

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

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

What is the OMG Exchange Program?

The Ontario-Maharashtra-Goa (OMG) Exchange Program is a consortium of 16 Ontario universities and 9 universities in Maharashtra and Goa.

It is administered from an office housed at York University, Toronto. The OMG Administrative Coordinator is Agnes Poleszczuk <ontmg@yorku.ca>. The Academic Director is Prof. Lalu Mansinha <mansinha@uwo.ca>, of the University of Western Ontario. In India OMG has a Program office at the University of Pune with Vaishali Potnis as the program coordinator <vaishalipotnis@hotmail.com>.

Why should I think of spending an exchange term (year) at a university in India?

Colorful, beautiful, incredible are some of the words used to describe India. From the time of Alexander the Great, some 2500 years ago, the arts, crafts, culture, dance and music of India have been noted in the West. Currently the Indian economy is developing at a very fast pace. With that the educational institutions are also moving forward.

If you go, you will be placed in a select university of standing, taking courses that will enhance your educational experience. You gain credit toward your Ontario degree, enhance your marketability with international experience and skills, make lifelong friends, broaden your personal horizons by living in a different part of the world, and have a memorable and incredibly enjoyable time in the process.

Where on Earth are Maharashtra and Goa?

Maharashtra (pronounced Maw-haa-raa-straw) is one of 28 states (equivalent to a 'province' here) in India; it is the third largest state in India both in area and population. The state is bounded by the Arabian Sea in the west and includes the port city of Mumbai (formerly Bombay).

Goa is a tiny emerald land on the west coast of India, south of Maharashtra. Goa is a rich blend of Portuguese and Indian art, culture, cuisine. Goa is world famous for its lovely beaches, cuisine, music and dance.

How Many Spaces Are There?

There are 25 spaces for all of Ontario. With 16 participating universities, that means that each university can count on at least two spaces per year. Universities that nominate more than two candidates often receive extra spaces that are not claimed by other universities.

Who Can Apply?

Students at the following Ontario universities are eligible to apply: Brock, Carleton, Guelph, Laurentian, McMaster, Nipissing, Ottawa, Queen's, Ryerson, Toronto, Trent, Waterloo, Western Ontario, Wilfrid Laurier, Windsor, and York. You have to be in at least second year of an undergraduate program, in good standing, with an average of at least B, when you apply. We welcome applications from graduate students.

What do I study at the university where I am going to be an exchange student?

Most exchange students select courses at the Host University that would count towards their degree requirements at the Home University. Others broaden their education by enrolling in special courses offered at the Host University that are not normally available at the Home University.

Can I do my thesis /project research at the university where I will be an exchange student?

Your exchange term/year can be spent doing thesis/project research. As with all courses, prior consultation on thesis research projects is a requirement.

How do I choose a university in India in the OMG Program?

Your university's exchange student office will provide you with some information, as will the OMG-Ontario office. For detailed information please consult the individual university's homepage. Additional consultation will be provided by OMG-India.

Currently seven universities in Maharashtra are part of the OMG program: University of Pune, Pune; Shivaji University, Kohlapur; St. Xavier's College, Mumbai; SNDT Women's University, Mumbai; Vishwakarma

Institute of Technology (VIT), Pune, Ramnarain Ruia College, Mumbai, and Jai Hind College, Mumbai.

Two institutions in Goa are part of the OMG Program: Goa University; Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Goa;

Is the language of teaching, administration and research English?

Yes. Most higher education in India is in English.

How long will I be away?

You can go for as little as one term to a maximum of one academic year (two or three terms). The academic year varies from institution to institution.

How Much Does It Cost?

You pay tuition at the Home University prior to departure for India. You do not pay any additional tuition fees at the Host University.

In general, living costs in India are much lower than in Canada. Currently C\$1 = Rs40. As a very rough guide, consider that flying between City A and City B costs about C\$400 on a ticket sale. In India, a ticket between City C and City D costs about Rs4000 (C\$100) on ticket sales. Thus flying in India is cheaper by a factor of three. Most items are cheaper in India in dollar terms. So in working out a budget, count on spending at least half of what you would be spending in Canada.

Is Any Financial Support Available?

Every student selected for the OMG Program will receive a scholarship of \$2,000 for one term and \$2500 for full academic year participation.

OSAP, OGS, NSERC or SSHRC support, as well as many university-based scholarships, may be applied to your exchange year. Also, all Ontario universities offer scholarships and/or bursaries for study abroad: check with your home university's International Office and with your academic advisor.

I am interested in going next year. How do I start?

Give yourself a year or so to gather information, select an OMG university in India, and formally apply to OMG. Do start gathering information about the OMG program and your specific interest and available programs in OMG-India universities. The academic year in India varies so do find out about the start date of the Host University academic year. Give yourself two weeks before the term begins for settling down and

getting used to the climate, food, and of course, sightseeing.

Where can I get more information?

The first step is to visit the *exchange student office* at your university. They will have the latest information on the OMG Student Exchange Program.

The Program Office (contact information below) is also happy to advise you in person, by phone, and by e-mail. The OMG website has detailed information, including the current Handbook for Participants, application forms, and links to the Maharashtra and Goa universities and other relevant sites.

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