



ONTARIO'S INTERNATIONAL
POSTSECONDARY
EDUCATION STRATEGY 2018

EDUCATING GLOBAL CITIZENS



Realizing the
Benefits of International
Postsecondary Education

Standing out as a leader in international postsecondary education

The number of international students attending Ontario colleges and universities has increased every year since 2009, testament to the quality of Ontario's institutions and the province's well-earned reputation as a study destination of choice.

Today, international students account for over 15 per cent of all students enrolled in public postsecondary institutions in the province.¹ With this vibrant international student body comes the need for a renewed international postsecondary education strategy for Ontario: one mindful of the vital linkages between education, innovation and the economy, and puts students at the centre.

This strategy is based on extensive consultation with students, educators, industry partners and the broader postsecondary community. Its aim: lay the foundation for continued success in international education by strengthening international student recruitment and retention, supporting public priorities of economic growth, and meeting the evolving needs of 21st-century postsecondary learners.

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¹ Estimated based on internal ministry data

MESSAGE FROM

The Minister

Here in Ontario, we're preparing students to make their mark on the world.

That's not an exaggeration. Ontario's colleges and universities produce talented, driven and innovative thinkers. These leaders go on to find success in global health, international trade, cross-border research partnerships and so much more. They then come back to Ontario, creating businesses and investing in the community that gave them their start. That's the kind of future we want for more people in Ontario, and there's no reason that a competitive, international edge can't start earlier in one's career.

That's where this strategy comes in. It's a plan that responds to the growth of international education in Ontario and the increasing internationalization of our campuses. One that will provide domestic learners with more opportunities to access world-wide experiences, and one that enhances supports and opportunities for international students studying in the province.

We're not starting from scratch either. This strategy builds on the Ministry of Education's international blueprint — meaning we're thinking about internationalization at every stage of a student's learning. That kind of collaborative

work will continue over the next three years as the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development partners with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to improve student access and immigration pathways into Ontario.

This strategy, however, is about more than Ontario's economic competitiveness. It's about connection, and the ties we form as people. When more students are able to learn in diverse parts of the world, they create bonds with different cultures, communities and ways of thought. The same could be said for international students who study in Ontario. These bonds do more than enhance one's learning, they lay the groundwork for a better way to work and live — one that is more empathetic, diverse and connected. In Ontario, we want to put students at the centre of that kind of personal and professional development.

The more ideas there are at the table, the more likely it is that something truly great and novel will emerge. The message is clear: we are all stronger when we're together, and when we engage with people from around the world. Let's use international education to tap into that potential.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MH'.

Mitzie Hunter

*Minister, Ministry of Advanced Education
and Skills Development*



A WORLD OF

Opportunity

Today's global context demands new kinds of knowledge and skills. International education has a powerful role to play in preparing people for this reality, providing a space to share experiences, perspectives and ideas that foster inter-cultural understanding and open new doors to discovery.

The world is coming to Canada

International students come to Canada from 187 countries.²

Canadian students want international experience

86 per cent of Canadian students say they are interested in learning overseas. Those who have studied abroad have done so in 119 countries. 71 per cent said the experience influenced their career paths.³

The workplace is global

77 per cent of global CEOs say they are concerned that skills shortages could affect their companies' growth.⁴ To fill the gaps, they need to be able to recruit from anywhere — making internationally educated, knowledgeable and mobile workers highly valuable.

Education is an important Canadian export

Education-related services are among the country's top 10 service exports, accounting for \$5.8 billion in 2015.

International learners stay on

Between 20 per cent and 27 per cent of international students become permanent residents in Canada, with graduate students most likely to do so.⁵

The US and UK are Canadian students' peak international education destinations

Australia, France and Ireland round out the top five.⁶

“*There's been a notable spike in the number of foreign students choosing Canada as the place to learn. The reasons are multiple: there are excellent universities up north, and a visa regime that makes it easier, not harder, to study there.*”

— **Monocle Magazine**, *United Kingdom*
Issue 109 (Dec. 2017/Jan. 2018)

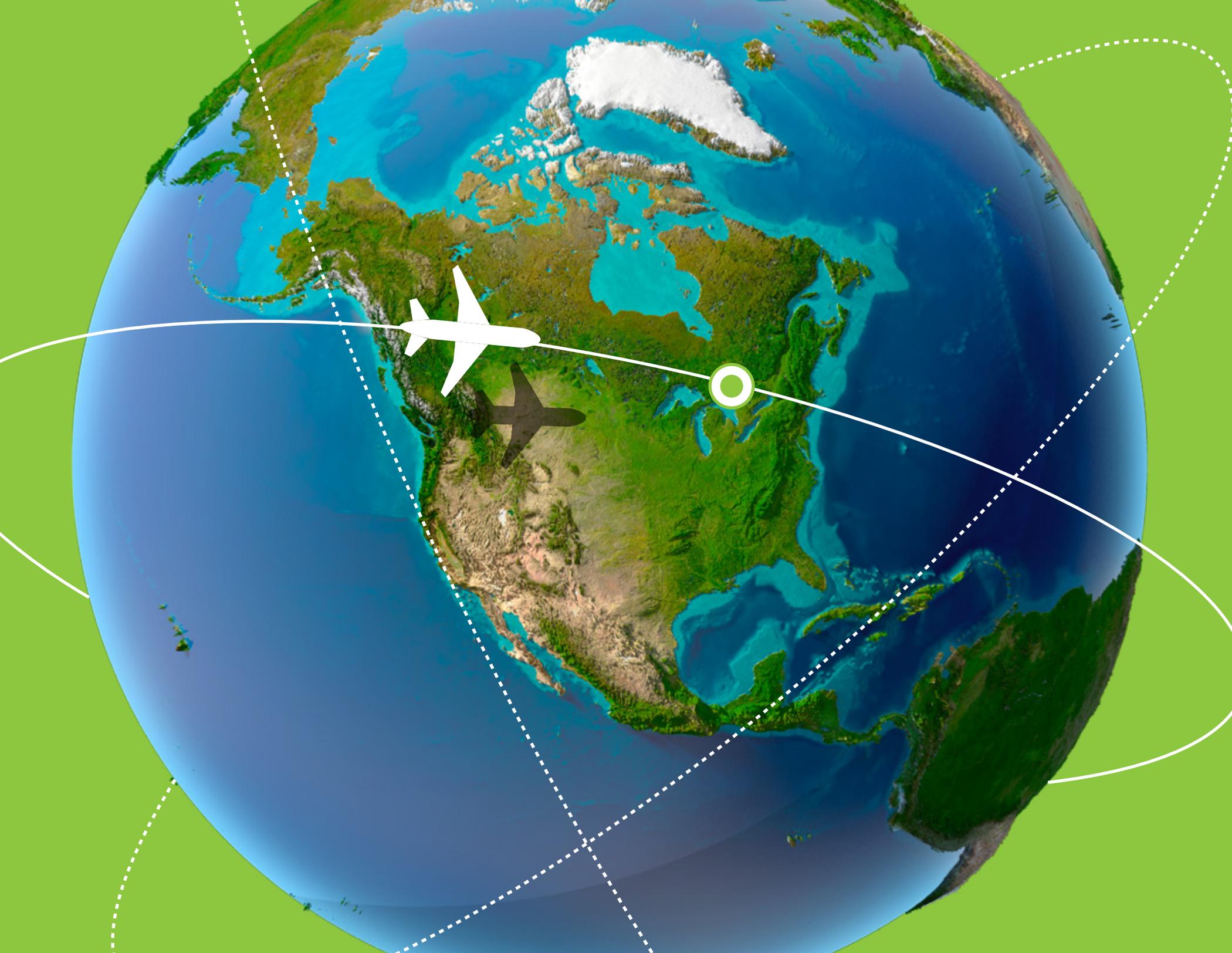
² Canadian Bureau for International Education. *A World of Learning 2016*.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Global Mobility Survey. Employees in 20 Countries Assess Employee Mobility for a Total Global Perspective* – June 2017 Canadian Employee Relocation Council.

⁵ *International students who became permanent residences in Canada*. Statistics Canada, 2015.

⁶ UNESCO Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students



ONTARIO'S

Moment is Now

The quality of Ontario's colleges and universities is recognized worldwide. Seven of the province's universities place in the top 400 of the Times Higher Education World University Rankings and colleges are internationally recognized for their career-ready programming. Nearly all of Ontario's universities and colleges have established global partnerships. Many are also home to global research projects and agreements that link them to industry, driving research and development of new technologies and knowledge for Ontario's competitive economy.

International enrolment is a big part of postsecondary education in Ontario

The ministry estimates that by 2022, if current trends continue, international enrolments will account for roughly 20 per cent of all postsecondary enrolments in the province. International students contribute to Ontario's talent pipeline and form vital connections between Ontario and the world.

Talent for the 21st Century

Ontario has committed to increasing the number of postsecondary students graduating in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines, including artificial intelligence, by 25 per cent over the next five years. As international students often choose STEM postsecondary programs, the international postsecondary education strategy is vital to contributing to the achievement of this goal.

Ontario's communities and economy benefit from international education

Long-term international students directly contributed \$7.8 billion to the Ontario economy in 2016,⁷ supporting thousands of jobs across the province. Institutional revenues alone from international postsecondary students totalled \$1.8 billion in 2015–16.⁸ Additionally, the benefit to Ontario communities cannot be ignored — international students bring cultural diversity to college and university campuses and enrich local communities.

International education promotes the vitality and growth of French-language education in Ontario

Ontario offers the opportunity to study in French at one of Ontario's French-language or bilingual postsecondary institutions. This gives international students a competitive advantage in the labour market while further enriching and contributing to the growth of francophone communities in the province.

⁷ Data was derived from information contained within *Economic Impact of International Education in Canada – 2017 update*. Roslyn Kunin & Associates, Inc., for Global Affairs Canada. 2017.

⁸ Estimated based on internal ministry data.



“ *Colleges play a vital role in providing young people with the skills needed to find jobs, and in providing employers with the resources needed to succeed in an increasingly competitive global economy and in the face of a looming shortage of trades.*”

— **Fiscal Sustainability of Ontario Colleges**, January 2017, PwC

BUILDING ON

Our Strengths

Ontario has many advantages when it comes to global postsecondary education:

- exceptional institutions
- strong immigration pathways
- opportunities to study in a French-language or bilingual program
- strong linkages to a diverse world-class labour market after graduation
- affordable program fees made even more attractive by the Canadian dollar.

These are strengthened by Canada's international reputation as a safe, welcoming country with a multicultural spirit.

Combined, these advantages represent an enormous opportunity for Ontario's postsecondary sector. By working together to facilitate international education experiences, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development and Ontario's colleges and universities can bring important educational, research, economic and social benefits to the province, today and into the future.

In 2016, the ministry embarked on a two-year consultation process with students, institutions and businesses across the province to inform the development of a new, future-minded international postsecondary education strategy for Ontario — one that will allow Ontario colleges and universities to put the province's advantages to work and ensure that our system is as attractive and competitive as it can be.

Based on the perspectives gathered through these consultations, the ministry has developed an international postsecondary education strategy for Ontario that reflects stakeholders' priorities, considers the global context, puts students at the centre and looks firmly into the future to benefit all Ontario communities.

The strategy is designed to realize the vision of making Ontario's postsecondary system a world-class destination for international students, one that contributes to a strong economy, prosperous communities and enriches education for all. Its success will depend on partnership between the ministry and sector. The ministry will be responsible for measuring outcomes going forward.

“ *Ontario is part of a fascinating, multicultural country. I chose this province on the one hand for its recognition internationally and on the other for its bilingualism.* ”

— **Hichem Rabie Anabi**, *Algeria*
Veterinary Technician Diploma, Collège Boréal

ENSURING LASTING

Benefits for Ontario

At the heart of the international postsecondary education strategy for Ontario are three core principles:

1. Create global citizens

Preparing learners to thrive in today's world means giving domestic students more opportunities to access international experience and develop intercultural skills. It also means making it as easy as possible for international students to study and (if they choose to) settle in Ontario, ensuring they have access to quality support services during their stay.

2. Contribute to Ontario's communities and economy

International students inject nearly \$8 billion a year into Ontario's economy and local communities, roughly \$2 billion of which is paid in tuition to colleges and universities. Those who choose to settle in Ontario after graduating become valuable contributors, adding to our capacity for innovation, bringing diverse perspectives to Ontario businesses and helping further develop the province's highly skilled workforce. Through working with the federal government to speed up study and work permit processing

times, adding funding-eligible PhD spaces for international students and intensifying diversity and recruitment efforts, the strategy will make it easier for international talent to come to Ontario. And by increasing access to international opportunities, domestic students will leave Ontario's system better prepared to help solve the challenges business and industry face in a globalized world.

3. Strive for sustainability

Strengthening partnerships between the Ontario government and postsecondary institutions, sharing the benefits of internationalization throughout the entire postsecondary education sector across the province, and actively protecting both Ontario's strong postsecondary system and global reputation are the chief ways this strategy will deliver sustainable advantages to the province over time.

How the strategy will help Ontario businesses

Sectors across Canada's economy are expected to face skills shortages in the coming years. Addressing these will demand an influx of talent from around the globe — for which Ontario's postsecondary institutions can serve as a key point of entry. At the same time, more Canadian and Ontario-based businesses are doing business and pursuing opportunities around the world. They need employees with local knowledge of other countries to be globally competitive. International graduates from Ontario institutions can fill those roles.

BUILDING ON EXISTING PROGRAMS

Supporting student mobility

Ontario already supports several programs that provide study-abroad opportunities for domestic students and make it easier for international learners to get their education in the province:

World University Service of Canada Student Refugee Program

Helps build capacity at colleges and universities to welcome resettled refugee students to study in Canada.

International Student Connect

This pilot program supports international student settlement and integration through workshops, webinars, and one-on-one sessions and with targeted support for francophone international students.

Ontario Universities International Student Exchange Programs

Four exchange programs offer reciprocal study and research opportunities: Ontario-Rhône-Alpes, Ontario-Baden-Württemberg; Ontario-India and Ontario-Jiangsu.

Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) — International Student Streams

OINP provides international students who hold a Master's or PhD degree from an eligible Ontario university the opportunity to live and work permanently in Ontario. The program can help Ontario employers meet their labour needs by enabling international graduates to remain in the province.

Forming international partnerships

Colleges Ontario and Ireland study agreement

Initiated in 2011 and renewed for another five years in 2016, the agreement enables Ontario college graduates to obtain Honours Bachelor's Degrees in Ireland from Irish Institutes of Technology. It also allows graduates of degree programs in Ireland to pursue post-graduate studies at Ontario's colleges.

Enhancing the internationalization of on-campus services

Avantage Ontario, a consortium of Ontario French-language and bilingual colleges and universities, developed six online training modules on internationalization. Delivered by experts in the field, the modules aim to help institutions enhance their services to better support the needs of international students.



“ *I chose Canada because of the numerous job opportunities in the field of science, Ontario because of its diversity, and Seneca because of its hands-on approach along with opportunity to work in the field in the form of a practicum before graduation.”*

— **Devi Bhojoo**, *Mauritius*
Biotechnology Advanced Diploma, Seneca College

At a Glance



Vision Building on the solid foundation of Ontario's postsecondary institutions, Ontario will be a world-class destination for international students, supporting a strong economy and the enrichment of education for all students, communities and the province.



Create Global Citizens

GOAL

Improve Ontario's domestic student experience

ACTIONS

- Enhance cultural perspectives on Ontario's campuses
- Create opportunities for Ontario students to study abroad

GOAL

Improve the international student experience in Ontario

ACTIONS

- Full program tuition transparency
- Create more support services for international students
- Collecting data to measure the international student experience



Contribute to Ontario's Communities & Economy

GOAL

Achieve balanced international growth across the province

ACTIONS

- Promote balanced international growth across Ontario
- Increase PhD funding for international students
- Support Ontario's 5 per cent francophone immigration target

GOAL

Support the retention of international talent

ACTIONS

- Facilitate the retention of international students after graduation
- Enhance Ontario's settlement services
- Integrate students into the province's labour market



Strive for Sustainability

GOAL

Ensure prudent, high-quality growth

ACTIONS

- Encourage a healthy, viable system

PRINCIPLE 1

Create Global Citizens

GOAL

Improve Ontario's domestic student experience

Today about 10 per cent of Canadian students study outside the country at some point in their education: roughly two to three per cent of university students and one per cent of college students a year.⁹ By comparison, the U.S. sees 15 per cent of postsecondary learners study abroad, and in Australia the figure is as high as 20 per cent. We need to do better.

Creating more opportunities for domestic students to learn internationally — and to interact with international students while studying in Ontario — provides a richer postsecondary experience and contributes to the development of competencies and intercultural skills needed for success in the global economy.

KEY ACTIONS

Enhance cultural perspectives on Ontario's campuses

- By creating an internationalization fund for programming that will build domestic students' intercultural competencies and knowledge

Create opportunities for Ontario students to study abroad

- By investing in international experiential learning for students to provide opportunities to work with leading international industries and researchers

- By establishing scholarships to financially support domestic students who wish to study abroad
- By setting international study targets for university and college students abroad developed collaboratively by the postsecondary sector and the ministry

“Going on international exchange is an experience like no other. I get to experience what people living in Seoul experience every day. From learning Korean literary traditions to ordering a cup of coffee in Korean, I will return home with a newfound independence and a gained global perspective.”

— **Erika Ward**, *Exchange to Seoul, South Korea*
Carleton University

⁹ *A World of Learning*. Canadian Bureau of International Education, 2016.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Experiential Indigenous learning goes global

The Matariki Indigenous Student Mobility Program gives Indigenous students and allies at Queen's University the opportunity to explore Indigenous knowledge and traditions firsthand. Every year, a different member of the Matariki Network of Universities (which includes New Zealand's University of Otago and the University of Western Australia) hosts the program. Students attend lectures and take part in community-based activities focused on issues important to local Indigenous communities. Through these experiences, participants network with Indigenous students, fulfill research objectives, and learn in an environment steeped in Indigenous knowledge.

GOAL

Improve the international student experience in Ontario

Ontario's postsecondary institutions are offering an educational experience that competes in the global market. With students seeking not only academic knowledge but also to gain cultural experience, the opportunity to integrate and interact with domestic students is a key attractor — backed by the right mix of supports and services. International students have also indicated that they want predictable, transparent tuition increases during the duration of their program so that they have the full picture of costs up front.

KEY ACTIONS

Provide full program tuition transparency from the start of a program to the end

- By institutions providing this information as part of the letter of offer to international students

Create more support services for international students

- By encouraging institutions to enhance international support services on their campuses
- Through collaboration between the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to identify health care issues faced by international students

Collecting data to measure the international student experience and share information across the sector

- By regularly surveying international students on their experience in Ontario to share data between the government and the sector to better inform programs and planning improvements

PRINCIPLE 2

Contribute to Ontario's Communities and Economy

GOAL

Achieve balanced international growth

Growing the number of international learners studying at Ontario colleges and universities must be done strategically to deliver the greatest possible benefits for students and the province. In part, that means promoting institutions and regions across all of Ontario as study destinations for international students. The capacity of institutions in Northern Ontario, for instance, has generally been less utilized than that of institutions in larger cities.

Promoting institutions across the province will allow all areas to benefit from international students who bring not only economic benefits to the community but also cultural diversity. International students also contribute to local communities by patronizing local businesses and services.

Ontario also has the opportunity to attract greater numbers of francophone students. For students who stay, this will help meet the province's goal of increasing Ontario's proportion of French-speaking immigrants to five per cent and contribute to the vitality and growth of French-language programs in Ontario's postsecondary

institutions, a goal that was set in 2012 with the release of Ontario's first immigration strategy.

KEY ACTIONS

Promote balanced international growth across Ontario

- By working with postsecondary institutions to define a sustainable and thriving range of growth of international students provincially
- By developing and adopting a recruitment strategy that encourages international students to study across Ontario — to make all Ontario institutions a destination of choice for international students
- Through collaboration between the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, the postsecondary sector and the Ministry of International Trade on a three-year marketing plan to recruit international students to Ontario

Increase PhD funding for international students

- By allowing universities to allocate up to 10 per cent of funding-eligible PhD spaces to international students to meet growing research demands

Support Ontario's five per cent francophone immigration target and ensure growth and sustainability of French-language programs

- By working with the consortium Avantage Ontario to promote Ontario's French-language education system in key French speaking international markets to increase enrolment in French-language and bilingual institutions
- By working with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to promote Ontario as a destination for French-speaking study, work and immigration

The best of both worlds: Studying in Canada's two official languages

Avantage Ontario works with the province's French-language and bilingual institutions to promote Ontario as a French-language and bilingual education destination. Partners are located in the Ottawa, Toronto, Sudbury and Hearst regions and collectively offer an extensive range of programs. Avantage Ontario also helps members organize recruitment fairs in key French-speaking markets, including North and West Africa and parts of Europe.

GOAL

Support the retention of international talent

Ontario's economy is strengthened when highly skilled international students settle here after graduating. This can be encouraged by making the permanent residency process as straightforward as possible and by enhancing settlement services with more funding and better information delivery.

KEY ACTIONS

Facilitate the retention of international students after graduation

- By supporting Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration negotiations to add an International Student Annex to the *Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement*; this annex would facilitate cooperation with the Government of Canada and address issues related to international student entry into Ontario and transitions to post-graduation employment and permanent residency

Enhance Ontario's settlement services

- Through collaboration between the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to expand the International Student Connect program pilot across more campuses and municipalities, connecting international students to settlement organizations

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Durham College helps international students get started on the right foot

It can be overwhelming — stepping off a plane into a new country. Durham College helps international students settle in by arranging for them to be greeted at the airport, transporting them to free “First Night” accommodations, and providing a welcome package. On campus, Durham's iWork's program gives these students opportunities to gain valuable work experience in Canada as administrative assistants, gym support staff and in other roles.

“No matter how well-planned your arrival arrangements, you inevitably find yourself in a sticky situation when it comes to booking a taxi or accommodation in an unfamiliar place. Durham College's arrival services gave me a sense of relief by providing first-night accommodation details beforehand and comfortable transport to the place when I arrived at the airport.”

— **Arpit Gupta**, *India*
Project Management Graduate Certificate, Durham College

Integrate students into the province's labour market

- Through collaboration between the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development and the Ministry of International Trade on exploring opportunities to connect students with export-ready Ontario small- and medium-size enterprises that would value students' international expertise and global job experience

PRINCIPLE 3

Strive for Sustainability

GOAL

Ensure prudent, high-quality growth

High-quality international growth is achieved by bringing the full potential of internationalization to institutions and communities across Ontario. At the same time, it benefits Ontario to draw international students from the widest range of countries.

Where Ontario's international students are from

The majority of international students coming to Ontario originate from:¹⁰

1. China
2. India
3. South Korea
4. Nigeria
5. Saudi Arabia
6. United States

The majority of international students coming to Ontario to study in French originate from Ivory Coast and Senegal in West Africa, Cameroon in Central Africa, and Morocco and Algeria in North Africa.

KEY ACTIONS

Encourage a healthy, viable system

- Through close partnership between Ontario's postsecondary sector and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, identify and share best practices of the various initiatives benefiting international students across the sector (e.g. orientation programs for international students) to support a healthy, viable postsecondary education system

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Enhancing domestic student life with an international sport — international student brings cricket to Wilfrid Laurier University

Abdul Naeem grew up playing cricket in Pakistan. When he came to Canada to study at Wilfrid Laurier University he discovered the university didn't have a cricket team — so he started one himself. Today the Laurier Cricket Club is a sanctioned sports club at the university's Waterloo campus with teams for men and women. About equal portions of domestic and international students make up the teams, and the men's team competes in international tournaments.

“Diversity is such a big thing for me. Cricket has ties to so many countries and cultures. It's a great way to bring people together.”

— **Abdul Naeem**, *Pakistan*
Double Degree Program: Bachelor of Business Administration, Wilfrid Laurier University; Bachelor of Mathematics, University of Waterloo

¹⁰ Estimated based on internal ministry data from the 2016–17 academic year.

MEASURING

Success

The ministry will work with institutions across the sector to carry out the actions outlined in the strategy. The ministry will be responsible for tracking outcomes to determine if these actions are successful. This will involve monitoring performance metrics including:

- The number of domestic students who study abroad
- The distribution of international students across Ontario
- The change in the number of international PhD students across Ontario and within universities
- Increased consistency in international student support services across postsecondary institutions through sharing best practices across the sector

“*Living in Freiburg, Germany, was one of the greatest experiences of my life. Aside from researching the cytomegalovirus at the University of Freiburg, I was exposed to the German culture in such an exciting way. But the greatest experience was being able to bring new research skills and ideas back to Canada and further apply them to developing research at York University.*”

— **Helen Moshe**, *Exchange to Freiburg, Germany*
York University

HELP MAKE ONTARIO'S POSTSECONDARY

System Even Better

Ontario's international postsecondary education strategy represents a promising path to a system that is recognized around the world as a top-tier study destination. Sector stakeholders can apply its framework, which is informed by their own feedback and insight, to help realize this vision.

By making it easier for global talent to come to Ontario, we can be more innovative, forge international partnerships, and drive economic development and positive social change. By putting students first — exposing them to diverse perspectives and providing them with opportunities to study-abroad — we can graduate global citizens who will thrive in today's borderless market.

The success of this strategy hinges on sector-wide cooperation. The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development is committed to working with Ontario's postsecondary students and institutions to facilitate uptake of the strategy. Together, we can bring the benefits of internationalization to all of Ontario.

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