504 two terms). (3) You need to figure in your flight, rent, meals, and books, as well as telephone, local transit, and entertainment costs. It will probably cost you at least \$1000 (about Rs 40,000) per month, excluding airfare. All students selected in the OMG Program will receive a stipend of \$2000 (for 1 term) or \$2500 (for more than one term). This covers the travel expenses.

11. *Can I work or participate in an internship while in Canada?*

You may take a job, but only on the campus of your host university. You may also participate in an internship / practicum, but you will need to arrange both the permission and the position by yourself – this is not part of the OMG exchange.

12. *Where can I get an application form and more information?*

Application forms and information are available from the OMG website.

13. *What is the administrative structure and who are the people behind OMG?*

OMG is a consortium of 16 Ontario and nine Maharashtra and Goa universities. Professor Lalu Mansinha of the University of Western Ontario is the Academic Director. The OMG Program Office is housed at York University, with Agnes Poleszczuk, Program Coordinator and Dagmar Todd, Program Assistant. In India OMG has a Program office at the University of Pune with Vaishali Potnis as the program coordinator <vaishalipotnis@hotmail.com>.