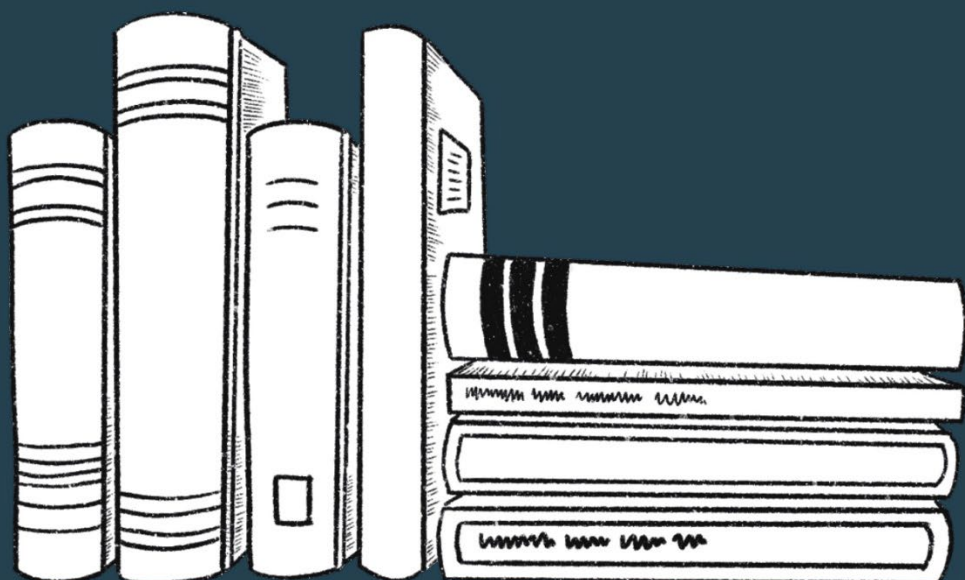


Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario



An agency of the Government of Ontario



Matching Rapid Growth with Adequate Supports: How Colleges and Government Can Enhance International Student Experiences in Ontario

Julia Colyar, Jackie Pichette
& Janice Deakin

Published by:

The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario

**88 Queens Quay West, Suite 2500
Toronto, ON
Canada, M5J 0B8**

Phone: (416) 212-3893

Fax: (416) 212-3899

Web: www.heqco.ca

E-mail: info@heqco.ca

Cite this publication in the following format:

Colyar, J., Pichette, J., & Deakin, J. (2023). *Matching Rapid Growth with Adequate Supports: How Colleges and Government Can Enhance International Student Experiences in Ontario*. Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario



The opinions expressed in this research document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views or official policies of the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario or other agencies or organizations that may have provided support, financial or otherwise, for this project. © King's Printer for Ontario, 2023

Acknowledgements

HEQCO team members Lena Balata, Rachel Courts, Hagar Effah, Sophie Lanthier, Jeffrey Napierala as well as Research Intern Nia Spooner contributed to this report. We are grateful for the Ontario college representatives who participated in interviews; their expertise and insights were invaluable in developing this work. We are also thankful for the support and assistance of Colleges Ontario in facilitating our contact with interviewees.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
Introduction	8
Context: Understanding International Students	10
Public-Private Partnership Programs	11
International Student Support Needs	12
Research Questions and Methodology	15
Findings	15
Housing and Transportation	16
Belonging and Community.....	18
Academics and Student Life	19
Finances and Employment	21
Health and Well-being.....	22
Discussion and Recommendations.....	24
Provincial Government.....	25
Federal Government.....	26
Colleges.....	27
Conclusion.....	28
References.....	29
Appendix.....	38
Appendix A	39

Executive Summary

Canada continues to welcome a growing number of international students. Ontario colleges attract the highest proportion, in part as a strategic response to fiscal imperatives resulting from decreases in government support. Colleges welcome international students to home and satellite campuses, as well as to programs offered in partnership with private providers (Public College-Private Partnership programs, or PCPPs). International students come to Ontario to study and earn credentials, work and pursue immigration pathways, and in so doing, contribute billions to the economy.

The dramatic growth in international student enrollments has been accompanied by concerns — raised by municipalities, institutions and students — for the financial, academic, physical and mental well-being of these students. Such concerns relate to recruitment practices, program quality and accountability, and misalignments between programming and labour market needs. Causes are complex and interrelated. As Ontario continues to recruit record numbers of international students, it is important to understand how colleges are managing these challenges.

With this in mind, The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) set out to learn more about how public colleges are supporting international students. HEQCO interviewed representatives from 16 public colleges, including institutional leaders, program administrators and student support professionals. Interviewees talked about the scope of activities underway; opportunities to enhance available resources; and the circumstances making these supports necessary.

We heard that international students require a range of supports over and above those originally designed to meet the needs of domestic students. Supports related to housing and transportation, health and well-being, and belonging and safety are needed most urgently, and require multiple levels of government support and collaboration to deliver effectively. Additional barriers are academic, financial and cultural. International students often struggle to understand academic expectations; many also work on- and/or off-campus in order to afford the high costs of tuition and housing. Students' experiences of racism on campuses and in communities can limit their integration and employment prospects. All of these challenges can exacerbate physical and mental health issues.

Our interviews also detailed the range of resources colleges are providing at home and satellite campuses. Colleges have, for example, repurposed old infrastructure as student housing; developed peer mentorship and community engagement programs; implemented online tools to provide orientation programs prior to students' arrivals; offered employment opportunities; hired nurse practitioners on campus; and allocated funding for emergency financial assistance. Many colleges use integrated service models

to avoid staffing and programming duplications and to reduce confusion about where students can access needed supports.

Overall, our interviews make clear that colleges and their private partners, alongside all levels of government, must share in the responsibility for international students' experiences and well-being. This work should start with a comprehensive government strategy to guide postsecondary internationalization activities. A strategic approach can support institutions as they build safe, welcoming communities and can help protect Ontario's reputation as a destination for high-quality education and enterprise. To those ends, HEQCO recommends the following:

Provincial Government

- Examine recruitment practices and incentive structures used to attract international students. Accurate information and ethical practice can help ensure student success.
- Revisit MCU's "Public College-Private Partnerships: Minister's Binding Policy Directive" (2019) to clarify college accountabilities related to enrolment management, program quality, advertising and student support requirements; monitor and enforce these directives.
- Develop a provincial strategy to guide colleges' internationalization activities. Ensure alignment between labour market gaps and high-intake programs, and emphasize the variety of credentials needed to meet labour market priorities.

Federal Government

- Work with the Ontario government to develop a comprehensive international education strategy. Review the goals and outcomes of the current program to ensure it is meeting federally identified priority programs, provides a PSE pathway for immigrants to become highly skilled workers, and is taken up across the full range of credential and programs offered by PSE institutions.
- Examine international student work permits (and the 20-hour pilot project in place) to evaluate student experiences, outcomes, completion rates and time-to-completion.
- Evaluate the permits required for co-op opportunities to reduce barriers to access.

Ontario Colleges

- Review the academic requirements for international students' admission — including language exam scores and assessment of prior learnings — and consider language programs for accepted students who lack adequate skills. Adhering to admission standards can help reduce pressure on students and staff.

- Collect and publish international student satisfaction data related to available supports and resources to understand where there are persistent gaps and challenges; coordinate approaches with other colleges for comparability.
- Leverage local community contexts for individual campuses (location, programming and populations); work closely with municipal governments to address some of the challenges facing students and institutions, including housing, health and well-being, inclusion and local employment.

Introduction

Canada's International Education Strategy — introduced, in 2014, along with regulations aimed at strengthening Canada's status as a study destination of choice for prospective international students — is considered by many experts to be a resounding success (Government of Canada, 2014).¹ Developed as a means of addressing “unprecedented and ... unfathomable labour shortages across the country” (Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, 2022), the internationalization strategy has helped ensure Canada is one of the world's top destinations for postsecondary education (PSE) (Richardson & Hussain, 2022; Statistics Canada, 2021). Each year, Canadian colleges and universities provide PSE to a growing number of international students; in 2021, more than 620,000 held a permit to study in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2022). In doing so, postsecondary institutions assist the Canadian economy immensely: RBC Economics estimates that international students contributed more than \$22 billion to Canada's economy in 2018 alone (Richardson & Hussain, 2022). International students also enrich campus diversity and expand “people-to-people” ties that help all learners acquire a global perspective (Government of Canada, 2012; 2014).

Students are drawn to study opportunities in Canada not only because of high-quality programming but also because they are a means of attaining permanent residence (PR) and they form a pathway to immigration (Government of Canada, 2014; Esses et al., 2018). Former international students represent nearly 40% of new economic-class immigrants (Richardson & Hussain, 2022), and today's international students continue demonstrating interest in working and immigrating to Canada: in a recent survey (CBIE, 2021), 73% of international students studying in Canada planned to apply for a post-graduate work permit upon completing their program, and nearly 60% indicated they planned to remain in Canada and apply for PR. This level of interest can help Canada reach its new immigration targets — 1.5 million new immigrants by 2025 — announced in November 2022 (Government of Canada, 2022c).

Ontario colleges have been particularly active in expanding international enrolments. Between 2012-13 and 2020-21, international student enrolment in Ontario colleges increased by 342% (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021a).² Most of the dramatic increases in international enrolment have occurred at Ontario colleges that offer programming in partnership with private providers. Under these Public College-Private

¹ The government of Canada developed its “International Education Strategy: Harnessing our knowledge advantage to drive innovation and prosperity” in response to The Report of the Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy (2012).

² Though the pandemic briefly interrupted enrolments, they fully rebounded in 2021 and are projected to continue accelerating (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2022).

Partnerships (PCPPs), public colleges recruit international students, and the curricula are delivered by the private providers at their facilities.

Increases in international enrolment at colleges are in large part a response to fiscal imperatives: in Ontario, provincial funding per college student is currently the lowest in Canada (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021a) and student fees now account for the bulk of Ontario college revenues (Statistics Canada, 2022). In 2018, government imposed a 10% domestic tuition cut and then froze tuition. Like other Canadian provinces, Ontario has seen a general downward trend in domestic college enrolments since 2013-14 (Statistics Canada, 2021).³ The increased reliance on student fees, drop in domestic enrolment and rising operating costs mean international enrolment is the only revenue lever available to PSE institutions (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021a). Indeed, without international enrolment and revenue, some Ontario colleges could not deliver on their mandate as community-focused educational providers (Beattie, 2021) nor remain financially viable (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021a). Government tacitly supports this approach by keeping international tuition unregulated; international college students pay nearly five times the tuition domestic students pay (Beattie, 2021).⁴

The rapid rate of international enrolment growth has been accompanied by a rise in concerns raised by municipalities, institutions and students themselves. Research and media reports highlight the ways in which international students are facing academic, mental health and cultural challenges. Media reports often focus on student experiences in PCPP programs (see, for example, McGregor et al., 2022; Baksh et al., 2022; Ng & Padien, 2019; Ronson, 2022; Rana, 2022; de Moissac et al., 2020; Armos, 2018). Financial burdens exacerbate these stresses (Singh Aulakh, 2022). Housing is of particular concern: students often struggle to find safe and affordable accommodations near their campuses (Calder, 2016; Ronson, 2022). International students who decide to remain in Canada also experience disparities in employment rates, relative earnings and alignment between their field/level of study and their employment compared to their domestic counterparts (Chen & Skuterud, 2020; Zhang, 2022). These challenges are personal — they shape individual students' learning experiences and future economic and immigration pathways — but they also represent risks to Ontario's global reputation for education and immigration. International students are paying high tuition, many for a precarious experience and an uncertain future. And as Ontario continues to recruit record numbers of these students, it is important to understand how colleges are managing these challenges.

³ This enrolment trend reflects Canada's changing demographics.

⁴ Tuition varies by program, but on average, domestic college students pay approximately \$3,000 per year, while international students pay over \$14,000 per year (Beattie, 2021).

In order to learn more about how public colleges are supporting international students, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) conducted qualitative interviews with representatives from 16 public colleges. Our interviews included institutional leaders, program administrators and student support professionals; we met with representatives from across the province, from large urban centres to smaller and northern communities. Through these discussions, we learned about the scope of activities currently underway at Ontario's colleges as well as opportunities to enhance the available supports.

Our interviewees also raised questions about the circumstances that make such supports necessary. Colleges are working to address challenges that are manifestations of systemic, upstream issues that must be resolved in order for them to provide meaningful educational experiences and routes to immigration for international students. These challenges — involving recruitment practices, program quality and accountability, and misalignments between available programming and labour market needs — are all subjects that require continued attention and interrogation.

This report begins with an overview of Ontario's PSE context as it relates to international students and the financial realities that drive enrolment increases. We follow with a summary of research investigating the challenges that international students face once they arrive in the province. We then present findings from our interviews — focused on the range of issues colleges are working to address — followed by a discussion that includes recommendations for both provincial and federal governments and institutions.

Context: Understanding International Students

International student experiences, either positive or negative, are not represented or reflected in quantitative data about student outcomes. In Ontario, graduation rates for international college students are higher on average than those for domestic students (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021a).⁵ We know, however, that graduation rates increase as tuition increases (Schmidt, 2020). High completion rates for international students may reflect students' pressures to graduate on-time — pressures introduced by scholarship requirements, financial strains and familial expectations — and may mask challenges and negative experiences en route to program completion. Other metrics, including participation rates in the underground economy, higher rates of suicide after graduation and poorer labour market outcomes, reveal a need to improve supports for international students (One Voice Canada, 2021).

⁵ In 2020-21, the graduation rate for domestic college students was 66%; the graduation rate for international students was 86% (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021a).

The majority of international college students in Ontario are enrolled in two-year diploma programs.⁶ Many international students also complete more than one program; for example, students may complete two certificate programs or post-graduate certificate programs in sequence. Following completion of their programs, international graduates can use their college credentials to apply for a post-graduate work permit (PGWP), which allows them to work for up to three years in Canada. This work experience also helps graduates qualify for PR (Choi et al., 2021). Rates of international student transitions to PR status vary by credential type: 80% of international postgraduate credential graduates and 71% of college certificate or diploma program graduates obtained PR in Canada within five years of program completion (Wall, 2022). These college programs tend to require one or two years of study, thereby offering an efficient pathway to working and living in Canada. International bachelor's degree graduates transition to PR status at lower rates (50%) (Wall, 2022; Esses et al., 2018).⁷

International students make up 37% of college enrolments in Ontario — the highest proportion in Canada and well above the national average of 20% (Usher, 2022). Students arrive at Ontario colleges from across the globe, but the top countries of origin are India, China, Vietnam, South Korea, Brazil and The Philippines (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021a). For a variety of reasons, including federal policy changes,⁸ India has become the top source country for Canadian colleges by a wide margin: in 2020-21, students from India composed 62% of Canada's international college population (Crossman et al., 2021). For several Ontario colleges, students from India composed more than 90% of the international student body (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021a).

Public College-Private Partnership Programs

PCPP programs have existed in Ontario since 2005. Currently, 12 Ontario colleges have established partnerships with private providers (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021a).⁹ In addition to delivering college curricula, private providers are responsible for

⁶ A PSE credential from a Canadian institution can translate into “additional points” under Canada's Comprehensive Ranking System, which is used in the Express Entry program. Applicants also receive points related to their educational background, with points assigned to correspond to program duration and more points assigned to longer programs (see: [Comprehensive Ranking System \(CRS\) Criteria – Express Entry](#)).

⁷ Bachelor's degree-seeking students are likely motivated differently than students seeking shorter credentials; immigration may not be their primary motivator (e.g., they may be interested in post-graduate studies in Canada or their home country, or they may be planning to return home to pursue a career).

⁸ According to the Auditor General, “In 2014, the federal government streamlined the study permit process for students from India, making it easier for them to access education in Ontario public colleges” (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021a, p. 21).

⁹ As of the writing of this report, 12 colleges are operating programs in partnership with private providers; additional colleges are currently developing new partnership programs.

facilities, support services and hiring instructors. Private providers keep 70% to 80% of tuition revenue, while public colleges retain the remainder (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021a). International students in PCPP programs generally live and study in urban centres, where private providers tend to be located, though their associated public college may be located in rural or northern communities; with the exception of two partnerships in Vancouver, all PCPP providers are located in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021a). This means students may complete a college credential without ever having visited their home campus.

Under the “Public College-Private Partnerships Minister’s Binding Policy Directive” (2019), partnership programs are subject to enrolment restrictions and service standards; specifically, they can enroll two international students for every international student enrolled at the college’s main campuses (commonly referred to as the “2:1 ratio”).¹⁰ Students enrolled at PCPP programs are considered “students of the college, and colleges are responsible for ensuring that partnership locations operate with the same student protections and standards of services, accountability, and quality assurance as college home campuses” (MCU, 2019, p. 4). “Standards of services” should include access to supports, including academic and wellness resources. Under the 2019 Directive, colleges “must also ensure that partnership students have access to housing” (p. 6). The Ontario Auditor General’s 2021 “Value for Money Audit: Public Colleges Oversight Report” (2021) found that the oversight outlined in the MCU Directive has been unsuccessful. In particular, the Auditor General noted that the 2:1 enrolment limitation was not effectively regulated. At the time of the Auditor General’s review, some partnership programs established before the 2019 MCU directive had enrolment ratios of nearly 9:1 and have not yet fulfilled requirements to develop enrolment compliance plans.

International Student Support Needs

International students’ support needs vary according to previous academic experiences, program of enrolment and individual background characteristics. In general, whether enrolled in partnership programs or at college home campuses, international students require a range of supports over and above those originally designed to meet the needs of domestic students to ensure their integration into the academic and social fabric of PSE (Ghalayini, 2014). These include, for example, orientation and settlement supports and support developing transferable skills, such as time management and organization. In addition, many international students require assistance in developing English language

¹⁰ This 2:1 ratio regulation came into effect in December 2019 when some partnership programs already exceeded the 2:1 limit.

proficiency and gaining familiarity with academic norms, including those related to academic integrity and plagiarism (El Masri & Khan, 2022).

Both domestic and international students entering PSE undergo a major life transition that often comes with new responsibilities. This is especially true for students living away from home for the first time. In Ontario, most domestic college students have historically attended institutions in or near their communities and support networks (Frenette, 2003). International students study and work very far from home, so many experience culture shock (Smith et al., 2013), which can leave them feeling withdrawn or isolated (Simon Fraser University, n.d).

Colleges face challenges in supporting international student inclusion, and experiences of racism and discrimination can compound symptoms of culture shock (Apna Health, 2021). Within colleges, instructors and staff may not recognize when material or in-class activities are discriminatory or culturally inappropriate (El Masri & Khan, 2022) — something intercultural competency and communications training can help address (Smith et al., 2013). For some international students, opportunities to learn and socialize with domestic students are limited (CBIE, 2016); some Ontario partnership programs exclusively enrol international students (Auditor General of Ontario, 2021), thereby eliminating opportunities for international students to study alongside their domestic peers. This arrangement also thwarts colleges' efforts to enhance domestic student experiences through campus internationalization.

Many international students also encounter implicit or explicit racism when they search for housing. Landlords may deny student rental applications based on immigration status, race or even names (El Masri & Khan, 2022). This adds further complexity to the need to secure suitable, safe accommodation. A lack of affordable housing, coupled with international students' lack of awareness of their legal rights as tenants, can lead to exploitation. Across Ontario, many international students are living in illegal, overcrowded accommodations with exorbitant deposit and rental prices (El Masri & Khan, 2022; CBIE, 2018; Apna Health, 2021). When international students identify appropriate housing, they are sometimes turned away for lack of Canadian references, proof of income, a Canadian credit report or even several months of rent available to be paid up-front (Armos, 2018).

The high costs of housing contribute to students' financial stresses. Recent media accounts suggest that financial worries are particularly acute for international students from India's Punjab region; according to these sources, families have sold assets or taken on loans to cover relatively high tuition rates, placing heavy financial burdens on students (Baksh et al., 2022; Hune-Brown, 2021; Singh Aulakh, 2022). To relieve these burdens, many international students pursue part-time work. In 2019, 50% of international students

studying in Canada reported T4 earnings — up from 18% in 2000 — and half of these earners were international college students (Lundy, 2022).

Until recently, international students have been limited to 20 hours of work, off campus, per week (Government of Canada, 2022a). On October 7, 2022, the federal government announced it would temporarily lift the off-campus work limit imposed on international students until December 31, 2023 (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2022). With this announcement, international students are permitted to work full-time while also pursuing full-time study. It also means that international students will become an even larger segment of Canada's labour force and will "increasingly form the backbone of low-wage labour" (Lundy, 2022). The policy shift was described in media reports as a "pilot project" (Osman, 2022).

International students often have unique health needs. Physicians at Durham College and Ontario Tech University reported preliminary results of a study about international student health needs at a summit organized by Sheridan College in July 2022. Most students participating in their study were from India, and 70% reported never having had a physical exam (Sandhu et al., 2022). Securing adequate housing, connecting with peers, academic concerns and health issues all contribute to heightened feelings of loneliness and depression (Apna Health, 2021; Armos, 2018; El Masri & Khan, 2022). Meeting the need for mental health support can be further complicated by cultural norms related to the value of mental health supports and students' beliefs about the importance of self-reliance (De Moissac et al., 2020). A May 2022 survey by the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations highlighted concerns regarding the quality and cultural appropriateness of mental health services. International students were also more likely to report confidentiality (or lack of trust) as a significant barrier to accessing supports (Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, 2022).

Meeting the needs of international students presents a difficult challenge for Ontario colleges, as their mandate to deliver PSE has not historically included delivering services available in the community (Coordinating Committee of Vice Presidents, Students, 2015). Mental health services are a prime example. The extent to which PSE institutions are expected to substitute for community mental health services (for domestic and international students) has greatly expanded — though there is not a shared understanding of institutions' and governments' core responsibilities or the scope of institutions' roles (Coordinating Committee of Vice Presidents, Students, 2015). Recruiting high numbers of international students without roots in local communities has intensified the need for these supports to be available on campuses.

Research Questions and Methodology

This report surveys the scope of support services currently available to international students attending Ontario colleges and explores strategies for improvement. Our project was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the most pressing service delivery gaps and how can they be addressed?
 - What is working well (what best practices can colleges share or scale up)?
 - What new approaches to service delivery, or adaptations to existing practices, could Ontario colleges implement?
- How are institutions monitoring success?

HEQCO invited all publicly assisted Ontario colleges to participate in one-hour, semi-structured interviews.¹¹ We emailed invitations to all Ontario public colleges using a list of contacts provided by Colleges Ontario (CO). A total of 16 institutions participated in interviews.¹² Interviewees included: Presidents, Vice Presidents and Executive/Associate Vice Presidents (10); Deans and Directors (16); and Managers, Supervisors and Leads (nine) of international portfolios, as well as one nurse practitioner. To encourage openness, interviewees were assured that no individuals would be identified, and no findings would be attributed to specific institutions (where relevant, we have included anonymized quotations). Each interview included a HEQCO project lead and a notetaker.

Findings

The supports and services we learned about are generally associated with the home and satellite campuses of public colleges,¹³ which enrolled 75% of total international students in 2020-21. Another 25% of international students are enrolled in PCPP programs. Under the 2019 MCU “Binding Policy Directive,” students in partnership programs are entitled to the same level of support as provided on home campuses; it is the responsibility of the private provider to offer these supports, and it is the responsibility of the public college to ensure they are doing so. While we did not interview representatives from private providers, we did gather insights that allowed us to consider the needs of students enrolled in partnership programs.

The institutional representatives we interviewed recognize that graduation rates, which tend to be high, are not an appropriate gauge of student experiences; as one interviewee

¹¹ See Appendix A for interview questions.

¹² Up to five representatives from individual institutions participated in virtual interviews; in some cases, we scheduled two interview sessions for an individual college to accommodate the number of representatives and/or scheduling challenges.

¹³ Many public colleges in Ontario operate on multiple campuses.

remarked, international students have often invested significant financial resources with the hope that their education will open an immigration pathway. In this way, “they are hugely motivated” (College A). While most interviewees acknowledge a need for accountability metrics beyond graduation rates, they indicate that few colleges have developed them.

Virtually all interviewees voiced an intention to continue increasing international recruitment through new or existing PCPP programs and/or on main campuses. However, this intention was not universally supported. Many interviewees in leadership positions focused on the benefits of international students in terms of financial stability, campus diversity goals and community impacts, both economic and cultural; but those in programming and advisory roles often focused on the rising pressures for students and staff associated with enrolment increases. Similarly, we heard different perspectives on partnership programs with private providers. Some interviewees voiced concerns over risks associated with partnership programs; others indicated that they were actively exploring new partnership opportunities.

Many of the pressures international students face, including the need for academic, social and financial support, are also seen within the domestic student population. However, the most pressing gaps we heard about are those that have not historically fallen within college mandates and require multiple levels of government support and collaboration to provide. Namely, these are housing and transportation, health and well-being, and belonging and safety (i.e., physical and emotional protection from exploitation). These challenges overlap with the types of settlement supports many newcomers require. Some interviewees mentioned Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and described the importance of addressing the lower needs in the hierarchy (viz., physiological needs like shelter and safety needs like health) so students can attend to other challenges, such as academics or career concerns. We learned that public colleges are actively working to ensure students can access wrap-around supports that attend to these needs, often through community partnerships. If left unaddressed, these challenges will continue to lead to negative student experiences and outcomes.

Housing and Transportation

In step with research and media reports, most interviewees raised the issue of housing and transportation as top concerns.¹⁴ One interviewee spoke about how Ontario colleges have historically been commuter campuses, focused on serving students from local communities; as a result, most of these sites do not have established student residences

¹⁴ International students’ housing concerns are part of a broader housing crisis affecting Ontario. In May 2021, government announced a plan to build [1.5 million new homes over the next ten years](#).

to the same degree that Ontario universities do. Interviewees from colleges that do have available residences noted that costs are higher than many international students are willing or able to pay. Interviewees also noted that housing shortages have led international students at urban campuses to live in crowded, unsafe situations. ‘Shadow markets’ often exist alongside the traditional housing market, whereby landlords rent a room within a house to an international student who then rents out half of that room to another student.

PCPPs contribute to housing issues in the GTA especially. Some rural public colleges with private partnerships in the GTA have recruited more international students to the region than the public colleges physically located within the GTA (Trick, 2017).¹⁵ Meanwhile, in rural areas, we heard about international students living far from their campus — sometimes to be closer to work opportunities or to live in proximity to other immigrants from their home countries. Relatedly, interviewees noted a lack of safe, reliable transportation options for commuting to school or work or for accessing community stores and services.

Regardless of whether students were living in urban or rural areas, interviewees spoke about the layers of challenge associated with student housing. One interviewee noted:

There are limited housing options available at price levels students are willing and able to pay. We’re seeing students come up with their own solutions — living where they can, often quite a distance away from campus, and this is impacting their success. Although we’re working to mitigate this as best we can, some have a limited understanding of tenant rights and can be vulnerable to exploitation.
(College B)

Most interviewees highlighted efforts underway at their institutions to address housing needs. In the absence of campus-owned residences and direct influence in local housing markets, colleges are focused on information-sharing — in other words, on providing advice about how to find appropriate housing and ensuring students are aware of their rights as tenants. Many colleges are including this information in pre-arrival orientation sessions. Some have staff roles exclusively dedicated to providing housing support. One institution described a peer housing WhatsApp group that has been instrumental in connecting students with appropriate accommodations.

Some colleges are taking extra steps and working directly with their communities to address housing needs. For example, these efforts include constructing new residences,

¹⁵ Housing issues are complicated by increases in the number of PCPPs operating in the GTA. Eighty percent of PCPPs are located in Toronto, the GTA or central Ontario; these private colleges enrol nearly 10,000 international students on more than 500 campuses (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021b).

repurposing old community infrastructure and offering (subsidized) affordable rates to students. Some institutions are also looking to community members for housing options:

The biggest housing opportunity is extra rooms in our community. We reached out and asked [community members] if they would rent out a room for a month using a service called “happipad.” (College C)

While several interviewees noted that fully addressing the lack of appropriate, affordable housing is beyond their means as colleges, one interviewee challenged this mindset, saying, “I find it difficult to swallow that knowing that there is a lack of housing, [colleges] continue to bring in more students, and then say, ‘well, I’m sorry, but housing isn’t our responsibility’” (College E) This interviewee further noted that both colleges and governments have a role to play in addressing the issue.

Belonging and Community

Many international students, including those coming from India, are unaccustomed to Ontario’s individualistic society. Several interviewees mentioned the preference — among Indian international students in particular — to spend time with close-knit communities. This makes it all the more challenging when students discover their new community, including other members of their college, are unwelcoming. Though few interviewees spoke of it directly, it is clear racism underscores many of these interactions. One interviewee noted: “I would call some of the communities deeply culturally unaware. And this is true about some of our faculty [and staff]” (College A).

Most interviewees acknowledged a need for more training and cultural awareness within their institutions to improve student experiences. Several interviewees described efforts that are already underway: some colleges are delivering professional development for faculty, including cultural sensitivity training, to addresses racism and discrimination. One Ontario college also offers intercultural awareness modules, with sample classroom activities, for faculty and staff through their learning management system. An interviewee observed a shift in faculty mindsets as a result of their college’s professional development programs, saying, “[In the past], faculty viewed cultural differences as issues that international students brought with them. Now faculty want to embrace the diversity of students and improve their teaching skills” (College A).

Interviewees also described racism in the communities surrounding colleges, including stereotypes about international students’ language and academic skills, religious observances and job readiness. Some institutions described efforts to engage their surrounding community to ensure international students feel at home. For example, we heard about colleges working with local elected leaders, businesses, health-care workers and law enforcement officers to address racism through task forces, advertising

campaigns and local events aimed at building mutual understanding and cultural appreciation. One college manages a program where community members serve as mentors. Others have staff who, as part of their role, inform local employers of opportunities to hire international students. We heard about how these efforts are paying off:

[In the past], employers [in our community] wouldn't hire international students. If they could not pronounce their names, they did not even consider them. We have come a long way since then. Employers now regularly approach the college looking to hire our graduates. The impact on our community has been significant." (College G)

In addition to providing support for students, these efforts are often aimed at keeping international graduates in the community after graduation. One interviewee described this as follows:

[Our] college is getting a reputation for contributing, in a positive way, to the skills the region needs and for attracting long-term residents. Many of our graduates will leave for the GTA and parts unknown, but a few are choosing to stay and develop their lives here. (College H)

Some institutions are also working with student councils to offer events that facilitate interaction between international and domestic students, as well as through sporting events. For example, one college is working to build community among students by establishing a cricket club — a "small thing" that can make a major difference and can help students feel more at home (College A).

Academics and Student Life

In some ways, the academic challenges we heard about overlap with those often associated with student transitions to postsecondary studies, including academic preparation and skill development (Napierala et al., 2022; Schaeper, H., 2020). Nevertheless, international students face unique issues layered atop these challenges, such as developing English language skills. These academic and linguistic barriers mostly materialize for students after they are situated in Ontario, but they reflect issues embedded in colleges' recruitment and application processes and standards.

Many colleges rely on recruiters (and/or recruitment agencies) located in students' home countries; these local recruiters are often paid a commission according to the number of students enrolled.¹⁶ The 2021 Auditor General's report highlighted a number of concerns

¹⁶ Recruiters' commissions vary by institution and range from \$750 to \$1,400 per student (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021a).

related to recruiting activities, including misleading claims about student visas, entry requirements and language testing. Admission standards that do not accurately reflect the skills students need in order to succeed are ultimately harmful for students' abilities to persist, graduate and become job-ready (Möhring, 2021; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Hu & Trenkic, 2021; Muche et al., 2004).

Interviewees recognized that international students require introductions and supports when adjusting to Ontario's specific academic expectations. One college representative described the initial exposure to Ontario's education system as "education shock":

Education shock is similar to culture shock. Our colleges have an education style that is unique around the world. The way we teach our applied education, and the expectations we have of cumulative grade development, with no final exam, is a form of education shock. Participation in classroom, group work, teamwork, and the role of faculty — not as bestowers of knowledge but facilitators of knowledge acquisition and skills — are forms of education shock. It hits every international student and doesn't matter where they're from. (College D)

Some interviewees also noted difficulty getting international students to feel comfortable sharing their own interpretation or analysis in their assignments (some interviewees referred to this as "independent thinking"). Acknowledging that Ontario's education standards and style are not universal, most colleges are now covering academic expectations as part of orientation.

Beyond orientation, most interviewees believed an integrated service delivery model for supports and services is most effective for addressing academic and social needs of both international and domestic students. Rather than organize services and supports separately for international and domestic students, an integrated model folds them into one portfolio that acknowledges students' overlapping needs. Interviewees observed that separating services can lead to unnecessary staffing duplications and confusion. One interviewee summarized their rationale:

We [used to have separate] international and domestic [services] — now it's synergized, with resources allocated to support both groups together. [The separate services] were almost competing with each other for funding ... What we need to do is to remove the barriers and labels. It doesn't matter what type of student is coming. [What's important] is the type of service you're offering. (College I)

In addition to integrated services, we heard from interviewees that facilitating peer-to-peer support can be an effective way of orienting students to Ontario academic expectations while simultaneously facilitating social integration. Some institutions are

hiring later-year international students as mentors or ambassadors. Several interviewees noted international students will bring questions to peers that they may not otherwise bring forward because of the power imbalance with instructors or staff. Often peers will speak the same language, which helps bridge the divide: “having a peer network allows [international students] to start to understand that it’s okay to have some challenges and seek support here” (College I).

Finances and Employment

Interviewees were highly attuned to the financial strains many international students experience. Many students receive financial support from their families and/or communities to attend college, and so are under a great deal of pressure. Students feel compelled to make sufficient income and succeed academically. Some interviewees raised the importance of helping international students set realistic financial expectations. To be approved for a study permit, international students must prove they will have \$10,000 per year, or \$833 per month, to support themselves while in Canada (Government of Canada, 2022b). Some interviewees considered this sum insufficient, particularly given the high cost of housing in communities such as the GTA. We also heard that recruiting agents abroad can often misrepresent aspects of life and costs in Canada — another example of upstream activities that compound challenges.

In many cases, financial strains upon arrival lead students to take on work, and often off-campus. Interviewees were divided about the merits of the 20-hour (off-campus) work limit imposed on international students (and which has temporarily been lifted until December 31, 2023). The varied perspectives we heard reflect the competing priorities that shape international education in Canada: international students are learners, but also potential workers who can fill labour market gaps; they are also potential future immigrants. A 20-hour off-campus work limitation helps reinforce the perspective that the primary purpose of studying in Canada is to gain an education. Some interviewees described this limit favourably as an important way of ensuring students have time to focus on their studies. Others raised concerns related to students’ safety in their employment: rather than constraining working hours, the limit prevents them from finding work that protects their rights as labourers. One interviewee noted:

We find that students will work the full 20 hours they’re allowed to, but many of them are working under the table, and when they start doing that, there are certain employers that will take advantage of them. (College I)

Interviewees also described barriers for international students to participate in work-integrated learning (WIL) programs. Accessible WIL programs can not only help relieve financial strain, but they also help to develop important skills for employment; in many

cases, they are a requirement to complete programs. According to our interviewees, barriers to participation in WIL include bureaucratic delays issuing co-op permits as well as human error (e.g., Canadian border guards sometimes forget to issue permits on entry). We heard of similar delays and errors obtaining social insurance numbers, which prevent students from securing any kind of legitimate employment. Students must return to the original port of entry to rectify these sorts of errors, which might be quite far from the institution they are attending.

Financial issues and work arrangements are connected with housing, health and wellness, community integration and academic issues — either as motivating factors to work as many hours as possible or as sources of stress that negatively influence students' mental health. For some students, conflict and/or economic struggles in their home countries exacerbate their financial concerns if they are unable to access savings. Compared to funding available for domestic students, our interviewees noted that there is limited emergency funding available for colleges to provide support to international students in these circumstances.

To address these issues, some institutions are working to offer donor-based awards. A few interviewees also mentioned having resources (such as laptops) available for loan and/or funds for international students facing emergencies. Many colleges employ international students in on-campus jobs (often in peer-mentorship roles). These roles have the added benefit of not requiring long and expensive commutes. One interviewee said their institution is committed to matching tuition set-aside dollars for domestic students to use for international student support. Another interviewee mentioned emergency funding specific to the COVID-19 pandemic: "We partially covered the costs of the 14-day [quarantine] stay for students. They had to carry a portion of it, but we recognized this was not a cost that students had budgeted for" (College J). The same institution provided tuition fee deferral for students from Russia and Ukraine. Several interviewees also said their colleges provide information about financial risks related to housing and phishing scams as part of orientation.

Health and Well-being

All of the stressors described above can influence international students' overall health and well-being. Interviewees described concerns for international students related to physical and emotional needs. Interviewees observed a higher incidence of diet-related health issues in international students than domestic, which may be a result of food insecurity and/or poor knowledge of nutrition. One college has developed an informal peer network on food and nutrition, pairing students who need coaching with those who already have cooking skills. Colleges have also been proactive in providing wellness

information to international students, and many include information about nutrition in pre-arrival orientations:

Students can't hear advice about cooking and the realities of living in Canada when they arrive; they have to hear it from their comfort zone, where they have food, shelter, belonging and core essential needs taken care of. (College D)

Interviewees also raised sexual health challenges related to a lack of education in many international students' home countries. For example, one interviewee noted higher rates of unplanned pregnancies and terminations among female international students than domestic students.

The most common concern we heard about, however, was mental health. Many interviewees noted mental health struggles in students stemming from feelings of overwhelm and isolation. One interviewee connected these challenges to social characteristics that exist on top of academic challenges: "we have an individualist society, and we bring students from collectivist societies. We have not adjusted to that as a campus" (College E). Several interviewees also commented on the tendency for many international students to try to cope with their mental health struggles alone; interviewees perceived this was owing to cultural differences in the way such challenges are viewed and discussed. One interviewee explained:

Students may not be aware of mental health services, and they may not have experience talking about mental health; they may also not be aware of mental health as a concept ... [the presence of mental health issues, alongside a lack of recognition or openness to discussing them] are separate problems that compound [one another]. (College E)

Another interviewee linked student reticence to discuss their mental health with concerns regarding their immigration status — some students have expressed a misconception that, by drawing attention to their struggles, they could somehow jeopardize their student visa. While acknowledging the reasons why students may be hesitant to bring these challenges forward, some interviewees also expressed frustration: staff cannot address mental health challenges they are not aware of. In addition, we heard about difficulties for international students in accessing health specialists who accept third-party insurance. The pandemic has added to the list of health-related challenges international students face, including the difficulty of accessing vaccinations (especially through the online government portal) without an Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).

In addition, our interviewees shared strategies their colleges are using to help address health-related challenges, including building wrap-around support teams with peer networks and culturally relevant counselling. Some said having nurse practitioners on

campus helps make care more accessible. We also heard that many colleges are working to offer nutritious, culturally appropriate food in campus eateries, vending machines and at events. One has a food locker program with diverse fresh food ingredients. Another has an online food bank that's available 24/7; students can 'shop' online and pick up their food the next morning. A college in a rural community has a large fruit and vegetable garden that provides produce to help students eat more healthfully.

The pandemic-inspired growth of virtual support services has helped colleges meet student needs. One respondent noted: "The virtual environment made it easier for us to be available to students, and more students showed up to virtual appointments" (College F). Students do not need to commute to campus for virtual appointments, which also increases the accessibility of supports. And some institutions are experimenting with digital apps for mental health services and are having success.

Discussion and Recommendations

Ensuring adequate supports for international students is a complex problem involving individual colleges, local communities and all levels of government. Our interviews reveal that colleges are working to ensure that appropriate supports are available at the right time — and in some cases, this means before a student leaves their home country. Colleges are also bringing important non-academic resources to campuses — for example, representatives from banks, Service Canada and community service agencies — so that students can directly and easily access the information they need as they settle in Ontario. Online advising and counseling appointments are making services more accessible and convenient, both for students and staff.

The supports and services we learned about focus on home and satellite campuses. Many interviewees noted that successful support activities for international students depend on the commitment and compassion of campus personnel. In many cases, student supports are also connected to local contexts, as colleges are leveraging community resources, facilities and people. Embedding supports in communities mobilizes more resources and provides opportunities for students and community members to engage these challenges collaboratively.

Our findings emphasize both the scope and level of challenge colleges are managing, and the scope and variety of services Ontario's public colleges have implemented. Although our interviews did not include representatives of private providers delivering partnership programs, these findings should be applied to partnership environments: students enrolled in partnership programs are entitled to the same scope and variety of supports available to students at home campuses. These findings yield detail that can inform both

Ministry and college assessments related to the supports offered by private providers as part of their partnership agreements.

The supports colleges provide international students act as de facto settlement services and serve as an important part of students' pathways to immigration. After students graduate, few resources are available for those pursuing PR, but newcomers may continue to require supports related to housing, community engagement and well-being (Dennler, 2022). All levels of government should examine the resources and supports available to new international graduates and other immigrants and bring adequate resources to support newcomer transitions. Supports should be developed in concert with a coherent government strategy with clear goals and accountabilities for international education and immigration. Without an intentional strategy, international student enrolment will outpace government planning.

Reflecting on our interviewees and existing research, HEQCO offers the following recommendations to colleges and government to enhance international student experiences in Ontario.

Provincial Government

Student challenges — academic, financial and housing — are rooted in the recruitment activities used to draw learners to colleges in Ontario. Students need accurate information as they are making decisions, and they need to be set up for success. As part of maintaining Ontario's reputation, both in terms of academic excellence and as a worthwhile place to live, the provincial government should examine the recruitment practices and incentive structures used to attract students. Other jurisdictions have successfully implemented "Codes of Practice" that can serve as a model: Australia and New Zealand, for example, have built legislative frameworks that hold institutions accountable for protecting international student rights and ensuring students have positive experiences (Australian Government, 2021; New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2021).

Government should also leverage existing tools to ensure that all programs, including those delivered by private providers, are meeting student support and quality assurance standards. For example, MCU's "Public College-Private Partnerships: Minister's Binding Policy Directive" (2019) should be revisited and revised so that college accountabilities related to enrolment management, advertising and marketing and student support requirements are clear. These accountability requirements must also be monitored and enforced by the ministry.

Changes to government's "Binding Policy Directive" should reflect larger strategic priorities for international education in Ontario. Federal and provincial governments have

presented a narrative that focuses on international students as potential immigrants who, with high-quality PSE experiences, can help fill gaps in the labour market and contribute to Canada's economy. It is not clear, however, if the growth in international enrolments in Ontario — concentrated in one- and two-year credentials and programs — aligns with provincial labour market needs and priorities. It is also not clear if international student graduates are transitioning into jobs that align with their preparation and skills; and misalignment or underemployment has long-term impacts on international graduates' career pathways (Zhang, 2022).

Ontario's government should shape international PSE activities by providing strategic direction. Such direction could be developed by examining employment outcomes for international graduates to understand alignments between labour market gaps and high-intake programs. Colleges should recruit students according to this provincial strategy, ensuring that students are enrolled in programs that will prepare them for jobs in high-priority areas. Further, Ontario should consider an approach that emphasizes the variety of credentials needed to meet labour market gaps. Different credentials and areas of study will lead to different labour market opportunities.

Federal Government

The federal government should work with the provincial government to review and update the current internationalization strategy. Nearly a decade has passed since the federal government introduced new regulations that reshaped Canada's approach to international students and immigration pathways. A review the objectives and outcomes of the educational immigration program should focus on questions such as: Is the current approach attracting students into the programs that the federal government prioritized at the program's outset (2014)? Is it providing the PSE pathway for immigrants to become highly skilled members of the Canadian workforce, and in what proportion? To what extent is uptake of this immigration pathway distributed across the range of educational credentials and programs offered by postsecondary institutions (graduate degrees, undergraduate degrees, diplomas and certificate programs) and how is the distribution reflected in labour market outcomes?

The federal government should also undertake a review of international student work permits. The pilot project currently in place — which has removed limits on international student work hours — offers an opportunity to evaluate student experiences and outcomes. For example, an evaluation should focus on program completion rates as well as time-to-completion. If international students are being recruited for the primary purpose of studying in Canada, the policies that shape their experiences should, in principle, support that goal.

A federal review of permits currently required for co-op opportunities would also be beneficial. Co-op/WIL opportunities, which allow students to apply their programming to workplace settings, are important for all students as they develop professional skills and job-readiness. These opportunities may be particularly important for international students, and barriers to access should be reduced to ensure more students can benefit.

Colleges

Given the academic challenges many international students experience, colleges should evaluate the academic requirements for international students' admission — including language exam scores and assessment of prior learnings. Language exams offer one means of evaluating students' preparation for studying in English; it may be the case that colleges can better support student success with admission standards that require higher language exam scores. Colleges could also require language programs for accepted students who do not have the language skills needed for the academic setting. Ensuring they are adhering to their stated rules and regulations around admission standards can help colleges reduce pressure (on students, faculty and support staff) by screening out academically underprepared students.

Colleges should also collect and publish international student satisfaction data related to available supports and resources to understand where there are persistent gaps and challenges. Students enrolled at partnership programs should be included in satisfaction surveys. Colleges should consider a coordinated approach, with similar questions for comparability, to facilitate systemic lessons, while still allowing for variation to capture needs specific to individual communities; students attending a campus in the GTA will have different needs than those in smaller communities. Survey results can inform and strengthen provincial and local strategies to address challenges, including housing, health and well-being, and community inclusion.

Given the importance of local contexts, colleges should work closely with municipal governments to address some of the challenges facing students and institutions. For example, safe and affordable housing is essential for students; high housing costs are one of the reasons international students seek opportunities to work additional hours on- and off-campus. Colleges and municipalities should partner to explore current zoning bylaws and develop non-market housing solutions. Colleges, municipalities and other partners can also work together to establish innovative solutions, such as placements in private homes, retirement facilities or other community housing.

Conclusion

As international enrolments at Ontario colleges continue to climb, there is an increasingly urgent need for colleges and governments alike to take responsibility for the well-being of international students. Indeed, all levels of government are benefiting from and facilitating enrolment growth. Meanwhile, colleges — both public and in partnership programs — cannot continue to recruit beyond the means of their communities' infrastructures. Together, colleges and all levels of government — municipal, provincial and federal — share responsibility for working together to build welcoming, safe communities for international students to call home. In claiming this responsibility, all parties will protect Ontario's international reputation as a destination for high-quality education and enterprise.

While incremental changes can and should be made in the name of student supports, overarching work needs to be done to ensure that Canada and Ontario are attracting the quality and number of students that the educational pathway to immigration can manage. In the current environment, international enrolment is primarily driven by the financial exigencies of PSE institutions in Ontario. This focus has upstream and downstream impacts — it shapes program development, overseas recruitment practices, student support needs, institutional staffing and programming requirements and the stressors on local communities (particularly communities in the GTA), including health-care options and housing markets. These challenges will continue to be carried by local communities as international students graduate and seek opportunities to live and work in Ontario. Government and institutions must start with a focus on ensuring supports for all international students, but ultimately, this work can help ensure the stability and sustainability of PSE institutions and prosperity for all those who call Ontario and Canada home.

References

- Amos, N. (2018). Support Services for International Students in British Columbia: A Study on Students' Need and Service Delivery. AMSSA. [Support-Services-for-International-Students-in-BC-Aug-2018.pdf \(amssa.org\)](https://www.amssa.org/Support-Services-for-International-Students-in-BC-Aug-2018.pdf)
- Australian Government. (2019). Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000. <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2022C00066>
- Australian Government. (2018). National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018. <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01182>
- Australian Government. (2021). Australian Strategy for International Education 2021-2030. <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2021-11/apo-nid315307.pdf>
- Australian Government. (2021b). Council for International Education 2021 Report to the Prime Minister. file:///C:/Users/jpichette/Downloads/2021%20Annual%20report%20to%20the%20PM_Alt%20Text.pdf
- Aziz, S. (2022, September). "Nearly 30% of Canadians report 'chronic difficulty' accessing health care: Poll." Global News. <https://globalnews.ca/news/9111584/canada-health-care-access-poll/>
- Baird, B. (2010). Stronger, simpler, smarter ESOS: supporting international students. Australian Government. https://internationaleducation.gov.au/regulatory-information/Education-Services-for-Overseas-Students-ESOS-Legislative-Framework/ESOS-Review/Documents/ESOS_REview_Final_Report_Feb_2010_pdf.pdf
- Baksh, N., Ellenwood, L., Kelley, M., Aulakh, S.S. (2022, October 13). International students enticed to Canada on dubious promises of jobs and immigration. *The Fifth Estate*, CBC News. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/international-students-canada-immigration-ontario-1.6614238>
- Beattie, S. (2021). Ontario colleges' reliance on international student tuition a 'risky formula,' auditor general warns. CBC News, December 4, 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-colleges-reliance-on-international-student-tuition-a-risky-formula-auditor-general-warns-1.6272326>
- Bhogal, J. (2021). Petition to increase international students working hr limit to 30hrs and more TR to PR pathways. Change.org. <https://www.change.org/p/honourable-sea-fraser-minister-of-immigration-refugees-and-citizenship-to-increase-international-students-working-hr-limit-to-30-hr-and-more-tr-to-pr->

[pathways#:~:text=This%20petition%20is%20to%20request,during%20the%20Covid%2D19%20Pandemic.](#)

Calder, M., Richter, S., Mao, Y., Burns, K.K., Mogale, R.S., Danko, M. (2016). International students attending Canadian universities: Their experiences with housing, finances and other issues. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 46(1), 92-110.

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations. (2022). *The New Abnormal: Student Mental Health Two Years into COVID-19*. Ottawa, ON: The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations.

https://assets.nationbuilder.com/casaacae/pages/3470/attachments/original/1664377984/Abacus_Report_2022_%281%29.pdf?1664377984

Canadian Mortgage Housing Corp. (2022). Canada's Housing Supply Shortage: Estimating what is needed to solve Canada's housing affordability crisis by 2030.

<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/housing-markets-data-and-research/housing-research/research-reports/accelerate-supply/housing-shortages-canada-solving-affordability-crisis>

Canadian Mortgage Housing Corp. (2022b). Housing Supply Report: Canadian Metropolitan Areas. <https://assets.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/sites/cmhc/professional/housing-markets-data-and-research/market-reports/housing-supply-report/housing-supply-report-2022-05-en.pdf?rev=e66a4117-594f-4b3e-8477-c33fbe1e7766>

CBIE. (2016). A World of Learning: Canada's performance and potential in international education 2014. *CBIE-Flagship-2014-E-WEB-RES-final.pdf

CBIE. (2018). *The Student's Voice: National Results of the 2018 CBIE International Student Survey*. <https://cbie.ca/learning/webinars/the-students-voice-national-results-from-the-2018-cbie-international-student-survey/>

CBIE. (2022). *The Student Voice: National Results of the 2021 CBIE International Student Survey*. https://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/CBIE_2021_International_Student_Survey_National_Report.pdf

CBIE. (2021). Facts and Figures. <https://cbie.ca/infographic/>

Chen, Z.J. & Skuterud, M. (2020). Relative academic achievement of international students: Evidence from an Ontario university. *Canadian Public Policy* 46(1), 125-144.

- Choi, Y., Crossman, E., & Hou, F. (2021). International students as a source of labour supply: Transition to permanent residency. Statistics Canada.
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2021006/article/00002-eng.htm>
- Coordinating Committee of Vice Presidents, Students. (2015). White Paper on Postsecondary Student Mental Health. Available at
<https://occcco.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/ccvps-white-paper-on-postsecondary-student-mental-health-april-2015.pdf>
- Crossman, E., Choi, Y., Lu, Y., Hou, F. (2022). International students as a source of labour supply: A summary of recent trends. Statistics Canada
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2022003/article/00001-eng.htm>
- Crossman, E., Choi, Y., Hou, F. (2021). International students as a source of labour supply: The growing number of international students and their changing sociodemographic characteristics. Statistics Canada.
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/36-28-0001/2021007/article/00005-eng.pdf?st=Jn7b7QM5>
- De Moissac D., Graham, J. M., Prada, K., Gueye, N. R., Rocque, R. (2020). Mental health status and help-seeking strategies of international students in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 50(4), 52–71.
- Dennler, K. (2022). From Student to immigrant? Multi-step pathways to permanent residence. Ottawa: The Conference Board of Canada.
https://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/ec7aad06-7206-415d-a9d0-3ac26ed9cee2/11858_data-briefing_international-students.pdf
- Desai Trilokekar, R., Keenan, J., Barrett, J., Moore, J., Barker, J., Allen, J., Campos, V. (2022, July 25-26). *Measures of accountability to enhance the international student experience: Lessons from international jurisdictions*. [Presentation]. Improving the International Student Experience, Brampton, On.
- El Masri, A. & Khan, N. (2022). International Students' Lived Experiences: A Review of Literature. CGEI Resources and Reports. 1.
https://source.sheridancollege.ca/cgei_resources/1
- Esses, V., Sutter, A., Ortiz, A., Luo, N., Cui, J., & Deacon, L. (2018). Retaining international students in Canada post-graduation: Understanding the motivations and drivers of the decision to stay. Ottawa: Canadian Bureau for International Education.
<https://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Intl-students-post-graduation-RiB-8-EN-1.pdf>

- Frenette, M. (2003). Access to College and University: Does Distance Matter? <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2003201-eng.pdf?st=WiKZicIE>
- Ghalayini, M. (2014). Academic and social integration: a narrative study of Indian international students' experience and persistence in post-graduate studies in Ontario. Doctoral Thesis submitted to the School of Education, College of Professional Studies, Northeastern University.
- Gomes, C. (2014, July). "Australia loses international students at its own peril". *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/australia-loses-international-students-at-its-own-peril-29377>
- Government of Canada, Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy. (2012). International Education: A Key Driver of Canada's Future Prosperity. Ottawa: Government of Canada. <https://www.international.gc.ca/education/report-rapport/strategy-strategie/index.aspx?lang=eng>
- Government of Canada. (2014). Canada's International Education Strategy: Harnessing our Knowledge Advantage to Drive Innovation and Prosperity. Ottawa: Government of Canada. <https://www.international.gc.ca/education/report-rapport/strategy-strategie-2014/index.aspx?lang=eng>
- Government of Canada. (2022a). Work off campus as an international student. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/work/work-off-campus.html#who-can>
- Government of Canada. (2022b). Study permit: Get the right documents. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/study-permit/get-documents.html#doc3>
- Government of Canada. (2022c). An immigration plan to grow the economy. Ottawa: Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/11/an-immigration-plan-to-grow-the-economy.html>
- Hune-Brown, N. (2021). "The Shadowy Business of International Education". *The Walrus*. <https://thewalrus.ca/the-shadowy-business-of-international-education/>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2022, October). "International students to help address Canada's labour shortage". Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/10/international-students-to-help-address-canadas-labour-shortage.html>

- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2020, April). "Removing barriers for international students working in essential services to fight COVID-19." Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2020/04/removing-barriers-for-international-students-working-in-essential-services-to-fight-covid-19.html>
- Institut du Québec. (2022). Regard sur les postes vacants: un marché du travail en pleine transformation. <https://institutduquebec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/202203-IDQ-Postes-vacants-T4-2021.pdf>
- Institut du Québec. (2022). "2021 Quebec Jobs Report – A recovery labour market, albeit shaped by the pandemic". Cision. <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/2021-quebec-jobs-report-a-recovered-labour-market-albeit-reshaped-by-the-pandemic-801770262.html>
- Hu, R. & Trenkic, R. (2021). "The effects of coaching and repeated test-taking on Chinese candidates' IELTS scores, their English proficiency, and subsequent academic achievement". *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 24(10), 1486–1501.
- Khawaja, N. & Stallman, H. (2011). "Understanding the coping strategies of international students: A qualitative study". *Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools*, 21(2), 203–224.
- Lafontaine, M. (September, 2022). "Old punk venue in Montreal to be turned into affordable housing." CBC. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/katacombes-montreal-affordable-student-housing-1.6580411>
- Lenarcic Biss, D. & Pichette, J. (2018). *Minding the Gap? Ontario Postsecondary Students' Perceptions on the State of Their Skills*. Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.
- Lundy, M. (November 8, 2022). How Canada became a hotbed for low-wage foreign labour. The Globe & Mail. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-tfw-program-canada-low-wages/>
- Mangin, D., Premji, K., Bayoumi, I., Ivers, N., Eissa, A., Newbery, S., Jaakkimainen, L., Nowak, D.A., Green, M., Beazley, S., Pinto, A., Haldane, V., Muggah, E., Rayner, J., Kaplan, D.M., Bhattacharyya, O., Grill, A.K., Bodmer, N.S., Perkhun, A., ... Martin, D. (2022). "Brief on Primary Care Part 2: Factors affecting primary care capacity in Ontario for pandemic response and recovery". *Science Briefs of the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table*. 3(68). <https://doi.org/10.47326/ocsat.2022.03.68.1.0>

- Martin, F. (2020, June). Tim to reset Australian International Education. East Asia Forum. <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2020/06/10/time-to-reset-australian-international-education/>
- McGregor, A., Decarie, C., Whitehead, W., & Aylesworth-Spink, S. (2022). "Supporting international students in an Ontario college: A case for multiple interventions". *Canadian Journal for Action Research*, 22(2), 5–28.
- Ministry of Colleges and Universities. (2019). Public College-Private Partnerships: Minister's Binding Policy Directive: Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Policy Framework. <https://files.ontario.ca/mcu-public-college-private-partnerships-dec2019-en-2022-02-15.pdf>
- Möhring, J. (2021). European University Admission Language Requirements for International Students – A Look at Varied Standards. Presentation at the 8th Annual International Scientific Conference: Linguistic, Educational and Intercultural Research 2021 (October 21–22, 2021). Institute of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Philology, Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania.
- Muche, F., Kelo, M., & Wächter, B. (2004). The Admission of International Students into Higher Education: Policies and Instruments. *ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education*, Bonn: Lemmens. https://www.lemmens.de/dateien/medien/buecher-ebooks/aca/2004_the_admission_of_international_students_into_higher_education.pdf
- Napierala, J., Pilla, N., Pichette, J., & Colyar, J. (2022). [*Ontario Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Experiences of Ontario First-year Postsecondary Students in 2020-21*](#). Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.
- Ng, P. & Padjen, M. (2019). An overview of post-secondary mental health on campuses in Ontario: Challenges and successes. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 17, 531-541.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. (2021, July). "New code of practice for the pastoral care of tertiary and international learners". News. <https://www.education.govt.nz/news/new-code-of-practice-for-the-pastoral-care-of-tertiary-and-international-learners/>
- OECD. (2012). [*Approaches to internationalisation - final - web.pdf \(oecd.org\)*](#)
- Office of the Auditor General of Ontario. (2021a). Value for Money Audit: Public Colleges Oversight. Toronto: Office of the Auditor General of Ontario.

https://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arreports/en21/AR_PublicColleges_en21.pdf

Office of the Auditor General of Ontario. (2021b). Value for Money Audit: Private Career Colleges Oversight. Toronto: Office of the Auditor General of Ontario.
https://auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arreports/en21/AR_PrivateColleges_en21.pdf

One Voice Canada. (2021). Report on the realities for international students: Evidenced challenges. https://onevoicecanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/The-Realities-of-International-Students-Evidenced-Challenges_Full-Report-2.pdf

Ontario Medical Association. (n.d.). In the News. <https://www.oma.org/newsroom/in-the-news/oma-doctors-in-the-news/>

Osman, L. (2022, October). "Cap on international students' working hours should be lifted permanently: advocates." The Canadian Press.
<https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/cap-on-international-students-working-hours-should-be-lifted-permanently-advocates-1.6104450#:~:text=Immigration%20Minister%20Sean%20Fraser%20announced,the%20end%20of%20next%20year.>

Ramia, G. (2021). "Crises in international education, and government responses: a comparative analysis of racial discrimination and violence towards international students". *Higher Education*, 82(3), 599–613. doi: 10.1007/s10734-021-00684-w. Epub 2021 Jan 18. PMID: 33487671; PMCID: PMC7813531.

Rana, U. (2022). "Indian students killed in highway 401 crash commuted to Montreal from GTA for school". *The Globe and Mail*, March 18.
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-401-crash-indian-students-killed-montreal-toronto-commute/>

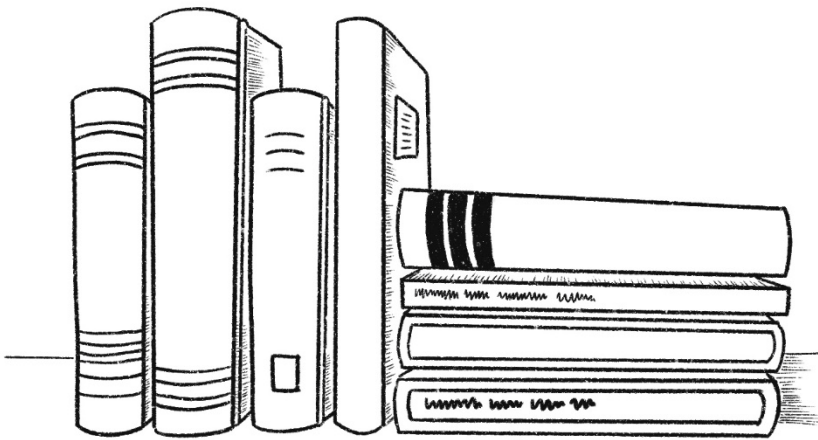
Richardson, B. & Hussain, Y. (2022). RBC Economics & Thought Leadership. [Course Correction: How International Students Can Help Solve Canada's Labour Crisis \(rbc.com\)](https://www.rbc.com/economics/correction-how-international-students-can-help-solve-canada-labour-crisis)

Ronson, D. (2022). "Canada: Students face 'traumatising' search for housing". *The PIE News*, July 15. <https://thepienews.com/news/canada-finding-student-accommodation-traumatising/>

Sandhu, J., Sivapalan, S., Khan, Y., Etcubanez, E., Khanna, V., & Arora, R. (2022, July 25-26). *Health and well-being: culture and gender sensitive supports*. [Presentation]. Improving the International Student Experience, Brampton, ON.

- Schaeper, H. (2020). "The first year in higher education: the role of individual factors and the learning environment for academic integration". *Higher Education*, 79, 95–110 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00398-0>
- Scroope, C. (2018). Indian Culture. Cultural Atlas. <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/indian-culture>
- Simon Fraser University. (n.d.). Stages and Symptoms of Culture Shock. <https://www.sfu.ca/students/isap/explore/culture/stages-symptoms-culture-shock.html>
- Singh Aulakh, S. (May, 2022). "Ontario international students, families making 'massive sacrifices' for the Canadian dream". CBC. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/international-students-tuition-sacrifices-1.6450240>
- Smith, C., Whiteside, B., Blanchard, S., & Martin, C. (2013). International Student Support Services at Ontario Universities. *Strategic Enrollment Mgmt Quarterly*, 1: 55-66. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sem3.20005>
- Spinks, H. (2016, April 1). *Overseas students: Immigration policy changes 1997–2015*. Overseas students: immigration policy changes 1997–2015. Retrieved September 23, 2022, from https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1516/OverseasStudents#_ftn39
- Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. (2022). [Differential Treatment in Recruitment and Acceptance Rates of Foreign Students in Quebec and in the Rest of Canada](https://publications.gc.ca/Recruitment-and-Acceptance-Rates-of-Foreign-Students-in-Quebec-and-in-the-Rest-of-Canada) (publications.gc.ca)
- Statistics Canada. (2021). Table 37-10-0018-01 Postsecondary enrolments, by registration status, institution type, status of student in Canada and gender. <https://doi.org/10.25318/3710001801-eng>
- Statistics Canada. (2022). "Trends in private and public funding in Canadian colleges, 2019/2020". *The Daily*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220120/dq220120c-eng.htm>
- Statistics Canada. (2022). "International students as a source of labour supply: A summary of recent trends." DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/36280001202200300001-eng>
- Usher, A. (2022). *The State of Postsecondary Education in Canada, 2022*. Toronto: Higher Education Strategy Associates.

- Wall, K. (2022). "The rising popularity of college postgraduate credential programs in Canada". Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/75-006-x/2022001/article/00008-eng.pdf?st=ZMIRFNt1>
- Zhang, T. (2022). "How to keep Canada's international student engine humming". C.D. Howe Institute. <https://www.cdhowe.org/intelligence-memos/tingting-zhang-how-keep-canadas-international-student-engine-humming>



Matching Rapid Growth with Adequate Supports: How Colleges and Government Can Enhance International Student Experiences in Ontario

Appendix

Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about the international student population at your college.
 - a. What are some of the unique needs of this population?
 - b. What are some of the challenges facing your institution with regards to serving this population's needs?
2. Can you describe some successes your institution has had in meeting the needs (e.g., academic, social, emotional and economic) of international students?
 - a. What have been some successful interventions?
 - b. How have you measured success?
 - c. What do you think were the "secret ingredients" to success?
3. Do you have plans to implement or coordinate any new interventions with a view to improving international student experiences?
 - a. What's the inspiration behind these plans?
4. How has government (provincial, federal, municipal) helped or hindered your institutions' ability to provide wrap-around supports for international students?
5. What changes to government policy (provincial, federal, municipal), or government's role, would support your efforts?
6. How do you think Ontario colleges might collaborate with each other and with community stakeholders more effectively to improve international student experiences?