

# Career college students rights and responsibilities

Know what to expect and what you need to do when signing up for programs offered by registered career colleges.

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Career colleges in Ontario are regulated under the *Ontario Career Colleges Act, 2005* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05p28>) which is administered by the Superintendent of Career Colleges.

This Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities is provided for your information and convenience only. It is not a legal document. Find detailed and specific information about the measures available to protect career college students in the *Ontario Career Colleges Act, 2005* and the regulations made under that Act.

## Before you enrol

Make sure the career college is registered and that the vocational program you are enrolling in is approved by the Superintendent of Career Colleges under the *Ontario Career Colleges Act, 2005*. You can find out at ServiceOntario.

**Search ServiceOntario** (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/search-career-college-ontario>)

**Note:**

If you enrol in an institution that has not been registered, or in a vocational program that has not been approved, the student protection measures available in the *Ontario Career Colleges Act, 2005* are not available to you.

## Communicate in writing

There may be times when you need to communicate important information to your career college, for example, to give notice that you want to withdraw from a program and receive a refund of fees or if you have a complaint against the college.

When you communicate formally with your career college you should do so in writing. The document should be delivered to an official at the college by email, fax, registered mail, or by personal delivery.

Keep copies of any written communications between you and the career college.

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## Documents you must receive

The career college is responsible for providing you with a copy of your **contract**, **transcript** and the **credential** earned after you graduate.

### Contract

When you enrol in a vocational program with a career college, you must sign and receive a written contract. The career college must give you a copy of the signed contract.

The written contract **must** contain:

- the approved program name
- the legal name of the career college
- your address, telephone number and, if applicable, e-mail address
- the program's start and expected end date
- the program's language of instruction
- the program's admission requirements
- a schedule of hours of instruction and the method of delivery for all scheduled hours

- the location of instruction, and if instruction is to be provided online, the website address
- the location of any additional training location and/or practicum and the website address if additional training and/or a practicum is provided online
- the fees payable by you set out in Canadian dollars, including an itemized list of fees for any products or services, including books, equipment, administration fees (such as processing applications, or conducting admissions tests)
- a payment schedule indicating the time and amount of each payment

The contract must also include a place for you to acknowledge that you have received a copy of this Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities issued by the Superintendent of Career Colleges and the college's:

- fee refund policy
- student complaint procedure
- sexual violence policy
- student expulsion policy

and, if required by a superintendent's policy directive:

- a program disclaimer

#### **Career college administrators:**

Print a copy of this Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities and attach it to the student's contract you keep on file. The student must also acknowledge receiving this information.

#### **Consent section**

The written contract must also have a consent section for the collection and use of your private information and the following statements, **in bold**, that:

- the contract is subject to the *Ontario Career Colleges Act, 2005* and the regulations made under the act

- the career college does not guarantee employment for any student who successfully completes a vocational program offered by the college
- you are entitled to a copy of the signed contract immediately after it is signed

**Note:**

If you notice that your contract does not have the elements listed above, notify the career college as soon as possible or contact the ministry:

[pcc@ontario.ca](mailto:pcc@ontario.ca) (<mailto:pcc@ontario.ca>)

**Transcript**

If you have not received a copy of your transcript within 60 days of ending your studies, you should contact the career college to request a copy. It is recommended that you also make and keep a digital record of the transcript when you complete or leave your program for your own records.

You also have the right to access your transcript for 25 years after you complete or leave the career college.

If the career college closes, you will be able to access your transcript from an approved third-party transcript issuer (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/career-college-transcripts>). We suggest that you ask your college for the name of the third-party issuer when you complete or leave your program.

**Credential**

A career college that issues credentials must issue you any applicable credential (diploma or certificate) within 60 days of successfully completing a program. The college does not have to issue your credential until you have paid your fees in full although you are always entitled to a copy of your transcript.

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## Concerns and complaints

**Student complaint procedure**

Every career college must have a student complaint procedure to resolve complaints raised by a student. Under the *Ontario Career Colleges Act, 2005* and its regulations, the Superintendent of Career Colleges can consider a student's **complaint only after**:

- the student has followed the college's student complaint procedure
- has complained directly to the college
- is not satisfied with the outcome

If you request the Superintendent of Career Colleges to review your concern or complaint submit it using the ministry's Program Approval and Registration Information System (<https://www.pcc.tcu.gov.on.ca/PARISExtWeb/public/login.xhtml>) (PARIS.) At your first visit, you will be asked to create a student account (<https://www.pcc.tcu.gov.on.ca/PARISExtWeb/public/register.xhtml>) .

Your complaint or concern can be tracked easily and addressed directly through your account. You may also request a review of your complaint by email:

[pcc@ontario.ca](mailto:pcc@ontario.ca) (<mailto:pcc@ontario.ca>)

Once you submit your complaint and any supporting documents, the superintendent or a delegate will review the documents and advise you on next steps.

You can log-in to your PARIS account  
(<https://www.pcc.tcu.gov.on.ca/PARISExtWeb/public/login.xhtml>) at any time.

### **Sexual violence policy and accommodation**

All career colleges must have a stand-alone policy to address sexual violence involving students. In addition, all career colleges must, without fee, appropriately accommodate the needs of students affected by sexual violence.

The sexual violence policy must be included in every enrolment contract between a student and a career college. It must also be published on each career college's website or, where the career college does not have a website, posted in a conspicuous location at each campus.

## Sale of students' goods and services

If you make goods or provide services as part of the requirements to complete your program, a career college can:

- sell these goods
- provide these services to the public
- arrange for the delivery of these services to the public

The college cannot profit from these sales. It can only charge an amount that allows the college to recover its costs.

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## Fee collection

A career college is only allowed to:

- charge or collect fees for a program in Canadian dollars
- charge or collect compulsory fees that are equal to or less than the fees approved by the Superintendent of Career Colleges and published on ServiceOntario (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/search-career-college-ontario>)
- charge or collect optional fees for a program if they are the authorized by the superintendent

Before a contract is signed, a career college can charge a fee up to \$500 to process your application and do assessments or admissions tests. These fees must be included in your contract at the time you sign it.

### Itemized list of fees

Career colleges must provide an itemized list of all fees charged to students, expressed in Canadian dollars to the superintendent. This includes:

- tuition fees
- cost of books

- any administrative charges
- any other compulsory or optional fees

The superintendent publishes the fees (except optional fees) on ServiceOntario (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/search-career-college-ontario>) .

### Unpublished or inaccurate fees

If a career college charges or collects any compulsory fee that is not published on ServiceOntario (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/search-career-college-ontario>) or that is higher than what is published, you are entitled to a full refund of the unpublished fee or the difference in amount between what is published and what was collected. The same applies if the college charges or collects any optional fee that is not published.

#### Note:

A career college cannot require you to obtain a product or service from a particular person or vendor as a condition of admission into the program. There may be required products or equipment for the training (for example, a laptop), but you are free to purchase those products or equipment anywhere you wish.

### Receipts

A career college is required to issue you a receipt every time you pay a fee. You should keep all receipts for your own records.

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## Refunds

A career college is required to issue a fee refund within 30 days. You should check if the career college specifies the timeframe of their refunds in the refund policy attached to your contract. There is also a cooling-off period of 2 days after signing the contract.

Only the compulsory program fees published on ServiceOntario (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/search-career-college-ontario>) or optional program fees approved by the superintendent are covered by the refund policy. An optional program fee might be

the cost of a field trip or conference that is related to your studies but not required content of the program.

To get a refund on books or equipment you received from the college under a contract you must return them:

- in the same state they were in when supplied to you
- within 10 days of withdrawing

All refunds must be in Canadian dollars.

The college **cannot** deduct money from a refund you are entitled to for a vocational program if you owe money:

- to the career college for other services
- for other non-vocational programs offered by the college

The same refund policy applies when you withdraw from a program or are expelled, as long as you are expelled in accordance with the college's expulsion policy or sexual violence policy.

### Cooling-off period

You can cancel a contract for the provision of a vocational program within 2 days of signing it if you provide written notice to the career college. It is important to keep a copy of your written notice. You are entitled to a full refund of fees paid for the program, including any application fee, from the college.

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## Types of refunds

### Full refund

In the following circumstances, you can cancel a contract and make a written request for a full refund.

- the career college collects any fees for the program before the college is registered or before the program is approved under the *Ontario Career Colleges Act, 2005*



- you are expelled from the career college in a manner or for reasons outside of the college's expulsion policy or sexual violence policy
- the career college collects more than 20% of the total fees for the program up to \$500 before signing a contract with you
- a total of more than 10% of the program is taught by unqualified instructors
- the contract does not include all the mandatory terms required (refer to the "Contract" section)
- the career college, while still operating, discontinues the program before you can complete the program
- you do not receive the required written mid-point evaluation from the career college
- the program approval is revoked by the Superintendent of Career Colleges

In addition, you also may seek a full refund if a career college or its representative makes untrue statements for the purposes of convincing you to enrol in the program and the statements constitute a fundamental breach of the contract. The categories of inappropriate statements include:

- a false or misleading statement
- a statement that guarantees admission to or successful completion of the program or employment after completing the program
- a statement that guarantees the right to enter Canada or receive a visa or work permit

It is best to make a request for a full refund as soon as you find out about the issue or it may be more difficult to support your claim.

### Full refund minus service fee

You are entitled to a refund of fees paid for a program minus a service fee if you:

- withdraw from the program more than 2 days after signing a contract and **before** the program begins
- or**
- do not meet the program's admission requirements when the program starts

The service fee can be 20% of all vocational program fees or \$500, whichever is less.

## **Partial refund**

If you withdraw from a program after the program begins, you may be entitled to a refund of fees paid for the program, depending on how much of the program a career college has delivered.

In most cases, the career college can keep the service fee plus the fees for the portion of the program delivered.

However, if the career college cancels the contract for the program because you did not attend the first 14 days, the career college can only keep the service fee.

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## **International students**

If you are attending or planning to attend a career college under a student visa, some special rules apply.

### **Fee collection**

You should make sure that you are familiar with the rules mentioned in the “Fee Collection” section of this page.

A career college is allowed to charge international student fees in relation to a vocational program but these fees cannot be higher than what is published on ServiceOntario (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/search-career-college-ontario>) .

### **Fee refund**

You can cancel a contract with a career college or withdraw from a program for any reason. The same refund policy for domestic students also applies to you.

### **International students unable to get a student visa**

A rule applies to an international student unable to obtain a student visa to enter Canada. If you deliver a written notice of this fact to a career college before half of the instruction hours have passed, you are entitled to a full refund minus only the service fee.

## Insurance

Every career college is required to have insurance in case you have an accident in class or while on an offsite practicum. If you are injured while attending a career college, you should immediately inform the relevant official at the college.

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## Mid-point evaluation

If you enrol in a program that is 12 months or shorter or is delivered over an undefined period of time (for example, a commercial flight program), a career college is required to provide you with the result of at least one evaluation of your progress **before** you complete half of the instruction hours of the program.

If your program is expected to run longer than 12 months, for each 12 month period, the college is required to provide the result of at least one evaluation **before** you complete half the instruction hours planned for each period.

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## Qualified instructors

You are entitled to be taught by an instructor who has the required experience (academic, practical and/or teaching) outlined in the *Ontario Career Colleges Act, 2005*. Some programs must also meet industry standards for instructors. Career colleges must follow the Act and program standards when they hire teaching staff.

On a temporary basis, a career college is allowed to use a substitute instructor who does not meet all these requirements. However, the college is not allowed to use a substitute instructor to teach a total of **more than 10%** of a program.

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## Closure

Certain rules apply when a career college closes. If your college closes before you finish your program, efforts will be made to give you an opportunity to complete your program at another career college or institution.

The Training Completion Assurance Fund (TCAF) (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/career-college-closures>) exists to help eligible students in this situation. Instead of participating in training completion, or if no training completion is available, you may receive a refund of fees paid for the portion of the program that has not been delivered.

Read more about what you need to do in the event of a career college closure (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/career-college-closures>) .

You can also contact the ministry by email:

TCAF-PCC@ontario.ca (<mailto:TCAF-PCC@ontario.ca>)

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## Contact

If you have questions about the *Ontario Career Colleges Act, 2005* and regulations, contact:

Career Colleges Branch  
Ministry of Colleges and Universities  
77 Wellesley Street West, Box 977  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1N3

Tel: 416-314-0500

Toll-free: 1-866-330-3395

[pcc@ontario.ca](mailto:pcc@ontario.ca) (<mailto:pcc@ontario.ca>)

Fax: 416-314-0499

### Related

Career colleges (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/private-career-colleges>)

Find registered colleges through ServiceOntario's Career College Search Service  
(<https://www.ontario.ca/page/search-career-college-ontario>)

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