

# Protecting Yourself from Common Scams Targeting International Students

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International students arriving in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) bring excitement, ambition, and hope for a better future. Unfortunately, this also makes them attractive targets for scammers who prey on unfamiliarity with local systems. Understanding the most common fraud schemes can help students stay safe.

One growing issue is **immigration-related scams**, where fraudsters pose as officials from agencies such as immigration departments or law enforcement. These individuals often use spoofed phone numbers and fake documents to threaten students with deportation unless they pay immediate “fees” or provide personal information. Reports show that scammers frequently impersonate government officers, demanding urgent payments for alleged visa violations or unpaid taxes—tactics explicitly identified in warnings issued to international students.

Fraudsters will often have a lot of personal information and scare students into believing they are in trouble. NEVER provide any information to ANYONE over the phone, check with the [CRA](#) (Canada Revenue Agency) or the Bank for confirmation of any issues.

Another major threat involves **fraudulent admission or study permit schemes**. Organized networks have created fake universities, falsified admission letters, and imitation websites that mirror real institutions. In recent years, hundreds of students have been deceived with forged documents, leading to financial loss and even threats to their immigration status.

Students may also encounter **money-moving schemes**, where they are asked to transfer money on behalf of someone else—often unknowingly participating in criminal activity. These scams commonly occur through online messages, job offers, or unsolicited communication, and can have serious legal consequences.

To stay protected, students should:

- Avoid sharing personal information; DO NOT give ANY information over the phone. Go to your bank branch and ask a staff member directly for support.
- Verify all official communication through trusted channels; Canadian banks or the Canada Revenue Agency do not TEXT, EMAIL or PHONE clients for information. All communication is via mail. If you are suspicious, simply hang up and go to the bank and speak to someone.
- Remain cautious of unsolicited offers.
- If it sounds too good to be true, IT IS

When in doubt, seek help from trusted [Seneca](#) staff or [The Service Hub](#).

Staying informed is your best defence.

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