

Most people in Canada attach much importance to punctuality. It is customary for invitations to be answered promptly, and for appointments to be kept. If you have promised to go to a home or to meet someone, you should do so at the agreed time, unless you send word that you cannot keep your appointment.

After receiving hospitality, it will be appreciated if you phone or send a "thank-you" note to your host or hostess. The Eastern custom of taking a gift when visiting a home for the first time is very gracious, but it is not necessary and could become expensive. It is quite proper to accept an invitation from someone you have never met if this has been arranged by a mutual acquaintance. Although the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays have no significance for many overseas students, you should not feel that you are invading a family circle when invited to spend the holiday with friends. Guests in Canadian homes often offer to help with the dishes and overnight guests make their own beds.

In minor things it is good to conform to the customs of the people among whom you are living, but it is important to keep your own standard of values. For instance, if religious beliefs or personal preferences prevent you from eating certain foods or from drinking alcoholic beverages, you should not be embarrassed to explain this to your hostess.

In Canada relations between the sexes are quite informal. This freedom may sometimes be misinterpreted. For instance, if a man and woman share a seat on a train or bus they may talk with each other, but this should not be taken to indicate that either wishes to continue the chance acquaintance. Similarly, on campus, when men and women invite each other to join in various social activities, it need not imply sustained interest.

Most Canadians believe in equality between the sexes, but forms of courtesy in this country have traditionally given the women the preference. A woman goes through a door first, before the man who is escorting her. When a man and woman walk together, the man walks on the side nearest the street. A man usually rises when a woman enters a room, and takes off his hat when greeting women, and in homes.

ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING SERVICES TO STUDENTS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

At almost all universities and colleges, certain faculty members are assigned to offer advice and help to students from other countries. In some cases there may be a foreign-students adviser, in others the student personnel officer, university counselling officer or university chaplain is responsible for your welfare. You should find out who holds this position as soon as possible after your arrival and arrange to visit him. You will find that he, and other university officials, will be anxious to welcome and to help you.