



Leveraging our Strengths:

Enhancing Permanent
Residency Opportunities to
Attract and Retain
International Talent

Enhancing Permanent Residency Opportunities for International Graduates

Canada's universities and colleges are magnets for top global talent.

Faced with a daunting demographic challenge, Canada's continued prosperity is fundamentally linked to our ability to attract and retain skilled people from around the world.

Canada needs to attract even more skilled immigrants in the years to come. By 2016 Canada will need to attract at least 100,000 more immigrants per year than the current target to compensate for the aging of the labour force.¹ Expanding opportunities for permanent residency through the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) would offer significant support for the Canadian economy. Allowing recent international graduates to fill vacancies in the job market will be crucial in the near future and the long term. Expanding the CEC will not only help the labour market, it offers an unparalleled opportunity to support the future success of international graduates.

“Newcomers bring their skills and talents, contribute to our economy and help renew our workforce so that Canada remains competitive on the world stage”

***- Minister Jason Kenney
October 31, 2012***

Canada's international graduates make ideal candidates for permanent residency. Students educated and trained at Canadian institutions are exposed, over the course of their studies, to Canada's languages and culture. Further, these students have already been approved for Canadian Study Permits and have resided in Canada for the duration of their studies. Upon graduating, these students are often faced with the difficult choice of staying in Canada or returning home.

In 2010 there were 218,000 international students studying in Canada full-time. In the last twenty years the number of international students attending Canadian universities has doubled.² These individuals supported 86,000 jobs that same year and contribute more than \$8 billion to Canada's economy annually.³

Canada can boast that it has the highest stay rate among OECD nations. One-third of international students change their visa status upon graduating, of these at least 80% change their status for work-related reasons.⁴ Canada's high stay rate is indicative of one factor that influences the choice to study in Canada. International students may choose to study here because they can make the transition to working and living in Canada more easily than in other countries.

Recently, the Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy put forth the goal that Canada should aim to double the number of international students making it their study destination by 2022.⁵ Further, the panel identified a need to increase the marketing of Canada's educational brand and to expand and promote the CEC.⁶

The CEC supports international students who have contributed to Canadian society and who are ideal candidates for permanent residency. These students have obtained a Canadian education and work experience, which has enhanced the richness of classroom experiences for domestic students and our communities.

▶ **In 2010 over 4.1 million post-secondary level students globally were studying abroad.**

In 2010 over 4.1 million post-secondary level students globally were studying abroad.⁷ Canada faces stiff competition in attracting these highly mobile students. The United States and United Kingdom each educated over 10% of foreign students worldwide.⁸ Nations such as Australia and New Zealand do well in terms of proportions of international students among their post-secondary level students. In addition, Europe is outpacing North America in attracting international talent. Of all international students 41% choose Europe as a study destination, compared to 21% who choose North America.⁹

▶ **41% of international students choose Europe, compared to 21% who choose North America.**

The vast majority of international graduates who change their visa status upon completing their program of study do so for work. A successful application to the CEC requires an individual to possess one year of full-time work experience.¹⁰

Citizenship and Immigration Canada has placed an emphasis on attracting younger workers to Canada. They have identified that those 45 or older that come to Canada experience an unemployment rate twice as high as individuals aged 25-34.¹¹ Although international students have shown a slightly higher median age than domestic students, their median age decreased much more than domestic students between 1992 and 2007.¹² In 2007, 17% of Canadian students were over the age of 35 as compared to less than 10% of international students.¹³

Additionally, in November of 2011 the government announced its intention to accept 1,000 international doctoral students through the Federal Skilled Worker Program annually. This initiative gives Canada an advantage in attracting and retaining those who will help Canada prosper today and into the future. Expanding such an initiative to individuals who could address Canada's other skills and training gaps would, by the same token, be of high value.

CASA recommends that government increase the number of permanent residents accepted each year in the Canadian Experience Class.

CASA recommends that government implement a fast-track to permanent residency to international students from the Master's level, or who are working toward acquisition of a skilled trade into the Federal Skilled Worker Program to address Canada's approaching labour and skills shortages.

Citations

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² Statistics Canada, Industry Canada. Extract from the Tuition and Living Accommodation Costs for Full-time Students at Canadian Universities. Accessed online: www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/81-004-x/2010006/article/11450-eng.htm. February 24, 2011.

³ Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Harper Government Highlights Economic Impact of International Students in Canada. Accessed online: www.international.gc.ca/media_commerce/comm/news-communiqués/2012/07/27b.aspx?view=d. July 27, 2012.

⁴ OECD. How many international students stay on in their host country?. Accessed online: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/content/chapter/eag_highlights-2011-14-en. September 13, 2011.

⁵ Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy. International Education: A Key Driver of Canada's Future Prosperity. Accessed online: www.international.gc.ca/education/report-rapport/strategy-strategie/index.aspx?view=d. August 15, 2012.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ OECD. Education at a Glance 2012: Highlights. Accessed online: www.oecd.org/edu/highlights.pdf. October 2012.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Canadian Experience Class: Who can apply? Accessed online: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/cec/apply-who.asp>. March 23, 2012.

¹¹ Department of Citizenship and Immigration. Regulations Amending the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations. Accessed online: <http://gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2012/2012-08-18/html/reg2-eng.html>. August 18, 2012.

¹² Statistics Canada. Trends in the Age Composition of College and University Students and Graduates. Accessed online: www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/81-004-x/2010005/article/11386-eng.htm. December 13, 2010. Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.