

Stakeholder Summary

The average international student is male and attends college in the GTA according to new report

A new report published by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) finds that Ontario is the primary destination for international students coming to Canada. The report documents the average international student profile, the rise in international student numbers as well as student pathways, transitions from study to work visas and experiences in the labour market.

Ontario-bound international students tend to be male and attend colleges over universities, with over 50% of new entrants attending a college in 2012. While the number of international students attending universities has also risen, the number of international students pursuing a college education has grown more rapidly.

Project description

International Students in Ontario's Postsecondary Education System, 2000-2012: An evaluation of changing policies, populations and labour market entry processes explores how many international students came to Ontario between 2000-2012, their socioeconomic status and outcomes after finishing their studies, as well as the major provincial and federal policy changes that affected student immigration during this time. The study examines international student visa data from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, as well as international student arrival and labour market transition data from Statistics Canada.

Findings

Between 2000-2012, 252,819 international students came to Ontario; 711,548 came to Canada as a whole. Of those who came to Ontario, most studied in Toronto and its neighbouring municipalities. By 2012, most students came from India and China, with notable growth from Africa and the Middle East. This marks a shift in source regions as the majority of international students in 2000 were from Western Europe, China and South Korea.

Most international students did not work off-campus during this period although there was a noticeable growth in those who did, likely due to new work permit programs, such as the Off-Campus Work Permit (OCWP) program introduced in 2006. In 2014, the OCWP was removed and international students no longer need a work permit to work off-campus. This was seen as a major benefit to the international student community as it advanced the integration of international students.

Students tend to stay in the province once they finish their studies. Over 75% of international students who changed visa statuses in 2011 remained in Ontario following the completion of their studies, although more stayed in the province on temporary work visas rather than obtaining permanent residency status.

Further research

The authors suggest that more research is needed to understand the international student experience, what happens once students graduate and whether incomes earned offset the initial costs of studying in a foreign country. Another new HEQCO report, *The Global Competition for International Students as Future Immigrants: The role of Ontario universities in translating government policy into institutional*

practice, explores the range and types of programs and services for international students; as well as the perceived factors that facilitate or hinder the transition of international students into the labour market.

The authors also note that future research should explore the effects of the elimination of the OCWP, the extension of the Post-Graduate Work Permit and the introduction of the Express Entry system.

International Students in Ontario's Postsecondary Education System, 2000-2012: An evaluation of changing policies, populations and labour market entry processes was written by Keegan Williams, Gabriel Williams, Amy Arbuckle, Margaret Walton-Roberts and Jenna Hennebry from the International Migration Research Centre at Wilfrid Laurier University.