

## **Definition Of A Senior / Elder / Older Person As It Pertains To This Course**

According to the Canadian Oxford Dictionary, a senior citizen is "an elderly person, especially a person over 65."

Most government benefits and programs for elders are available only to people who are 65 years of age or older.

In some cases, limited benefits may be available as early as age 60. And many businesses offer special programs, services and pricing to people as young as 50. So, at what age does one officially become an elder?

It is largely a matter of ongoing debate, and most of the current definitions of elder can easily be contested. Many of the names given to this group are also being rejected, challenged and changed. Even the Government of Canada is systematically changing the term "senior" to "older adult."

Some would argue that increases in life expectancy would justify reserving the term elder for individuals who are much older than 65 (just as 50 is the new 40, 75 may be the new 65). Others, meanwhile, would argue that a steady decline in the average age of retirement would justify a move in the other direction.

It is also important to remember that "elder" is a very broad term. It should go without saying that the issues, concerns and circumstances of a 65-year-old are dramatically different from those of an 85 or 90-year-old.

The Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies considers anyone who is 55 years of age, or older, to be an elder. By this definition there were 13.2 million elders in Canada in 2024, representing roughly 32.4% of the total population.

According to Statistics Canada's population projections, in less than 10 years (2031) over a third of Canada's population will be 55 years of age or older.