Institut national de la recherche scientifique

Service des études supérieures et de la réussite étudiante

Practical information for students admitted to INRS – Winter 2027

Information for all

Information for international students

As soon as you obtain your immigration documents

International students

Let INRS know the results of your procedures

- ✓ **CAQ attestation and study permit acceptance letter:** as soon as you receive one or the other, send a copy to the student records contact for your centre:
  - Armand-Frappier Santé Biotechnologie Centre: Etudes.AFSB@inrs.ca
  - Ruralités durables Centre : Etudes.CRD@inrs.ca
  - Énergie Matériaux Télécommunications Centre: Etudes.EMT@inrs.ca
  - Eau Terre Environnement Centre: ETE.Enseignement@inrs.ca
  - Urbanisation Culture Société Centre: UCS.etudes@inrs.ca

- ✓ **Mentorship**: A mentor can provide you with individual support, free of charge. Are you interested? See details on next page.

- ✓ **Arrival date and flight ticket**: as soon as your arrival plans have been finalized, notify your Student records contact and enclose your flight ticket.

Note:

We do not recommend that you come to Canada more than one month before the start of the semester for which you have been accepted. If you come to Canada earlier, there is a risk that you will be denied boarding or entry into the country, and the risk increases the earlier you arrive.

People who arrive earlier may have to justify their reasons to customs officers, as the permit obtained is for study purposes. Be prepared to demonstrate these reasons if required. It's especially important in this situation to bring with you all the evidence submitted with your application for a study permit, especially those showing your financial capacity.

Health and hospitalization insurance

For full information on health insurance coverage, see the INRS web page using your web browser translation function.

Students eligible under Québec public plan (RAMQ)

We strongly recommend that you request the official attestation of affiliation to your country's social security or health plan. You'll need it to subscribe to RAMQ once in Quebec. Take note that you will first need to register to INRS while in Quebec, and to request for an attestation of enrolment. Follows these essentials to apply for RAMQ correctly.

Students NOT eligible under Québec public plan (RAMQ)

You will be covered by a mandatory insurance group plan, Desjardins Insurance, but only from August 15. **If you arrive before that date, you need to take out private insurance to cover the days before.** Note that care related to pre-existing conditions may not be covered completely. It's your responsibility to get the information if this is the case. If you have any questions about insurance, please contact bbve.sesre@inrs.ca.

Medication and health diagnoses

If you have any health problems, whether physical or mental, it's your responsibility to be well prepared. Please read the following carefully. Also note that you can communicate confidentially with INRS professional resources at intervention.sesre@inrs.ca knowing that, in any cases, there will be no negative impact on your study project at INRS.

If you are taking medication, make sure you bring enough to last the duration of your stay, or enough to give you time to send your official medical paperwork (including diagnosis and prescription) to a local doctor, who will be able to confirm it. Please note that pharmacists are unable to renew prescriptions issued by health professionals outside Canada.

If you have health issues, we recommend that you undergo a pre-departure consultation in your home country, in order to receive a diagnosis, as well as appropriate treatment and recommendations.

In any case, if you need medical care in Quebec, start the process as soon as you arrive, as it may take longer than expected. Whether it's to confirm a diagnosis, obtain a prescription or get medical follow-up, you need to see a doctor. In cases where a psychiatrist is required, it is the doctor who must refer you, and the delay may be extended. Times can be much shorter in private clinics, but you'll need to be able to pay. In this case, it's a good idea to check with your insurer whether the care you need is covered: you can refer to the section on health and hospitalization insurance above.

Importance of being able to communicate in French

The official language of Quebec is French. Although many of your colleagues may be able to speak to you in English, and although INRS translates some resources to help newcomers, official communications from INRS and the Quebec authorities will be in French. The language is important if you want to integrate well into Quebec society in your day-to-day life. This is especially true if you're settling outside the Montreal area, where bilingualism may vary.

If you have a limited knowledge of French, INRS encourages you to begin classes as soon as possible. Francisation Québec offers courses for immigrants to Quebec. Once you've obtained your CAQ, courses are available in various cities abroad.

In addition, **INRS offers French language courses and coaching completely free of charge**. You will receive information about this when you will be at INRS.

Preparing to come to INRS

All

Confirm your arrival and enroll

If you haven't already done so, please confirm your arrival with your Student records contact (see email on the first page). As the beginning of the semester comes closer, be sure to enroll. If you expect to arrive after the semester has begun, make sure you have your research supervisor's approval and request a late arrival letter from the registrar's office, as you may be asked for it by border officers. Finally, register as soon as you arrive.

Note: International students must have obtained their study permit at the border and sent a copy to the student records contact in order to be able to enroll.

Mentorship

A team of student mentors will be ready to support you with your preparation, arrival and integration. The mentorship is offered by students like you, to help you, and this is totally free. You can benefit from mentorship in two ways:

1. By requesting a one-to-one pairing, which we recommend;
2. By contacting the on-call team (see program page).

The one-to-one pairing will take place after you have requested it at bbve.sesre@inrs.ca. If you are an international student, you must have your study permit acceptation. Pairing is based on preferred language of communication, background and previous experience, as well as program of study.

Housing

Finding a place to live in Quebec has proven difficult in recent years. The housing shortage means you need to take steps before you arrive and prepare a backup plan to avoid being caught unprepared.

Your responsibility

As a graduate student, INRS expects you to take responsibility for finding your own accommodation. Since some of the steps involved can be more complex at a distance, and given that you may not understand certain details, INRS offers you information and resources, as well as basic support to assist you.

Resources

You can visit our Finding an accommodation in Quebec webpage, which provides a wealth of information on best practices for renting accommodation and resources for finding accommodation near the INRS center where you will be studying.

If required, the INRS letter of financial support can be used to demonstrate your solvency to an eventual landlord. Failing anything better, short-term accommodation can be used to bridge the gap while you search for a more appropriate solution.

Accommodation measures for students with disabilities or limitations

INRS offers confidential support to students whose disability or limitation may hinder their full and equal access to academic participation. This may include, for example, a learning disability, a mental health disorder, a motor, organic, or sensory impairment, ADD/ADHD, or any other condition that impacts their academic success and university experience.

International students have full access to the accommodation measures available to the entire student community.

Requesting Support

If you anticipate needing specific accommodations during your studies, we encourage you to contact the learning support specialist from the Graduate and Student Success Service at intervention.sesre@inrs.ca, as early as possible, and ideally before your arrival at INRS. To allow for a needs assessment in relation to the requirements of your academic program, you will be asked to complete the Consent and Consultation Form.

This initial meeting aims to assess your needs, better understand how your situation may affect your academic journey, plan appropriate support, and determine the relevance of implementing accommodation measures.

Declaring a Disability or Limitation

Declaring a disability or limitation will have no impact on your academic progress, and all information provided is treated with strict confidentiality.

To learn more: Support for students with disabilities or limitations

For any questions, please write to: intervention.sesre@inrs.ca.

One-stop Student Resources Centre (GARE)



For any questions on INRS, on how to get started and on how to get here, you can write to gare@inrs.ca.

Welcome day and Integration training sessions

A few weeks before the beginning of the semester, you'll receive an invitation to your centre's welcome day. In addition, three integration training sessions are offered for you to get prepared for the challenges you will face, beginning mid-September. We strongly recommend that you take part in these activities to get your journey at INRS off to a good start.

Final preparation
International students

Credit cards, bank cards and money transfers

For information on this topic, please consult the Personal finance for newcomers to Québec interactive document.

Telephone and Internet

It's a good idea to have a SIM card that works in Canada. This can be very useful when you arrive. Ask your provider for details. For your first few days in Quebec, you should also know that public libraries and some cafés offer free Internet access.

On a more permanent basis, you should consider taking out a call and data package in Canada. The Immigrant Québec site provides information on this subject (in French). To find the package that's right for you, whether for phone, Internet or TV, you can compare the plans available in Québec on Planhub.

Going through customs

Review the list of documents you need to bring with you to enter Canada, as presented by the Canadian government. In particular, make sure you have the financial capacity evidence you submitted with your application.

When you receive your study permit, check that the information and numbers on it are correct. A mistake can have unpleasant consequences. Also check that your permit contains the condition allowing you to hold a job on or off campus: otherwise, you won't be able to work unless you go through a lengthy process to request a correction.

If you've applied for a co-op work permit, be sure to tell the border services officer so that he or she can issue it to you.

Apply for a SIN to be allowed to work

International students can obtain their Social Insurance Number (SIN) in two different ways:

1. **Online application**
   Applying online is EASY and QUICK.
   It is processed within 5 days, plus postage, and requires no trip to a Service Canada Centre.
   Here's the link to the online application: **Apply for a SIN online**.

2. **In person**
   - Make an appointment by filling out the **eService** request form
   - **Find a Service Canada Office**