

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



RECOMMENDATION:

Amend the Canadian Experience Class (Express Entry) program so international students can count part-time employment experience while they are full-time students towards their permanent residency.

International students make up a significant portion of the workforce all while managing the challenges of being a student. Currently, part-time and full-time work carried out while being a full-time student cannot count toward the skilled work experience requirement for permanent residency. According to the International Education Strategy, improving paths to permanent residency in Canada can foster sustainable growth of Canada's international education sector and have equitable benefits across the country (Global Affairs Canada, 2019)⁶. The federal government can expand the Canadian education sector by amending the Canadian Experience Class (Express Entry) program.

It is currently reported that within 10 years of international students receiving their first study permit, 20% to 27% become permanent residents (Hou, 2021)⁷. Additionally, of the 58% of international students who filed a tax return in Canada after graduation, approximately 8 in 10 remained in their province of study one year after graduation. This rate falls to about 7 in 10 in the five years following graduation. Most international students receive their permanent residency 10 years after graduating from post-secondary institutions and the rate of foreign talent retention falls after graduation (Hou, 2021)⁸. It is therefore essential that the Canadian Experience Class (Express Entry) program be amended to decrease extended processes for permanent residency in Canada to allow for positive contributions to Canada's economy.

CITATIONS:

Global Affairs Canada. "Canada's International Education Strategy (2019-2024)." GAC, EduCanada, 19 Oct. 2020, www.international.gc.ca/education/strategy-2019-2024-strategie.aspx?lang=eng. (6)

Hou, Feng, et al. International Students as a Source of Labour Supply: Retention in Their Province of Study, Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, 23 June 2021, www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2021006/article/00003-eng.htm. (7, 8)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the federal government make the one-year pilot program permanent by **indefinitely lifting the 20-hour work cap for international students.**

International students make up a significant portion of the Canadian economy and contribute as much as \$22.3 billion each year (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2022)⁹. International graduates also play a crucial role in the Canadian economy by supporting future economic growth and supporting the aging population. However, they are faced with barriers and challenges with employment and the number of hours that they can work. The pilot project that temporarily lifted the 20-hour cap has improved the lives of international students and the economy. The financial barriers and challenges to obtaining permanent residency inhibit international student retention and workforce transition in Canada. The rising costs of international tuition, concerns about traveling to pursue education, and a shrinking job market make it more difficult for international students to settle in Canada after they have finished their degrees. Almost 50% of all international students surveyed in 2015 worked full- or part-time to finance their studies (Frenette, 2019)¹⁰. Being unable to count this work experience towards permanent residency results in unnecessarily lengthening academic careers and applications for permanent residency in Canada. Similarly, studies found that higher levels of earnings from employment for international students while studying or after graduation increased the likelihood of permanent residency (Choi, 2021)¹¹. By permanently lifting the 20-hour work cap for international students, the federal government can match the interests and motivations of international students who desire to stay permanently in Canada. This change would also make it easier for international students to meet the qualification requirements for permanent residency and mitigate the financial barriers to attending post-secondary institutions. Additionally, staff shortages within healthcare, STEM, trades, and skills can be resolved with the elimination of the 20-hour cap and the leveraging and expansion of the international student pool by allowing international students to further participate in the workforce.

CITATIONS:

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. "Government of Canada." Canada.Ca, Gouvernement du Canada, 15 June 2022, www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/committees/cimm-mar-03-2022/international-students.html.

Frenette, Marc, et al. The Postsecondary Experience and Early Labour Market Outcomes of International Study Permit Holders, Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, 20 Sept. 2019, www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2019019-eng.htm.

Choi, Youjin, et al. International Students as a Source of Labour Supply: Transition to Permanent Residency, Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, 23 June 2021, www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2021006/article/00002-eng.htm.

RECOMMENDATION:

The federal government should **renew the Building on Success: International Education Strategy** in accordance with the expected increase of international students, to ensure that funding levels **remain in line with inflation**.

As noted in the message from the Minister of International Trade Diversification in the Building on Success: International Education Strategy (2019-2024), “in 2018, international students in Canada contributed an estimated \$21.6 billion to Canada’s GDP and supported almost 170,000 jobs for Canada’s middle class” (Canada’s International Education Strategy, 2020)¹². International students represent a growing proportion of Canadian post-secondary students and face growing pressures both within the post-secondary sector and while they work in Canada. The Building on Success: International Education Strategy that encourages the inbound and outbound mobility of international and Canadian students will be sunset in 2024. Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) reported that. As of December 2019 there were approximately 642,480 international students across Canada at all levels. An internal policy document from the IRCC forecasted that Canada will reach an intake of 949,000 international students by the end of 2023 and just over a million in 2024 (Hornstein, 2023). Future increases are projected at up to 1.28 million in 2026 and 1.4 million in 2027 (Hornstein, 2023)¹³. UCRU recommends that the budget of the Building on Success: International Education Strategy (2019-2024) be renewed to reflect the growing numbers of international students in Canada to ensure that funding levels remain in line with inflation, to encourage study and work abroad opportunities, to increase support to the Canadian education sector, and most importantly to increase levels of support for international students coming to Canada.

CITATIONS:

“Canada’s International Education Strategy (2019-2024).” GAC, Government of Canada, 19 Oct. 2020, www.international.gc.ca/education/strategy-2019-2024-strategie.aspx?lang=eng.

Hornstein, Julia. “How Canada’s 2024 Study Permit Costs Compare to Other Popular Study Destinations.” CIC News, Canada Immigration News, 21 Dec. 2023, www.cicnews.com/2023/12/how-canadas-2024-study-permit-costs-compare-to-other-popular-study-destinations-1242001.html#gs.3qvd51.