



Local Immigration Partnership  
Partenariat local pour l'immigration  
LANARK & RENFREW



# Navigating Canadian Colleges - A Guide for Learners

# Table of Contents



03 What are Hofstede insights?

05 Canada Cultural Dimensions Overview

07 Examples of How Cultural Aspects Might Appear in the Classroom

08 What You May Experience in Your Classroom

09 Brief Overview Canadian Values and Cultural Norms

10 Addressing Challenges and Rights





**Individualism vs. Collectivism (IDV):** This dimension refers to the degree to which individuals in a society prioritize their interests over the interests of the group. Individualistic cultures emphasize personal freedom, autonomy, and individual achievement, whereas collectivistic cultures emphasize group harmony, cooperation, and loyalty.

**Motivation Towards Achievement and Success (Decisive vs Consensus-Orientated):** This dimension compares societies driven by competition and success with societies that place value in caring for others and quality of life. Decisive cultures emphasize competition, assertiveness, and material success, while consensus-orientated cultures prioritize cooperation, quality of life, and caring for others.

[www.hofstede-insights.com](http://www.hofstede-insights.com)



## What are Hofstede insights?



Hofstede Insights refers to the cultural dimensions framework developed by Geert Hofstede, a Dutch social psychologist, in the 1970s and expanded upon in subsequent years. Hofstede conducted one of the most comprehensive studies of how culture influences workplace values and behaviours across different countries. His research led to the identification of several cultural dimensions that can be used to compare and contrast cultures. These dimensions provide insights into how cultures differ regarding their values, beliefs, and behaviours.

**Power Distance Index (PDI):** This dimension reflects the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept and expect power to be distributed unequally. In high power distance cultures, there is a greater acceptance of hierarchical structures and authority, whereas, in low power distance cultures, there is a preference for equality and a more egalitarian society.





It's essential to recognize that cultures are intricate and fluid, and individuals within a culture can display diversities and may not strictly adhere to the general tendencies indicated by these dimensions.

**Each person is unique.  
Interact with them  
accordingly.**



**Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI):** This dimension measures how individuals in a society feel threatened by ambiguous situations and try to avoid them. Cultures with high uncertainty avoidance tend to have a strong need for rules, structure, and certainty. In contrast, cultures with low uncertainty avoidance are more open to change, risk-taking, and ambiguity.

**Long-Term Orientation vs. Short-Term Orientation (LTO):** This dimension reflects the degree to which a culture values long-term virtues, such as persistence, thrift, and perseverance, versus short-term virtues, such as immediate gratification and tradition.

**Indulgence vs. Restraint (IND):** This dimension describes the extent to which a society allows gratification of basic human desires related to enjoying life and having fun versus suppressing such desires through strict social norms.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework has been widely used in cross-cultural research and management studies to understand cultural differences, improve intercultural communication, and guide multinational organizations in adapting their strategies to different cultural contexts.

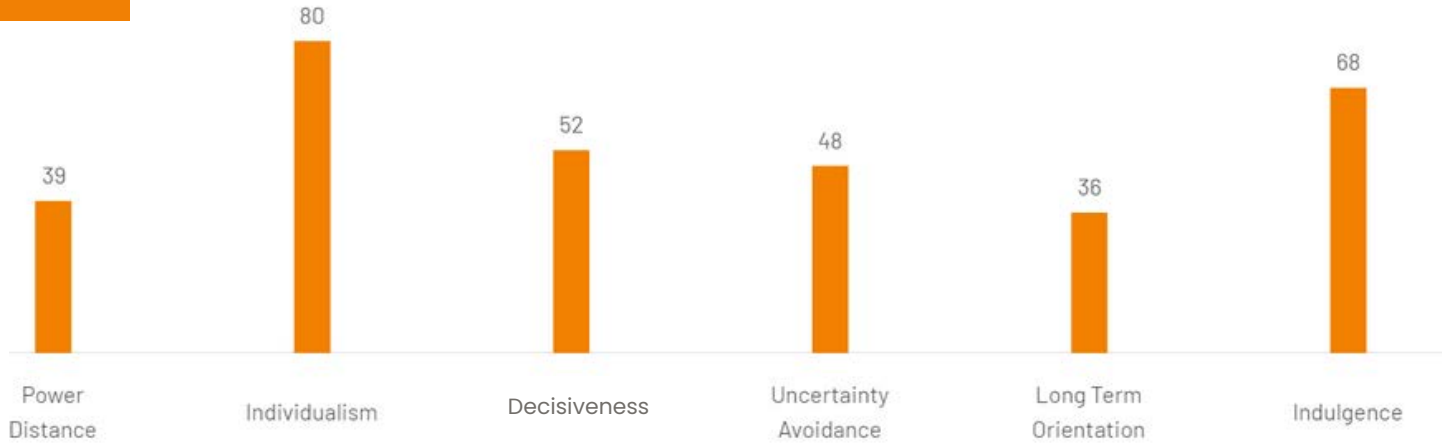
# Canada – Country



National language: English and French  
Population: 38.25 million  
Capital city: Ottawa



## Canada



## POWER DISTANCE: 39

With a score of 39 on this dimension, Canadian culture is marked by interdependence among its inhabitants, and there is value placed on egalitarianism.

This is also reflected by the lack of overt status and/or class distinctions in society. Typical of other cultures with a low score on this dimension, Canadian organizations' hierarchy is established for convenience, superiors are always accessible, and managers rely on individual employees and teams for their expertise.

It is customary for managers and staff members to consult one another and to share information freely.

## INDIVIDUALISM: 80

Canada scores 80 on this dimension (its highest dimension) and can be characterized as an Individualist culture.

Similar to its American neighbour to the south, this translates into a loosely-knit society in which the expectation is that people look after themselves and their immediate families.

Similarly, in the business world, employees are expected to be self-reliant and display initiative. Also, within the exchange-based world of work, hiring and promotion decisions are based on merit or evidence of what one has done or can do.

**Communication:** Canadians value clear and concise communication, avoiding overly formal language and unnecessary jargon. While politeness and respect are important, communication is generally more informal and egalitarian.

**Body Language:** In Canadian culture, body language is relatively restrained compared to more emotionally expressive cultures. Canadians maintain personal space during conversations, respecting the comfort zone of others.

**Social Interactions:** People interact as equals regardless of their positions. This encourages open discussions and collaboration, even between superiors and subordinates. Canadians generally respect diverse opinions and cultural backgrounds, promoting inclusivity and multiculturalism. Friendliness, approachability, politeness and a sense of humour are valued traits that help to establish rapport and build relationships.



## UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE: 48

The Canadian score on this dimension is 48, and Canadian culture is more “uncertainty accepting.” This indicates the easy acceptance of new ideas, innovative products, and a willingness to try something new or different, whether it pertains to technology, business practices, or consumer products. Canadians also tolerate ideas or opinions from anyone and allow the freedom of expression.

At the same time, Canadian culture is not rules-oriented, and Canadians tend to be less emotionally expressive than cultures scoring higher on this dimension.

## INDULGENCE: 68

The high score of 68 in this dimension means that Canadian culture is classified as Indulgent. People in societies classified by a high score in Indulgence generally exhibit a willingness to realize their impulses and desires about enjoying life and having fun. They possess a positive attitude and tend towards optimism. In addition, they place a higher degree of importance on leisure time, act as they please and spend money as they wish.

While the above descriptions apply to Canadian culture overall, one will likely find subtle differences between anglophone Canadians and francophone Canadians (the province of Quebec.) compared with their anglophone counterparts. French Canadians can be more formal, hierarchical, moderately relationship-focused, and emotionally expressive. The scores for Quebec are as follows: Power Distance 54; Individuality 73; Decisiveness 45; Uncertainty Avoidance 60.

## LONG-TERM ORIENTATION: 36

Canada scores 36 in this dimension, marking it as a normative society. People in such societies have a strong concern with establishing the absolute Truth; they are normative in their thinking.

They exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results.



## Examples of how these cultural aspects might appear in the classroom:

- **Open and Inclusive Communication:** The Canadian professor may encourage learners to share their perspectives and experiences in class discussions. They may create an environment where students feel comfortable expressing their opinions, even if they differ from the majority.
- **Respect for Personal Space:** The professor may respect students' personal space during one-on-one interactions. They may maintain an appropriate distance while speaking with students, allowing them to feel at ease and appreciated. This distance is about an arm's length.
- **Directness and Politeness:** When providing feedback on assignments, the professor may offer constructive criticism directly, focusing on areas for improvement. They may do so with a polite and encouraging tone to ensure students understand the feedback and feel motivated to make necessary changes.
- **Building Relationships:** The Canadian professor may organize casual meet-and-greet sessions outside of class hours, creating opportunities for learners to connect with the professor. This helps foster a sense of belonging and camaraderie among the diverse student body.
- **Embracing Diversity:** During cultural events or themed lessons, the professor may encourage students to share their cultural traditions and customs. They may create a classroom environment where students learn about each other's backgrounds and develop a deeper understanding of cultural diversity.
- **Balancing Academics and Social Life:** The professor may emphasize the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between academics and social activities. They may suggest local events, clubs, or activities where learners can engage in leisure and connect outside class.
- **Embracing Optimism and Open-Mindedness:** The professor may encourage students to explore different viewpoints and challenge their assumptions. They might assign projects that require students to research topics from various angles, fostering an atmosphere of open-mindedness and critical thinking.
- **Flexibility and Accommodation:** The Canadian professor may understand that learners have different learning styles and educational backgrounds. They encourage students to ask questions and seek clarification, fostering an environment where everyone feels supported in their learning journey.

Canadian professors should demonstrate cultural awareness and adaptability by creating a classroom environment that values students' unique perspectives, encourages open dialogue, and supports academic and personal growth.





## Here is what may be expected of you in the classroom:

- **Active Participation:** Canadian college professors may expect learners to actively participate in class discussions, share their opinions, and ask questions. Engaging in classroom activities demonstrates your interest in the subject matter and your willingness to contribute to the learning environment.
- **Independent Learning:** While professors are there to guide and support, they also expect learners to take the initiative in their studies. This includes completing assignments on time, conducting independent research, and seeking help.
- **Critical Thinking:** Canadian education strongly emphasizes critical thinking and analysis. Professors expect learners to analyze information, question assumptions, and provide well-reasoned arguments in assignments and discussions.
- **Respect for Academic Integrity:** Canadian colleges have strict plagiarism and academic honesty policies. Professors expect learners to cite sources correctly and produce original work. Understanding and adhering to these rules is crucial.
- **Effective Communication:** Clear and effective communication skills, both written and oral, are highly valued. Professors may expect learners to communicate their ideas coherently and professionally in assignments, presentations, and interactions.
- **Respect for Diversity:** Given the multicultural nature of Canadian classrooms, professors expect learners to respect and appreciate the diverse perspectives of their peers. Creating a harmonious learning environment is essential.
- **Time Management:** Professors anticipate that learners will manage their time effectively to balance their academic responsibilities with other commitments. Meeting deadlines and prioritizing tasks demonstrate strong time management skills.
- **Willingness to Seek Help:** If learners encounter challenges, professors expect them to seek help when needed. This could involve attending office hours, seeking clarification, or seeking student support services.



- **Adaptation to Different Teaching Styles:** Teaching methods can vary, and professors might have different approaches. Learners may be expected to adapt and be open to various instructional methods to enhance their learning experience.
- **Professionalism:** Professors expect learners to approach their studies with professionalism. This includes being punctual, respectful towards peers and instructors, and actively contributing to a positive classroom environment.
- **Engagement with Campus Life:** Besides academic expectations, professors often encourage learners to engage in extracurricular activities, join clubs, and attend campus events. This helps students integrate into the college community and enjoy a well-rounded experience.

**Remember that professors are there to support your learning journey. If you have questions or uncertainties about their expectations, please communicate with them for clarification and guidance.**





# Brief overview: Canadian Values and Cultural Norms

- **Diversity and Inclusivity:** Canada is celebrated for its cultural diversity and inclusivity. People from various backgrounds coexist harmoniously, and different cultures and traditions are respected and embraced.
- **Politeness and Respect:** Canadian society highly values politeness and respect. Common courtesies like saying "please" and "thank you" are widely observed, and people treat each other with consideration.
- **Tolerance and Open-Mindedness:** Canadians are known for their open-mindedness and willingness to embrace differing viewpoints. Tolerance for diversity in opinions, beliefs, and lifestyles is an important cultural norm.
- **Equality and Fairness:** Equality is a core value in Canada. People are treated fairly, regardless of background, gender, sexuality, or identity. Discrimination is widely condemned.
- **Community Engagement:** Community involvement is encouraged in Canada. Many Canadians engage in volunteer work and contribute to the well-being of their communities.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Caring for the environment is a significant value. Canadians often prioritize sustainability and nature conservation.
- **Work-Life Balance:** A healthy work-life balance is emphasized, allowing individuals to dedicate time to personal interests and relationships.
- **Direct Communication:** Canadians generally value direct and clear communication. Expressing opinions openly, yet respectfully, is common in both professional and social settings.
- **Freedom of Expression:** Freedom of speech and expression are fundamental rights in Canada, allowing people to share their thoughts and ideas openly.
- **Cultural Appreciation:** Canadians take pride in their cultural heritage and enjoy celebrating it through festivals, art, music, and cuisine.



## Addressing Challenges and Rights

In addition to the values and cultural norms that are prevalent in Canada, it's important to be aware that, like any society, there can be instances of negative attitudes, including racism.

While these instances do not represent the entire community, it's crucial to equip learners with the knowledge and resources to navigate such challenges.

## Encountering Racism and Discrimination

If you encounter racism or discrimination in your new community, know you are not alone. The college is committed to fostering an inclusive and respectful student environment.

If you experience any form of discrimination, you are encouraged to reach out to your professor, student support services, or any employees of Algonquin College.

The college's policies and procedures explicitly condemn discrimination and outline the steps that can be taken to address any incidents.

Please read more about our commitment to inclusion at [www.algonquincollege.com/diversity](http://www.algonquincollege.com/diversity).

## Know Your Rights

As an international student studying in Canada, you have rights protected under Canadian law. These rights include protection from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, etc.

It's important to familiarize yourself with your rights to ensure you are treated fairly and equitably. The college is committed to upholding these rights and fostering an environment that respects the dignity of every individual.

For more information, please visit [www.algonquincollege.com/international/orientation/student-resources](http://www.algonquincollege.com/international/orientation/student-resources).



# Hofstede Insights



The cultural dimension information presented in this document has been sourced from Hofstede Insights.

Local Immigration Partnership - Lanark & Renfrew acknowledges using Hofstede Insights' research and data to provide insights into cultural dimensions. The content derived from Hofstede Insights is intended to enhance understanding and awareness of cultural differences and should only be used for informational purposes.

Local Immigration Partnership - Lanark & Renfrew does not claim ownership of the original data and research conducted by Hofstede Insights. Please take a look at the official Hofstede Insights resources and publications for more detailed and comprehensive information about cultural dimensions.

