

Why an Ontario Photo ID Was a Game Changer for Me as an International Student

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When I first moved to Canada, I didn't know how much not having a government-issued ID would impact my experience. I had my passport, but carrying it everywhere felt (and still feels) risky and impractical. However, little did I know how often I'd run into situations where having a simple piece of government ID would make things easier for me. For example, verifying my identity for CRA (Canada Revenue Agency) to set up my tax return account, which took over a month (that is a topic for another blog), or something as simple as showing an ID to get into a club with friends.

That's when I found out about the [Ontario Photo Card](#). This is a government-issued ID for people who reside in Ontario and don't have a driver's license. Honestly, it's been one of the most useful things I've done since arriving here.

The process was way easier than I expected:

- I booked an appointment online through the official [ServiceOntario](#) website. You can also book an appointment by phone.
- On the day of the appointment, I arrived about 15 minutes early, paid the \$35 + tax fee (which covers the photo too), and they took my picture right there.
- They told me it could take up to 4 weeks for the card to arrive by mail — but I got mine in just a week and a half!

Now I take it everywhere. It's convenient, safe, and I don't have to risk losing my passport just to prove my age or identity.

As an international student at Seneca, I highly recommend you get one as soon as possible. Trust me, if you're opening a bank account, verifying your identity for tax stuff, or just wanting to enjoy a night out with friends, having the Ontario Photo Card will save you a ton of stress.

(Written by Oscar Andres Guerrero Manjarrez)

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