

Study: International students who become permanent residents in Canada, 1990 to 2013

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Of the international students who came to Canada to study during the 1990s and early 2000s, 20% to 27% obtained permanent resident status in the 10 years after receiving their first study permit.

This finding is included in a new article released today, titled "[International students who become permanent residents in Canada.](#)"

The article examines the changing characteristics of international students in Canada from 1990 to 2013, and their rate of transition into permanent resident status.

Five cohorts of international students were examined: those who first obtained a study permit from 1990 to 1994, from 1995 to 1999, from 2000 to 2004, from 2005 to 2009 and from 2010 to 2013.

The number of international students rose quickly in recent years

From 1990 to 1994, Canada admitted 158,000 international students, or an average of about 31,000 per year.

From 2005 to 2009, Canada admitted 340,000 international students, or an average of about 68,000 a year, and in the four years from 2010 to 2013, Canada admitted 385,000 international students, or an average of about 96,000 a year.

The increase in the number of international students was accompanied by changes in their characteristics.

For example, among those who arrived between 1990 and 1994, 43% were enrolled in primary or secondary schools, while 18% came to pursue a university degree. The remaining 39% were enrolled in trades (10%), other postsecondary (21%) or other programs for which education level was not specified on the study permit.

In comparison, among those who arrived between 2010 and 2013, 22% were enrolled in primary and secondary schools while 29% attended university. The remaining 49% were enrolled in trades (6%), other postsecondary (34%) or other programs.

Source country composition also changed. Most notably, the proportion of international students from China or India increased from 6% in the early 1990s to 37% in the early 2010s.

Transition to permanent residence

A number of international students eventually become permanent residents in Canada. Of these, most obtain their permanent resident status within the 10 years following the receipt of their first study permit.

For example, among those who obtained their first study permit between 1990 and 1994, 27% became permanent residents in the 10 years that followed.

Among those who obtained their first study permit between 1995 and 1999, 20% became permanent residents over the next 10 years, while this was the case for 25% of those who obtained their first study permit between 2000 and 2004.



International students more likely to apply in the economic class

In the early 2000s, the selection process of immigrants changed as principal applicants in the economic class received more points for being of prime working age, proficient in English or French, having Canadian work experience, and having a university degree.

Correspondingly, international students became more likely to be admitted to Canada as principal applicants in the economic class. Those who landed also became more likely to have higher levels of educational attainment.

For example, of the international students who became permanent residents within 10 years, 36% of those from the 1990 to 1994 cohort had a university degree at the time they landed, while this was the case for 56% of those from the 2000 to 2004 cohort.

Note to readers

The analytical file for this study, called the Canadian Employer–Employee Dynamics Database, is composed of two input datasets. The first is the Temporary Residents (TR) file. The TR file was created by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and contains sociodemographic and administrative information on all non-permanent residents in Canada. **Foreign students** were identified among non-permanent residents as anyone who ever held a study permit issued by CIC.

The second data source is the Immigrant Landing File, which contains sociodemographic characteristics at landing for immigrants who have arrived in Canada since 1980. This study uses the following characteristics at landing: highest level of completed education, class of immigration, mother tongue and self-reported official language abilities.

The article "[International students who become permanent residents in Canada](#)" is now available in *Insights on Canadian Society* ([75-006-X](#)) from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website, under *Publications*.

For more information, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca).

To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, or for more information on *Insights on Canadian Society*, contact Sébastien LaRochelle-Côté (613-951-0803; sebastien.larochelle-cote@canada.ca).