



Canadian Bureau for  
International Education



# The Student Voice

National Results of the 2021 CBIE International Student Survey

## The Canadian Bureau for International Education

The Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) is a global leader in international education, dedicated to equity, quality, inclusiveness and partnership.

CBIE is the national voice advancing Canadian international education by creating and mobilizing expertise, knowledge, opportunity and leadership.

CBIE's pan-Canadian membership comprises all levels of education, including school boards, cégeps, colleges, institutes, language schools, polytechnics and universities, which enroll almost two million students from coast to coast to coast.

CBIE's activities comprise advocacy, research, training programs, scholarship management, and engaging in cooperative projects in capacity building, institutional strengthening and human resource development.

This report, prepared by CBIE, is a summary of the International Student Survey results. This survey was administered in collaboration with CBIE's participating member institutions.

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# Introduction

Comprehensive and timely pan-Canadian data is vital to inform policy and program decision-making within our sector. As the only Canadian organization dedicated to international education across all levels, CBIE is committed to leveraging its unique role to build a national body of evidence that can drive innovation and sustainability for international education in Canada.

With this in mind, I am pleased to share with you selected findings from the sixth iteration of the International Student Survey (ISS). With 67 institutions participating from across the country and over 40,000 international student responses, this survey overwhelmingly demonstrates that this student population wants to share their stories, motivations, and perceptions to help ensure the future success of all international students studying in Canada. I am proud that CBIE, in partnership with our members, can be the platform that amplifies these voices.

This year, in collaboration with a committee of practitioners and researchers, we refined our survey instrument to better articulate the challenges and opportunities that students face, from pre-arrival planning through study and post-graduate phases. Our intention is for this important tool to become instrumental in measuring the progress of strategic and operational objectives within Canadian higher education institutions.

In addition to the longitudinal data collected by CBIE since 2012, the ISS also offers a point-in-time snapshot of relevant and salient themes. The data collected in this year's survey provides valuable insight into the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on students as they experienced arriving in Canada, studying online and searching for work opportunities. The survey has also been revised to understand in a meaningful way the perceptions of safety and inclusion that students have while in our country.

As practitioners and administrators in international education, we must work together to raise awareness and broaden our understanding of the sector's inherent value and continuously strive to enhance the experience of all our students.

I am confident that the information provided in this report will be of great benefit to all who tirelessly support these efforts.



Larissa Bezo  
President and CEO

*The data collected in the survey provides valuable insight into the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on students as they experienced arriving in Canada, studying online and searching for work opportunities.*

”



# About this Survey

The 2021 CBIE International Student Survey was live from October to December 2021 and saw participation from an unprecedented number of institutions (67). The high survey response rate (41,512) of international students who completed the survey represents approximately 12% of all post-secondary international students in Canada, according to the 2021 data reported by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (351,195 study permit holders at the post-secondary level).<sup>1</sup>

For international students, it demonstrates their commitment to engage with their host community and share their educational experiences, intending to positively influence the sector's relevance and responsiveness to their needs and the needs of incoming students.

For institutions, it highlights their desire for evidence to inform policy and program decisions to ensure the international education experience they provide meets the needs and expectations of incoming students, enriches campus life, benefits the wider community, and helps calibrate their international student recruitment efforts.

For decision-makers at all levels of government, as well as for employers and community service organizations, it provides insights on how to best realize the myriad of ways in which international students can contribute to Canada's future and plan for the types of services and support required to enable these students to participate fully in community life.



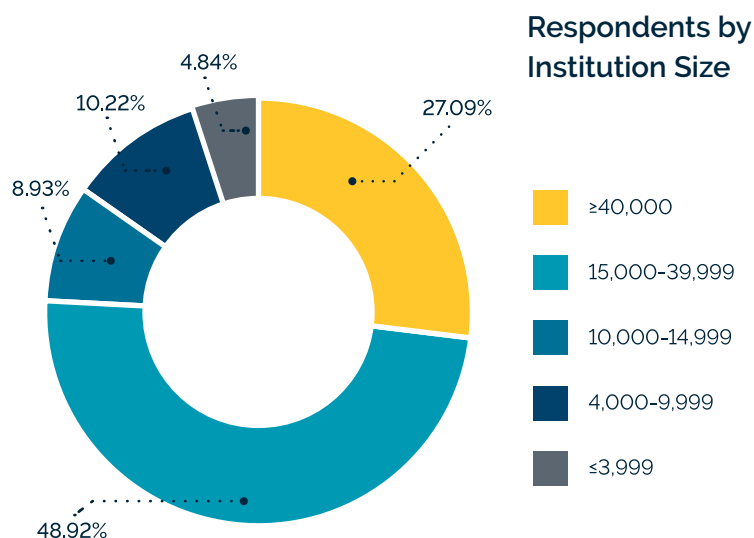
**41,512**

Completed surveys



**24.22%**

Average institutional response rate



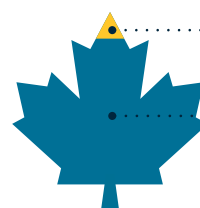
## Respondents by Institution Type and Language

Universities

**68.61%**

Colleges & Institutes

**31.39%**



**15.43%**  
French

**84.57%**  
English

<sup>1</sup> IRCC Data - Study permit holders with a valid permit by study level and year in which permit(s) became effective, 2021

# Qualifiers on the International Student Survey Data

In 2021, based on study permits issued, the top ten source countries for international students to Canada were India, China, France, Iran, Vietnam, Philippines, Republic of Korea, United States, Nigeria and Mexico.<sup>2</sup> Together, these countries represented 72.8% of international enrollment in Canada; 67.2% of student respondents of this survey were from these ten countries. While the survey results are broadly representative of international enrollment in Canada, the proportion of survey respondents from the top two source countries, India (35% of study permits; 25.3% of respondents) and China (16.9% of study permits; 10.8% respondents), are lower than might be expected. It should also be noted that survey participation was encouraged at each institution but remained optional.

Comparing the province of study of respondents to the provincial destination of study permit holders shows that students studying in Ontario are under-represented in these responses, with 47.7% of international study permit holders being located in Ontario, while 40.3% of student respondents coming from that province. Student respondents in this survey were over-represented in the Atlantic and Prairie regions.

The data-gathering phase for the 2021 ISS occurred during a peak period of the COVID-19 pandemic, when travel restrictions, quarantine and physical-distancing

measures were commonplace. Accordingly, the ISS included questions designed to provide insights into how international students in Canada experienced the pandemic. It is noted that the impacts of COVID-19 on mental health, finances and learning for all students in Canada, both domestic and international, have been far-reaching and continue to be felt. Further research is needed to determine whether there are significant differences in how the pandemic affected the two groups. It is especially important to keep this in mind when interpreting survey findings on issues such as reported levels of anxiety, satisfaction with online learning, and financial burden.

Finally, in terms of gender representativeness, it is important to note that minority gender respondents self-identified using a range of terms and that their respective international education experiences and perspectives can differ significantly. Student respondents could self-select from the following categories: female, male, non-binary/third gender, gender variant/non-conform, transgender male, transgender female, two-spirit, prefer to self-describe and prefer not to answer.

In some instances, this category was labelled as 'minority gender' as a necessity of process, not a failure of respect. In many instances, the small number of minority gender respondents limits the ability to establish clear trends.

## Study Permits in 2021 and Respondents by Region

Canadian Region	Study Permit Holders <sup>3</sup>	Respondents
Atlantic	5.2%	9.2%
British Columbia and Territories	21.7%	20.6%
Ontario	47.7%	40.3%
Prairies	10.0%	14.8%
Quebec	14.6%	15.14%

<sup>2</sup> IRCC Data - Study permit holders with a valid permit on December 31 by country of citizenship, 2021

<sup>3</sup> IRCC Data - Study permit holders with a valid permit on December 31 by province/territory of intended destination, 2021

# Executive Summary

The Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) has been studying, interpreting and sharing the experience of international students in Canada since 1988. With over 67 institutions participating from across the country and over 40,000 international student responses, the 2021 survey represents the most robust dataset that CBIE has collected to date.

This most recent iteration of the survey offers key insights for institutions, governments and other stakeholders that can be leveraged for decision-making as the sector looks ahead and seeks to chart a sustainable and impactful future for international education in Canada.

## Pre-Arrival Experience and Decision-Making

By a significant margin, student respondents cited Canada's reputation as a safe, stable and tolerant country and the quality of the educational system as critical factors in choosing Canada as a study destination. The opportunity to obtain permanent residency was cited as an important consideration by just under 40% of respondents.

The three most-valued resources cited by student respondents in helping them choose their institution were institutional websites, personal recommendations and institution ranking websites or publications. Government websites from the home country and Canada were not valued as informational resources. Interestingly, information from recruitment agents was not identified as a top resource. These findings are not universal, and the results vary considerably based on the source country.

Student respondents' three most frequently cited challenges regarding issues experienced during and following admission were arranging for accommodation, transferring funds, and obtaining a study permit. Notwithstanding the uncertainty resulting from COVID-19 travel and quarantine requirements, student respondents generally gave Canada and their institutions high grades regarding their experience on arrival.

## Learning Experience and Campus Life

Most respondents are enrolled in full-time study programs in urban centres, and three-quarters attend universities. Despite Canada's linguistic duality, only 2.3% of students were enrolled in bilingual programs, with 84.6% learning in English and 13.2% learning in French.





Business-related fields of study, Engineering, Computer Sciences and Natural and Applied Sciences accounted for over half of overall enrollment. Male respondents were over-represented in Engineering and Computer Sciences. Health Sciences and Services, Social Sciences and Art and Design accounted for just under 20% of enrollment. Female respondents were over-represented in each of these three programs.

COVID-19 lockdowns, quarantine and physical distancing measures significantly impacted the study location for student respondents. In both 2020-21 and 2021-22, roughly one in three respondents studying in Canada reported doing so exclusively virtually. The corresponding figure for in-Canada, in-person learning in 2020-21 was 11.2%. This more than tripled to 37% by 2021-22 as public health measures were gradually relaxed.

The transition to the virtual learning environment proved challenging for many student respondents, especially regarding collaborating with classmates. However, navigating institutional policies and complaint procedures or meeting professors was less problematic.

Student respondents indicated they were generally satisfied with available institutional support services, with all but one (residence and housing) obtaining satisfaction scores above 80%. While indicating broad awareness of institutional support services, few student respondents availed themselves of these services.

The imperative for institutions to actively monitor student well-being and assess the adequacy of mental health supports is highlighted by the feedback from student respondents to questions regarding their ability to cope with their academic workloads, navigate adversity and manage competing demands.

## Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples

Just under 85% of student respondents reported gaining exposure to Indigenous Peoples history and culture throughout their studies. However, the quality and intensity of these interactions showed little progression over time. There are also regional differences in where this knowledge is acquired.

## Safety, Well-Being and Inclusion

Student respondents gave institutions, faculty and administrators positive marks for their efforts to make them feel welcomed and valued. They also indicated a high level of familiarity with procedures for navigating or reporting instances of discrimination or harassment, threats to their safety and other complaints. A majority expressed confidence that their institution would address their concerns.

Despite these results, challenges remain. When asked if they agreed with the statement that "I have considered leaving my institution because I felt isolated or unwelcomed," a significant minority of respondents (16.5%) concurred. A further 15.4% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Student respondents from Asia were significantly more likely to report having experienced discrimination, harassment or feeling unsafe, especially in off-campus settings, on public transit and in virtual settings. Respondents who self-identified as Black were also more likely to report having experienced discrimination, harassment or feeling unsafe. Men were more likely than women to report having experienced harassment and discrimination.

Overall, one in four student respondents expressed that COVID-19 had worsened harassment and discrimination; the figures for Asian respondents to these questions were significantly higher, with one in three reporting COVID-19 had worsened the situation.

Student respondents indicated feeling close connections with students from their home countries (especially Asian students), with other international students and with Canadian students from other cultural backgrounds, but interestingly, not their own. Close to half of respondents indicated low levels of connection outside their communities.

## Experience with Work

While half of student respondents reported they were working or had worked, over four in ten reported having experienced challenges finding employment. Lack of work experience, Canadian or otherwise, was the primary barrier cited by respondents in explaining their difficulty finding work. However, many respondents indicated that while confident

in their skills, they lacked the ability to understand Canadian employer expectations and describe their relevant skills or that employers were unfamiliar with regulations around hiring international students.

### Post-Graduation Plans

The desire to pursue permanent residency in Canada after graduation is high but not universal. Just over four in ten student respondents indicated they planned to work for up to three years in Canada after completing their program of study and then pursue permanent residency. Another one in five indicated they planned to work in Canada for up to three years before returning home.

Student respondents planning to stay in Canada after graduation indicated they would choose the destination where they had studied. Key factors in their decision were personal (i.e. enjoying the lifestyle

and wanting to stay in touch with friends and family). Just over one in four respondents cited employment opportunities as a key factor.

### International Students as Champions

Respondents were asked to rate their likelihood of recommending their institution and Canada to other international students using the Net Promoter Score (NPS). Nearly half of student respondents can be identified as 'Promoters', indicating they would strongly recommend their institution to other prospective students. When asked if they would recommend Canada as a study destination, the likelihood of recommendation increased significantly, with 63.7% of student respondents identifying as 'Promoters'. There were also noteworthy differences in these results based on their personal experiences.





# Section 1

## Respondent Overview

The group of institutions that participated in the survey was diverse and representative of the Canadian post-secondary landscape. As a national body, CBIE strives for regional and linguistic representation in every data sampling exercise.

Most student respondents were enrolled as full-time students (97.8%), with 73% in their first (48.3%) or second year (24.7%) of study. The majority of student respondents were in study programs delivered in English (84.6%), while 13.2% were in study programs offered in French. Only 2.3% reported being registered in bilingual study programs.

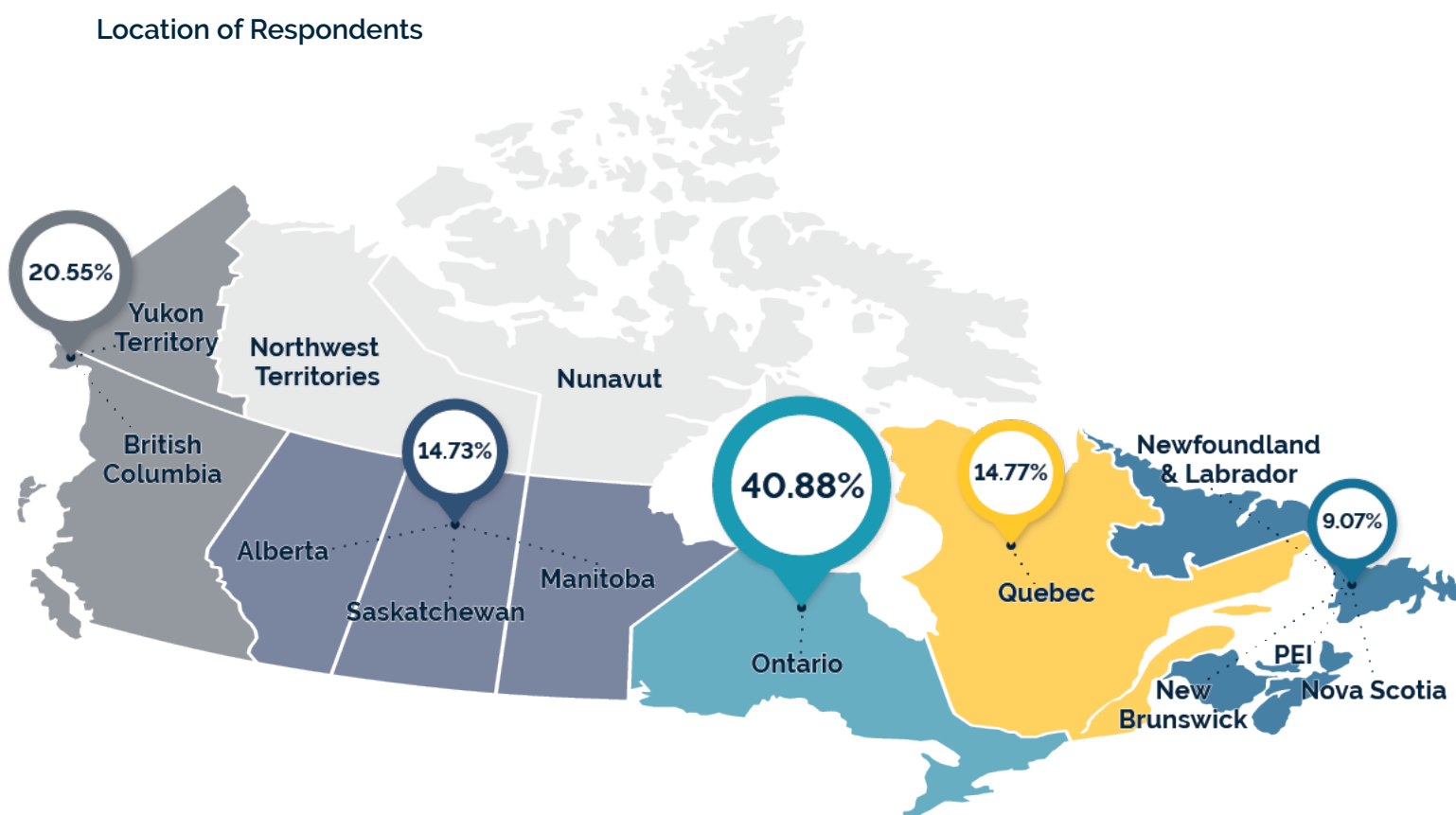
In terms of age, over 60% of student respondents were under 24 years of age, with the majority being 20 to 24 years of age (43.7%). With gender representativeness,

51.1% of student respondents identified themselves as female, 47.8% identified themselves as male, and 1.1% identified themselves as a gender other than male or female.

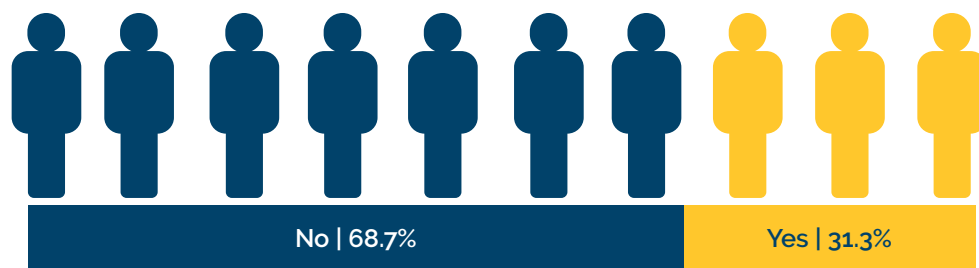
Almost four of five student respondents self-identified as non-white. Women are over-represented among Indigenous, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and Black groups, while men are slightly over-represented among Asian respondents.

Approximately 15% of student respondents were accompanied to Canada by either a spouse or common-law partner, child/children, or parent/parents. Among student respondents who are accompanied, women are more likely than men to arrive with a spouse/partner, child/children, or a parent/parents.

### Location of Respondents

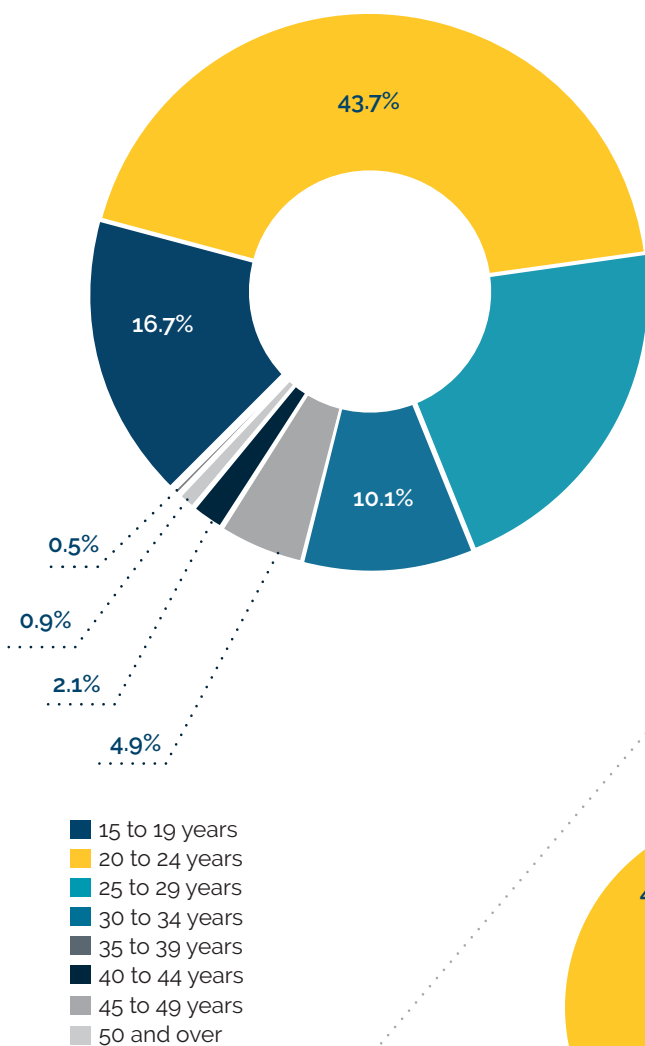


### Respondents by First Generation Status

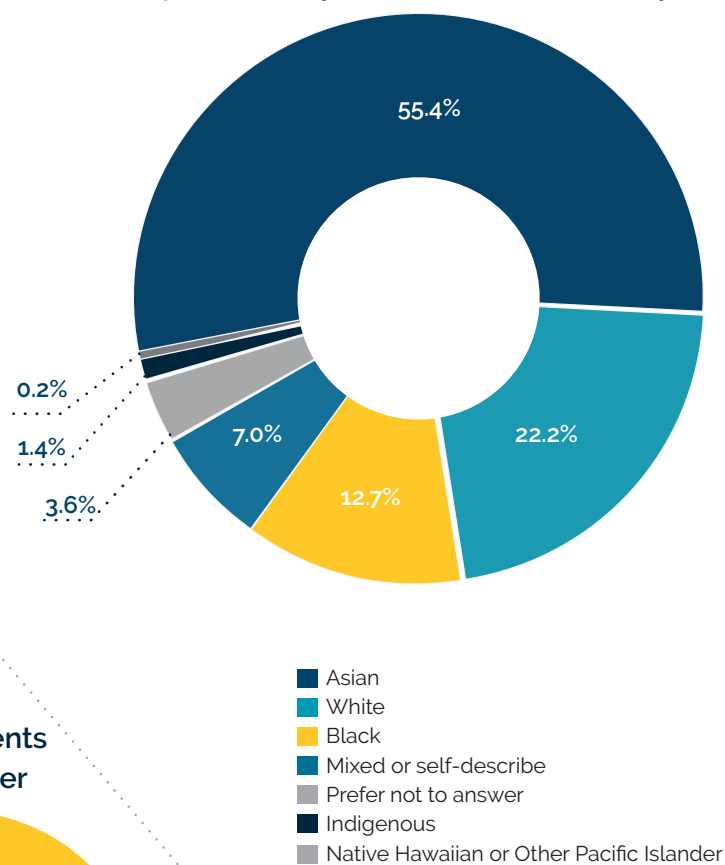


Note: First person in the immediate family to attend a post-secondary institution.

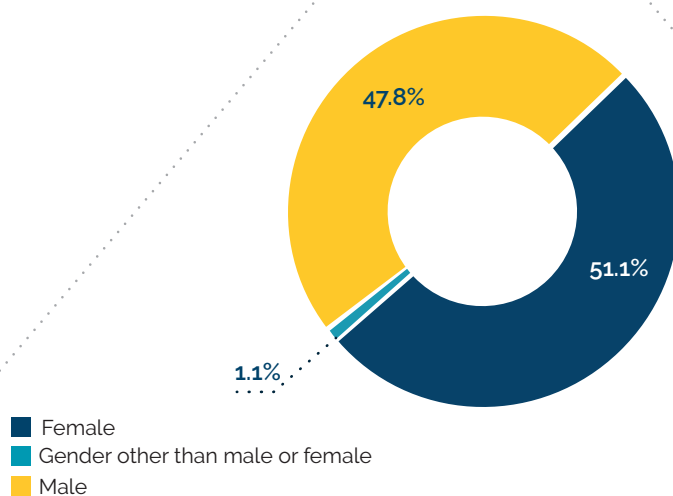
### Respondents by Age



### Respondents by Cultural/Ethnic Identity



### Respondents by Gender







## Campus Location

Urban

**88.59%**

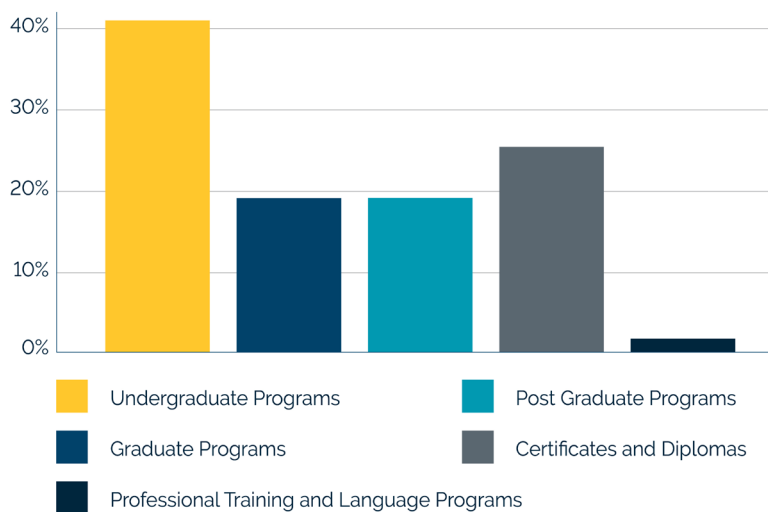
Rural

**6.97%**

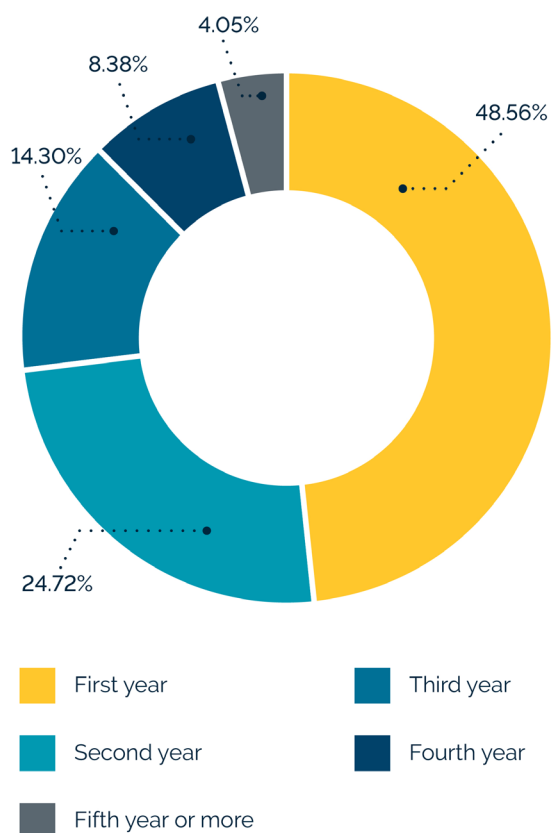
Undetermined / Offshore / Virtual

**4.45%**

## Respondents by Level of Study



## Respondents by Year of Study



## Top 10 Countries of Respondents

Vietnam Iran China Brazil  
 Philippines  
**India** Bangladesh France  
 United States  
 Nigeria of America



# Section 2

## Pre-Arrival Experience and Decision-Making

### 2.1. Canada's Global Brand

Canada's overall global brand and international education value proposition remain strong.

By a substantial margin, the three most important factors for student respondents that influenced their decision to study in Canada were our reputation as a safe and stable country (79.2% of respondents), the quality of our educational system (69.5% of respondents), and our reputation as a generally tolerant and non-discriminatory society (50.2%). Interestingly, these are consistently the top three factors that draw students to Canada; however, the order has changed, with safety

outranking reputation and quality of education for the first time. Opportunities for obtaining permanent residency in Canada was cited by 38% of respondents.

There were no significant difference in response by the gender of respondents to the top five factors influencing their decision to choose Canada. These results indicate that international student recruitment efforts by Canadian institutions should maintain a strong focus on values and take a balanced approach when promoting other benefits of choosing Canada as a place to study.

#### Reasons International Students Choose Canada

Canada's reputation as a safe and stable country.....	79.2%
The reputation and quality of the education system.....	69.5%
Offers a society that (generally) is tolerant and not discriminatory.....	50.2%
Opportunities for permanent residence .....	38.1%
Opportunities to gain work experience related to my program of study.....	34.3%

Opportunities to work while I study in Canada .....	32.2%
Opportunity to apply for a Post-Graduate Work Permit .....	30.5%
Gaining intercultural awareness and global competencies .....	29.3%
Knowing someone who lived/studied or is living/studying in Canada.....	27.1%
Affordability of studying in Canada in comparison to other countries.....	26.4%

A photograph of three young adults, two men and one woman, looking at a laptop screen. The man in the background is wearing a blue hoodie. The woman in the foreground is wearing an orange and black striped shirt. The man on the left is wearing a grey jacket. They are all smiling and looking at the screen.

*Canada is a great and safe multicultural country that respects all people regardless of their cultural background. The environment is amazing for studying. ”*

*– Male student from Zambia*



## 2.2. Informational Resources

Student respondents were asked to identify the most and least useful resources that they consulted when choosing Canada as their study destination.

For most student respondents, the institution's website, personal recommendations and websites/publications ranking universities and colleges were seen as the most valuable resources to inform their decisions.

Conversely, government websites, whether in their home country or Canada and international recruiting agents were seen as the least useful resources.

Interestingly, social media sites, online forums and blogs were considered useful by over 43.8% of respondents but were also viewed dubiously by 34.4% of respondents. There were also some differences among the top source countries regarding which resources were deemed most and least useful.

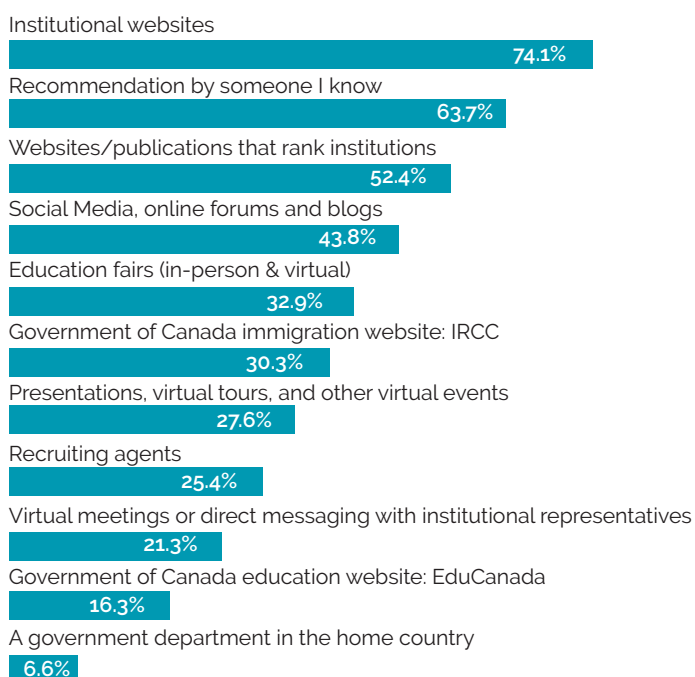
Looking at patterns of resource utility by student respondents from the top three source countries, there are some localized differences. These variances in how alternative resources are perceived underscore the need for nuanced approaches to international student recruitment in different countries, strengthening institutional and government websites and ongoing engagement with alumni to encourage them to advocate for their alma maters.

## Most Useful Resources by Top Three Sending Countries

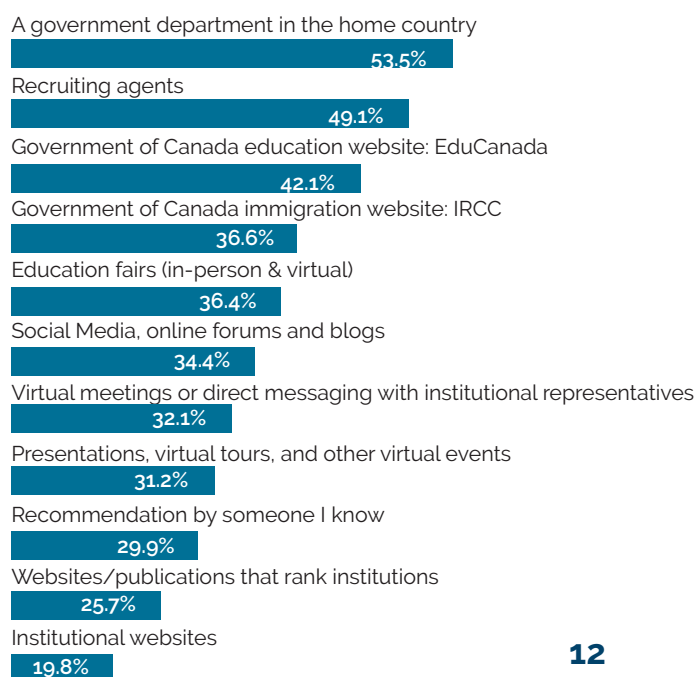
	Total %	India	China	France
Institutional websites	74.1%	77.8%	54.6%	87.8%
Recommendations by someone I know	63.7%	68.0%	71.1%	58.0%
Websites/publications that rank institutions	52.4%	56.1%	53.0%	42.5%
Social Media, online forums and blogs	43.8%	48.1%	43.6%	51.8%
Education fairs (in-person & virtual)	32.9%	40.1%	33.8%	32.3%
Government of Canada immigration website: IRCC	30.3%	39.9%	15.5%	23.6%
Presentations, virtual tours, and other virtual events	27.6%	29.9%	22.0%	46.7%
Recruiting agents	25.4%	36.0%	23.1%	10.3%
Virtual meetings or direct messaging with institutional representatives	21.3%	21.0%	13.6%	37.0%
Government of Canada education website: EduCanada	16.3%	22.5%	12.3%	8.4%
A government department in the home country	6.6%	5.5%	10.6%	13.1%

Over the average | Under the average

## Most Useful Resources



## Least Useful Resources



## 2.3. Experience with Admissions and Pre-Arrival

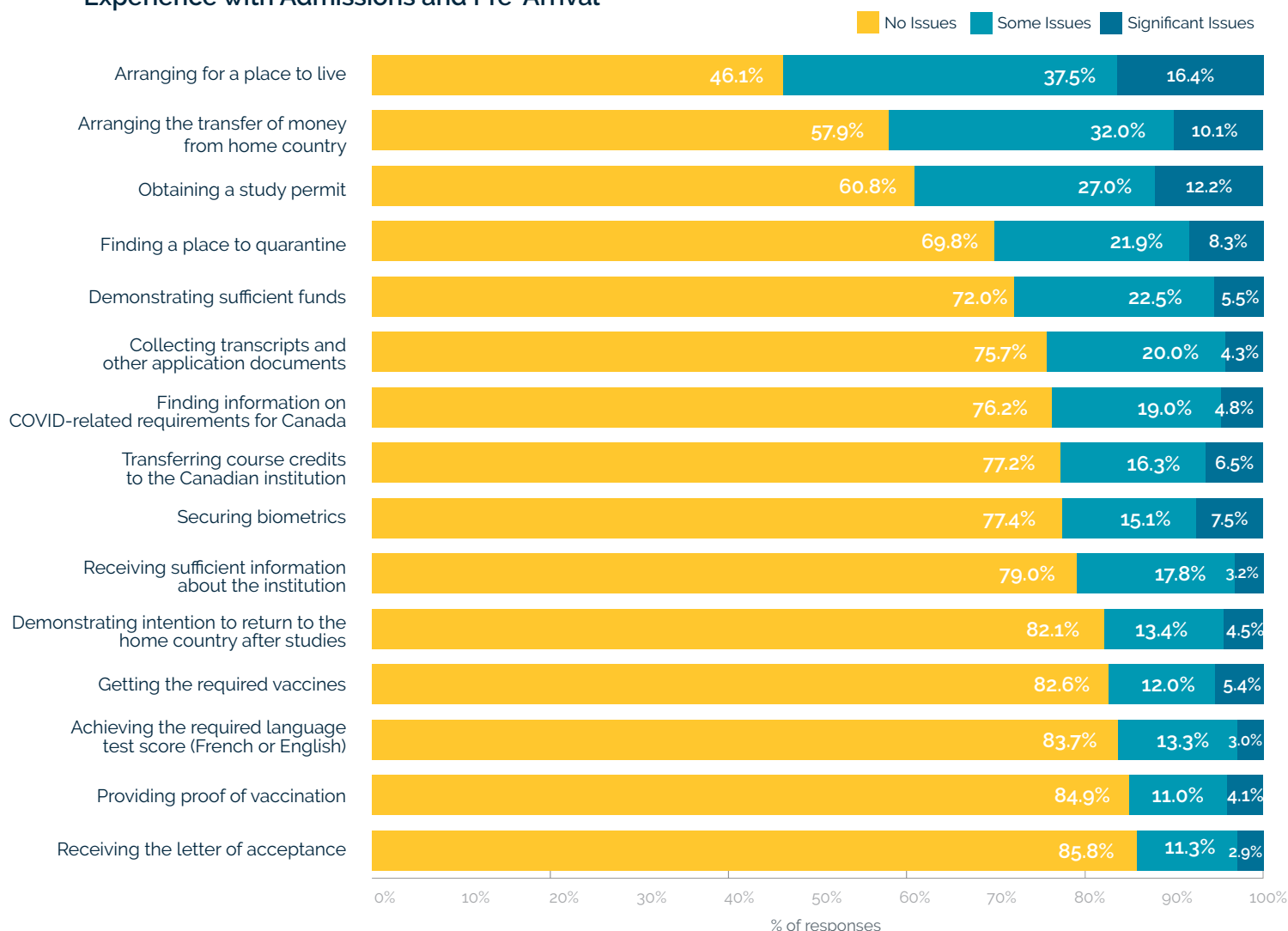
Among student respondents, the top three issues encountered during or following admission were arranging for accommodation, transferring funds, and obtaining a study permit. Each of these factors was cited at least 40% of the time by respondents. Among respondents from the top ten source countries for international students to Canada, there were notable differences in terms of issues experienced, particularly regarding study permits. Interestingly, while there are differences between countries, the scores were virtually identical among students from the same country who enrolled on a full-time or part-time basis or studied in a rural or urban centre.

Students from countries that have recently begun increasing their enrollment in Canadian institutions reported more frequent issues with study permit flows

than those from established source countries. While these differences may be attributable to the simple fact that established source countries have more robust networks and institutional practices based on experience, a more careful review of causality needs to be undertaken to understand these issues.

There is a broad consensus across Canada's international education community on the imperative to diversify source countries for recruitment. As these diversification efforts continue, careful consideration must be given to attendant issues experienced by international students. Finally, absent comparative data, it is unclear whether issues cited by international students, for example, finding affordable accommodations, reflect the realities of Canada's tight housing market or are a sign of broader resourcing issues.

### Experience with Admissions and Pre-Arrival



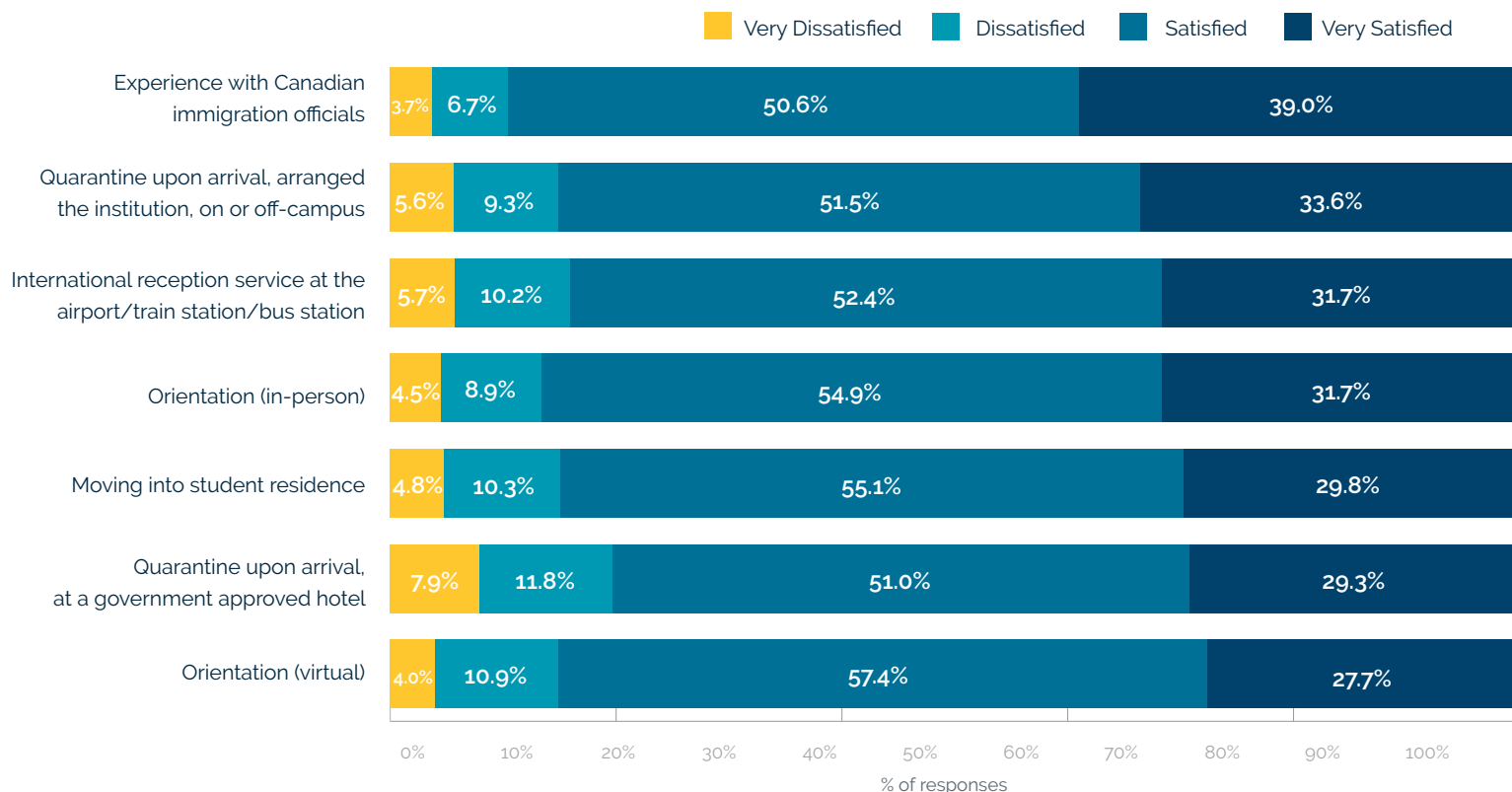
## 2.4. Experience on Arrival

Overall, student respondents gave Canadian institutions relatively high marks vis-à-vis their experience on arrival in Canada. Given the uncertainty and challenges posed by COVID-19 quarantine lockdown measures, these results are especially heartening. The generally high level of reported satisfaction with interactions with Canadian immigration officials is also noteworthy.

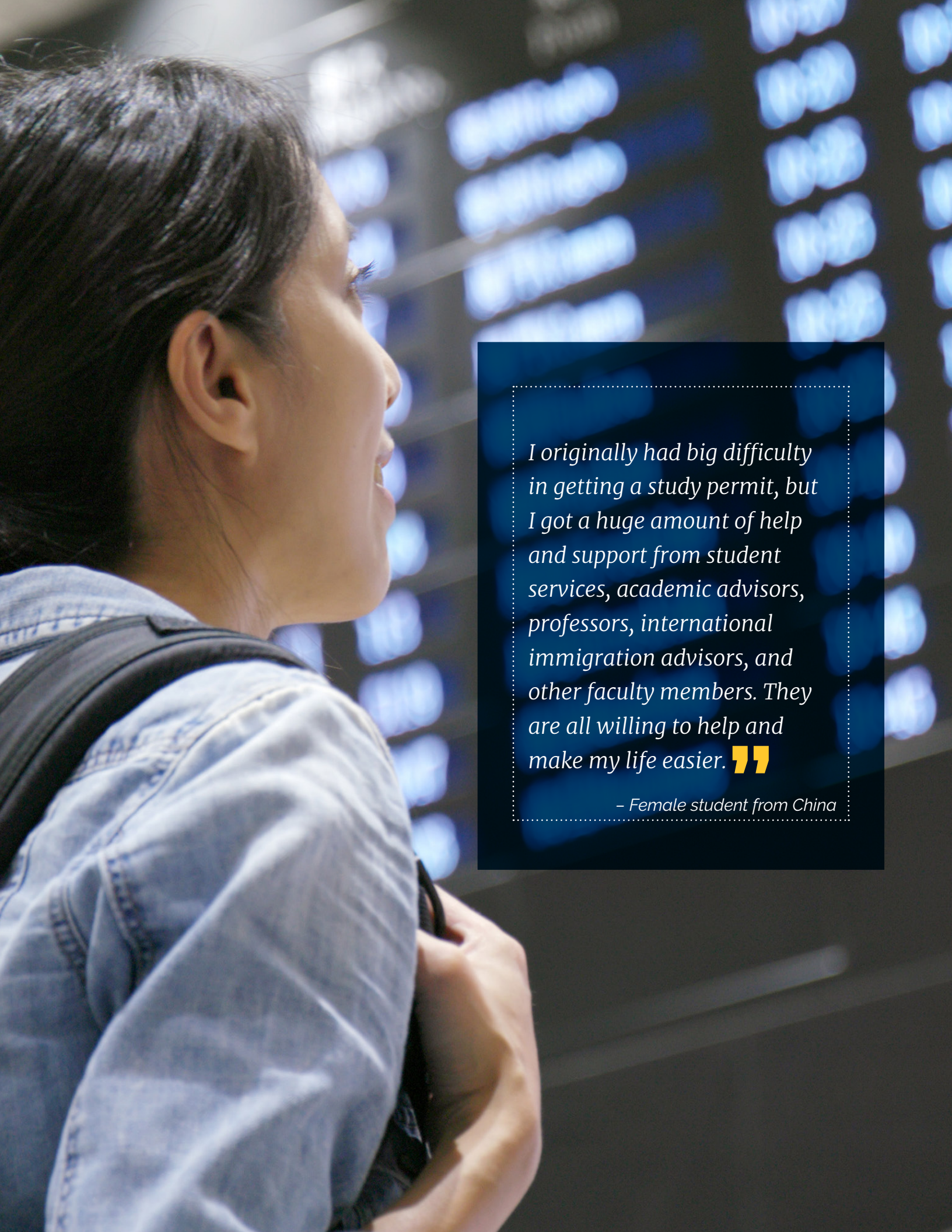
Notwithstanding the challenges posed by COVID-19 travel and quarantine measures, student respondents were generally satisfied with efforts to accommodate their requirements on arrival in Canada. Over 8 in 10 indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with arrangements for quarantine at a government-approved hotel. For arrangements made by institutions to provide for quarantine upon arrival on or off-campus, the combined satisfaction score exceeded 85%.

While there are no significant differences in satisfaction reported by source country across the indicators, student respondents from France, South Korea and Iran reported somewhat less satisfying experiences on arrival in Canada across most indicators, but especially regarding quarantine in a government-approved hotel and orientation, both in-person and virtually. The only anomaly is among student respondents from South Korea, who, by a substantial margin, expressed the least satisfying interactions with Canadian immigration officials. These less satisfying interactions may be reflective of their concerns over quarantine measures. Additionally, it is noted that student respondents from South Korea, as outlined later in the report, also reported having experienced the highest levels of discrimination and harassment.

### Experience on Arrival







*I originally had big difficulty in getting a study permit, but I got a huge amount of help and support from student services, academic advisors, professors, international immigration advisors, and other faculty members. They are all willing to help and make my life easier. ”*

*– Female student from China*



# Section 3

## Learning Experience and Campus Life

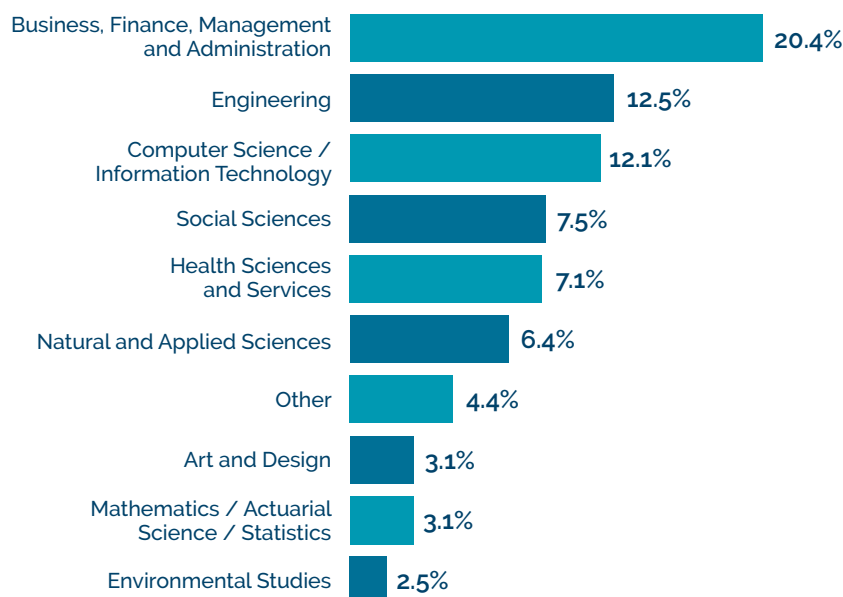
### 3.1. Fields of Study

Business-related fields of study dominated the responses, with 20.4% of respondents indicating their field of study included Business. Engineering (12.5%) and Computer Science (12.1%) were the next most frequently cited fields, followed by Social Sciences (7.5%), Health Sciences and Services (7.1%) and Applied Sciences (6.4%).

Looking at the breakdown of the top ten fields of study by gender, there are very strong trends. Female respondents, who are 51.1% of survey respondents, are

over-represented in the Health Sciences (where they are over 70% of responding students), the Social Sciences (65.5%) and Art and Design (57.4%). Male respondents are over-represented in Engineering (69.7%) and Math (57.2%). Respondents who indicated a gender other than male or female (1.1% of responses) are most likely to be enrolled in Art and Design (1.1%) or Social Sciences (2.5%) but are under-represented in Business (0.4% of students) and Engineering 0.5%.

#### Top Fields of Study



Students attending universities represent 75.4% of ISS respondents and are concentrated in these fields.

Mathematics

96.8%

Social Sciences

96.4%

Humanities

94.5%

Natural Resources

93.5%

Engineering

88.0%

Environmental Studies

86.7%

Law and Legal Services

86.6%

Undecided

83.9%

Communication

83.2%

Education

77.4%

Trades, Transport & Equipment Operation

**86.1%**

Hospitality

**75.6%**

Manufacturing

**73.1%**

English as a Second Language (ESL)

**65.2%**

Applied Technology

**52.9%**

Architecture

**40.1%**

Health Science and Services

**36.6%**

Business

**36.5%**

Students attending colleges/institutes represent 24.6% of ISS respondents and are concentrated in these fields.

Student respondents at urban (87.7% of responses), rural (7.8% of responses), and virtual (4.5% of responses) institutions are more or less evenly distributed by fields of study with some exceptions. A majority of respondents were in urban settings with programs in Social and Community Services (77.9%), Trades, Transport, Equipment Operations (73.4%), Natural Resources (65.6%), Indigenous Studies (77.8%), Hospitality (78.7%) and Architecture (98.4%).

There are gender differences regarding respondents' age and the type of study being pursued by international students in Canada.

Female student respondents are over-represented (52.5%) among the youngest group of respondents (15 to 19 years) and among those 30 years and older.

They also make up a majority of students seeking an associate degree (59.4%) or bachelor's degree (52.5%) but are under-represented in pursuing a master's degree (48.4%) or Ph.D./doctorate (42.5%). Female student respondents are also over-represented in certificate programs (59.6%), college professional training programs (57.3%), and university professional degree programs, such as law or medicine.



### 3.2. Location of Studies and the Pandemic

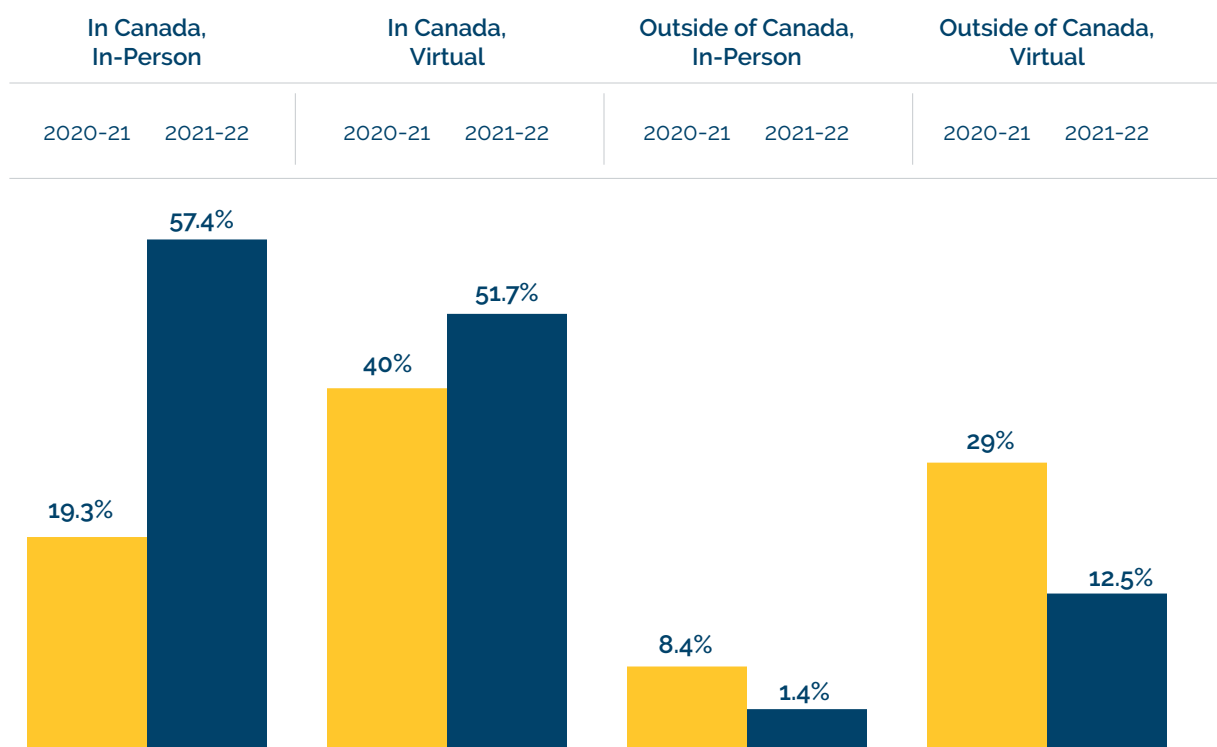
The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on study location among student respondents. In 2020-21, the number of student respondents studying in Canada (in-person or virtually) was significantly lower than in 2021-22. Similarly, the number of student respondents studying outside of Canada (in-person or virtually) was higher in 2020-21 than in 2021-22.

Among student respondents studying in Canada in 2020-21, 32.9% indicated they completed their studies virtually, and 11.2% indicated they completed

their studies exclusively in person. For 2021-22, the corresponding numbers for virtual studies were 30.2%, while in-person studies jumped sharply to 37.3%.

Over this period, student respondents enrolled in first and second-year studies were slightly less likely to indicate in-person, in-Canada studies than their counterparts in third-year and above. They were also more likely to indicate an exclusively outside of Canada virtual study experience.

#### Location of Students During the Pandemic



Among source countries in 2021, student respondents from India and the Philippines were most likely to have completed their studies outside of Canada. In 2022, Chinese respondents were almost twice as likely to be studying outside of Canada as their counterparts—a reflection of China's strong emphasis on using lockdowns to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

First and second-year student respondents were more likely to be studying exclusively virtually in Canada and outside of Canada than their third, fourth, and fifth-year counterparts. They were also less likely to be studying in person in Canada.

### 3.3. Impact of Virtual Learning

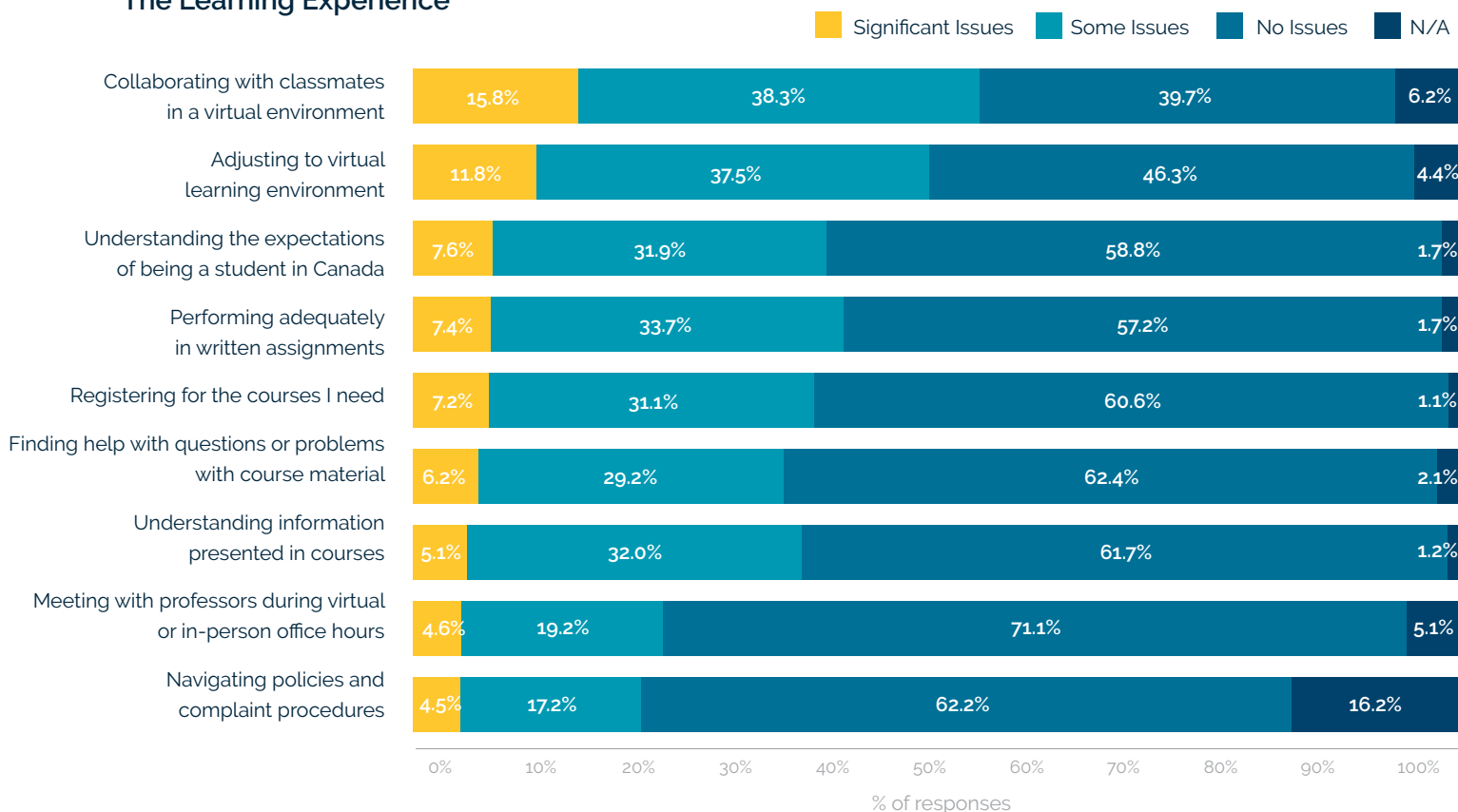
The transition to virtual learning posed challenges for a number of student respondents, especially in regard to collaborating with classmates (15.8%) and adjusting to a virtual learning environment (11.8%).

Few reported significant issues with navigating institutional policies (4.5%) or complaint procedures and meeting with professors during office hours (4.6%).

*Doing most of the courses online has been challenging. It is tough to stay motivated... I always feel like I lost an excellent opportunity to make friends, build a network, and connect with people. ”*

– Female student from India

### The Learning Experience





### 3.4. Accommodations

Among student respondents, only 13.8% reported living in residence. Of these, 54.9% were in their first year of study.

Most respondents reported living in a room, house, or apartment they rented themselves (32.7%) or with roommates (30.2%). Women were slightly less likely to be living alone in a rented apartment, house, or room (30.3% compared to 35.6% for men) and more likely to be living in a rental with a family (17.3% of women as compared to 12% for men).

### 3.5. Satisfaction with Institutional Services

Student respondents were generally satisfied with the level and quality of institutional services available to them, with all but one service area receiving a satisfied/very satisfied rating above 80%. However, a significant number of student respondents reported they were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied with four key areas of institutional services, residence and housing (22.6%), counselling and mental health services (19.6%), health services (16.8%), and financial services (16.3%).

While student respondents indicated they were aware their institution offered support in the aforementioned areas, few took advantage of available services. For residence and housing, 46.9% of respondents reported never having used these services. For counselling and mental health services, the figure rose to 61.7%. The figure was 40.3% for health services, and for financial services, the figure was 33.6%.

Overall, there are only minor differences in terms of student respondent satisfaction with institutional services regardless of province or territory of study or whether they are in a rural or urban setting.

When turning our attention to Canadian institutions and their level of support for accompanied students, 66% of student respondents were satisfied (50%) or very satisfied (16%) with services provided to partners to settle and integrate into the community. While 69% were very satisfied (24%) or satisfied (45%) with the support received to settle and integrate children into the community.

#### Accommodations While in Canada

32.7%	Renting as a single person
30.2%	Renting with non-family members
14.7%	Renting with family members
13.8%	On-campus residence
3.4%	Owned accommodation
3.4%	Homestay
1.8%	Other

*Diversity would be the best part. My international student advisor, my instructor, staff at the university's residence all respect my identity, and are willing to make accommodation if needed. Facilities (e.g. swimming pool) are often found with gender-neutral facility which inspires me. "*

*– Transgender male student from Hong Kong*

Absent comparative data on the reported challenges experienced by international students versus Canadian ones, it is difficult to draw any definitive conclusions about the nature of these issues, other than they merit priority attention.

However, what is clear is that there appears to be a disconnect between the self-reported needs of international students and the actual accessing of available services and supports within institutions. Further proactive efforts intended to raise awareness and uptake of available services could be beneficial for international students expressing self-reported needs for support/services.

## Use and Knowledge of Support Services

Service	Did not know about %	Never Used %
Facilities for Religious Worship	14.2	59.9
Additional Language Support (English/French)	10.0	55.5
Work Integrated and Experiential Learning Services	9.1	51.5
Recreational Facilities	6.1	43.2
International Office Services	4.9	23.7
Career and Employment Services	4.3	45.6
Accessibility Services	4.3	51.6
International Student Advising	4.0	24.4
Admissions and Credit Transfer Offices	3.8	44.7
Residence and Housing	3.7	46.9
Student Social Groups and Clubs	3.6	43.7
Safety Services	3.6	42.9
Counseling and Mental Health Services	3.5	61.7
Student Union or Associations	3.4	42.5
Academic Advising	3.0	33.5
Financial Services	2.4	33.6
Registrar's Office	2.3	26.0
Health Services	2.2	40.3
Library Services	0.9	22.2

## Satisfaction with Support Services

Library Services	3.37
Safety Services	3.31
Accessibility Services	3.29
Student Social Groups and Clubs	3.19
Academic Advising	3.19
Registrar's Office	3.19
Student Union or Associations	3.19
International Student Advising	3.18
International Office Services	3.16
Additional Language Support (English/French)	3.15
Work Integrated and Experiential Learning Services	3.15
Career and Employment Services	3.13
Admissions and Credit Transfer Offices	3.13
Recreational Facilities	3.13
Facilities for Religious Worship	3.10
Health Services	3.08
Counselling and Mental Health Services	3.06
Financial Services	3.06
Residence and Housing	2.93

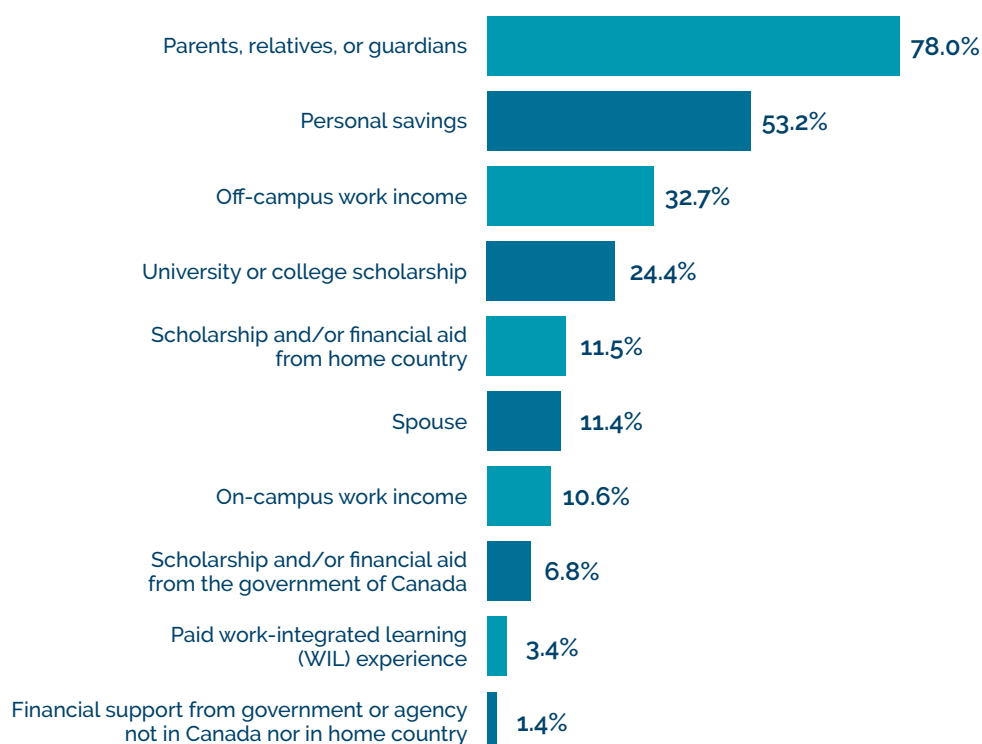
Average Satisfaction with Support Services (Scale of 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 4 (Very Satisfied))

### 3.6. Financial Support

One-third of student respondents depend on off-campus work and/or scholarships to finance their education. When asked to choose their top three sources of financial support for their education, almost eight in ten student respondents identified their parents, relatives, or guardians. Over half of student respondents selected personal savings, and one in three selected

off-campus work. There are also notable differences in types of financial support received based on gender, with women twice as likely to rely on a spouse for financial support and less likely to rely on personal savings or home country scholarships.

#### Sources of Funding





### 3.7. Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples

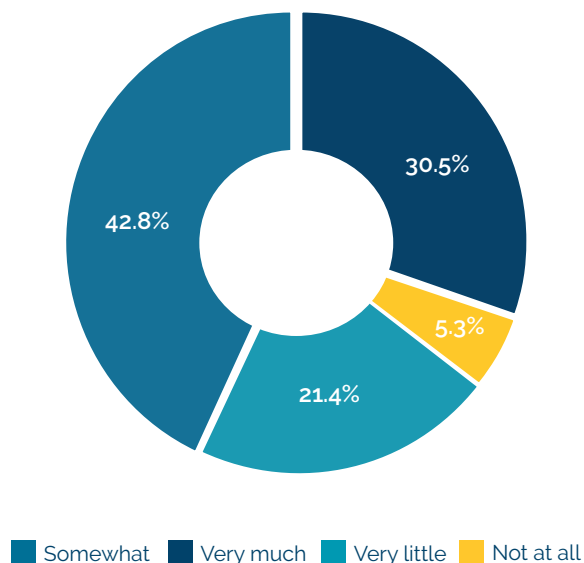
Among student respondents, almost 85% reported gaining awareness of or having exposure to Indigenous Peoples and their history and culture over the course of their studies. This exposure was achieved through a number of different sources. Classroom/coursework is most often cited as the source of this exposure, with orientation also frequently cited.

One in four respondents indicated that since the start of their studies in Canada, their appreciation of Indigenous history and culture had grown very little (21.4%) or not at all (5.3%).

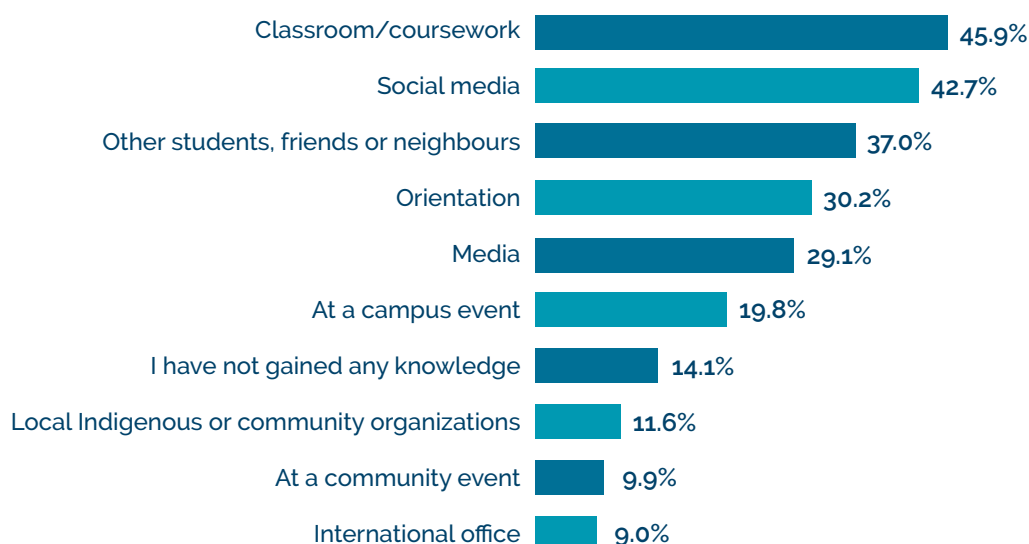
There also appears to be scope for the international offices to play a more active role in supporting these efforts. Additional work is required not only to reach the 15% of student respondents who indicated they had not gained any knowledge of Indigenous history and culture since their arrival in Canada, but to increase the quality of that exposure.

On a regional basis, some jurisdictions have been more effective than others in raising awareness of Canada's Indigenous heritage.

#### Growth in Appreciation of Indigenous Peoples' History and Culture



#### Where Students Gained Knowledge about Indigenous Peoples in Canada



## Where Students Gained Knowledge about Indigenous Peoples by Region

	Classroom / coursework	Social media	Other students, friends or neighbours	Orientation	Media	At a campus event	Local Indigenous or community organizations	At a community event	International office	I have not gained any knowledge
Atlantic	30.5%	32.9%	26.5%	21.8%	20.2%	21.2%	10.4%	10.2%	10.6%	8.6%
BC and Territories	60.4%	49.3%	40.6%	48.0%	32.5%	36.4%	16.8%	14.7%	9.8%	6.7%
Ontario	46.4%	43.4%	33.2%	29.7%	26.4%	14.9%	9.9%	7.9%	9.8%	16.6%
Prairies	51.8%	43.4%	40.1%	39.6%	30.2%	21.8%	13.9%	10.8%	10.5%	9.4%
Quebec	28.7%	37.1%	45.3%	2.9%	36.2%	7.7%	7.4%	7.3%	3.3%	25.3%



*I learned that the country is working towards reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples of Canada and as an immigrant, I can provide my support as well. ”*

*– Female student from Nigeria*

# Section 4

## Safety, Well-Being and Inclusion

### 4.1. Students and Belonging

Student respondents generally agreed with the statements indicating that their institution, faculty, and administration were doing an effective job acknowledging their personal and academic needs, treating them with respect and making them feel welcomed and valued.

Despite these positive ratings regarding inclusion, respect, and connection, 16.5% of respondents agreed with the statement: 'I have considered leaving my institution because I felt isolated or unwelcome' and a further 15.4% neither agreed nor disagreed with

that statement. These results indicate that feelings of isolation remain a substantial challenge. There were no significant differences across these indicators based on gender or ethnicity, although those identifying as neither male nor female were more likely to report feelings of isolation.

The gender breakdown of belonging among student respondents shows slight differences between female and male respondents. The stronger trend is that minority gender respondents report substantially less institutional belonging.

### Statements of Belonging by Gender

	Female	Minority Genders	Male
I have considered leaving my institution because I felt isolated or unwelcomed.	3.56	2.31	2.06
I have found one or more communities or groups where I feel I belong at my institution.	3.65	3.41	3.67
I feel valued as an individual at my institution.	3.59	3.44	3.79
I feel I belong at my institution.	3.35	3.62	3.89
I feel included in academic research/study groups.	3.10	3.64	4.00
Faculty members and teaching assistants help me to feel included in the classroom.	3.09	3.92	4.13
I am treated with respect at my institution.	3.56	4.03	4.23

Average Feelings of Belonging [Scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)]

## Statements of Belonging by Cultural/Ethnic Identity

	Asian	Black	Indigenous	Mixed or self-describe	White
I have considered leaving my institution because I felt isolated or unwelcomed.	2.07	1.96	2.14	1.95	1.90
I have found one or more communities or groups where I feel I belong at my institution.	3.74	3.47	3.61	3.45	3.55
I feel valued as an individual at my institution.	3.86	3.74	3.75	3.70	3.72
I feel I belong at my institution.	3.93	3.86	3.87	3.78	3.83
I feel included in academic research/study groups.	4.09	3.89	4.08	3.92	3.93
Faculty members and teaching assistants help me to feel included in the classroom.	4.21	4.10	4.22	4.15	4.09
I am treated with respect at my institution.	4.25	4.17	4.36	4.35	4.29

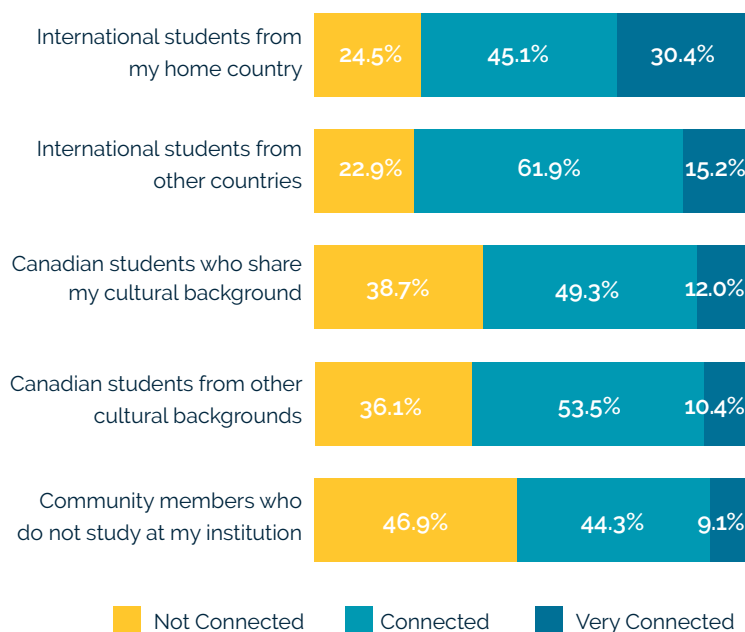
Average Feelings of Belonging [Scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)]

## 4.2. Connection to Student Groups

Student respondents indicated close feelings of connection with students from their home country and with other international students. They reported a closer affinity with Canadian students from other cultural backgrounds but less with Canadian students who shared their cultural backgrounds. However, their overall reported level of connection outside of their communities was low, with 46.9% reporting no connection outside their communities and only 9.1 % saying they felt very connected beyond their institution.

There are some differences between urban and rural student respondents, especially with feeling 'not connected' to the community; 41.8% of rural and 47.0% of urban students reported no connection. Urban students reported higher levels of not connecting than rural students across all questions.

### Feelings of Connection to Student Groups



Patterns of connection by year of study were steady regarding questions about links to other international students. There is a slight decline in 'no connection to Canadian students from other cultural backgrounds' from 37.5% in the first year to 32% in the fourth year. Similarly, there is a decline in 'no connection to Canadian students who share cultural backgrounds' from 40.7% in the first year to 31.8% in the fourth year, before rising again in the fifth year to 35.6%.

While there was little variance across these findings based on gender, student respondents from Asia were most likely to report a high degree of connection to international students from their home country and other international students. Indigenous student

respondents noted the highest degree of connection to community members beyond the institution.

Examining trends in connection by country suggests that national origin impacts student ratings of how connected they feel. Student respondents from Iran, and South Korea report the lowest overall connectedness ratings, with lower levels of connection to students from their home countries and Canadians who share their backgrounds. Respondents from Iran also report the lowest levels of connection to Canadian students from other cultural backgrounds and outside community members.

### Feelings of Connection to Student Groups by Top Source Countries

	International students from my home country	International students from other countries	Canadian students who share my cultural background	Canadian students from other cultural backgrounds	Community members who do not study at the institution
India	2.25	1.98	1.85	1.83	1.69
China	2.33	1.81	1.83	1.73	1.57
France	2.27	1.85	1.87	1.73	1.68
Iran	2.10	1.79	1.48	1.55	1.51
Vietnam	1.95	1.96	1.73	1.77	1.67
South Korea	1.81	1.83	1.61	1.67	1.52
Philippines	2.17	1.94	1.76	1.77	1.69
United States	1.63	1.81	1.87	1.84	1.55
Nigeria	2.10	1.84	1.69	1.65	1.60
Mexico	1.84	2.04	1.61	1.72	1.64

Average Closeness of Connection [Scale of 1 (Not Connected) to 3 (Very Connected)]

### 4.3. Feelings of Well-Being

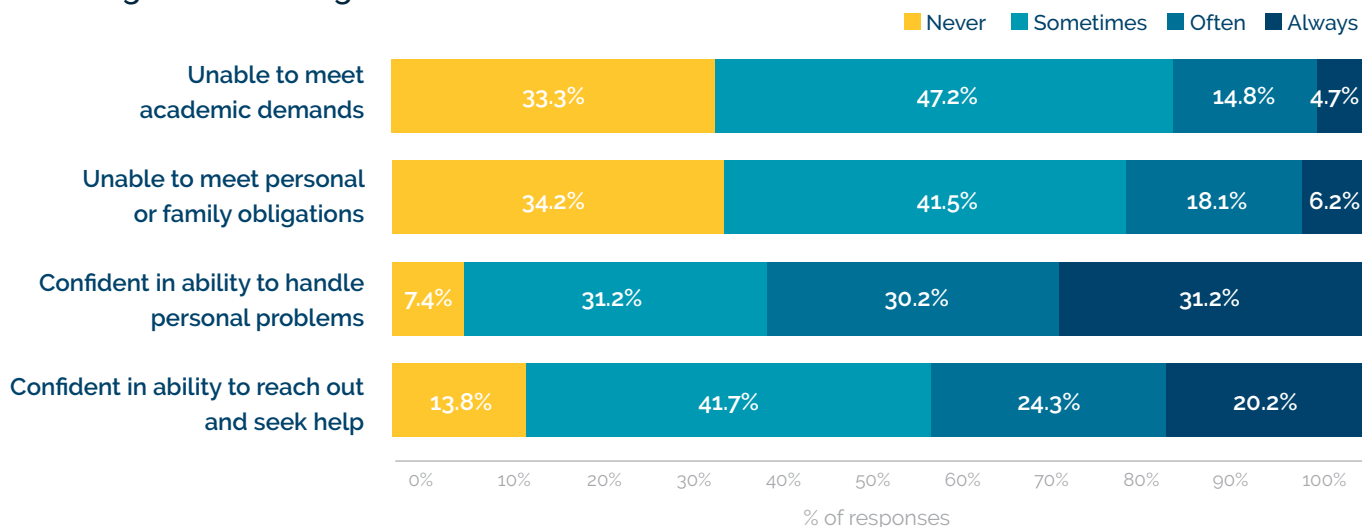
Student responses to questions about their ability to cope with their academic workloads, navigate adversity, and manage competing demands underscore the need for institutions to actively monitor international students' well-being and ensure the availability of counselling and mental health services. There were marginal differences by gender and ethnicity across these indicators.

There are also some statistically significant differences by year of study. Confidence in their ability to handle personal problems declines over time, with 35.7% of first-year student respondents reporting they are 'always' confident in their ability to handle personal problems, compared to 23.7% of fourth-year students. Similarly, 36.1% of first-year respondents reported 'never' feeling unable to meet academic demands. This declined to 26.8% for third-year students but increased after the third year before gradually reaching 33% for fifth-year students. Likewise, feeling 'never' unable to meet personal or family obligation sits at 37.9% in first-year respondents, sinking to 27.9% in the third year before rebounding to reach 29.1% in the fourth year and 30.9% in the fifth year. The notable decline in optimism among first-year respondents and its gradual rebound among fourth and fifth-year students would be an area of interest for further study.

There are differences in reported well-being by urban and rural status. Rural students reported higher levels of well-being, with 40.2% of rural and 30.5% of urban students reporting that they are 'always' confident that they can handle personal problems. 40.3% of rural students reported never feeling unable to meet academic demands, compared to 32.8% of urban students. Again, further analysis is required to understand whether this phenomenon is related to the program of study, available support services or the demographic characteristics of international students studying in rural areas.

Absent comparative data, it is not clear whether the ability of international students to manage adversity is stronger or weaker than those of Canadian students. That said, in section 3.5. *Satisfaction with Institutional Services*, it is observed that while international students are largely aware of the availability of on-campus counselling and mental health services, few choose to avail themselves of these services. Accordingly, the need for institutions to assess the relevance and accessibility of these services, recalibrate them as necessary, and be more proactive in marketing them should be noted. The same point stands with respect to these findings for all students.

#### Feelings of Well-Being





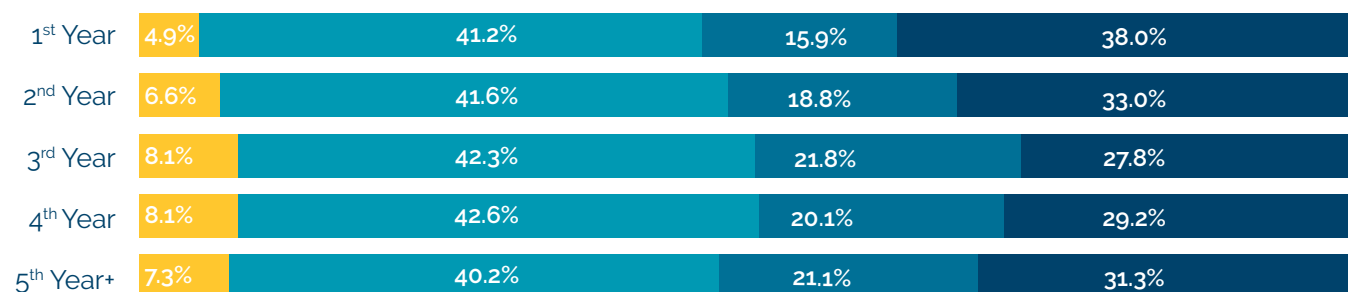
## Feelings of Well-Being by Year of Study

Always Sometimes Often Never

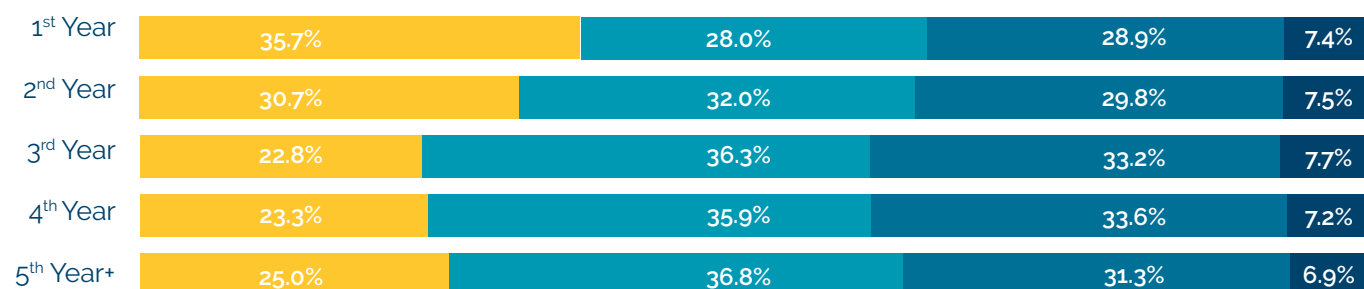
## I feel unable to meet academic demands.



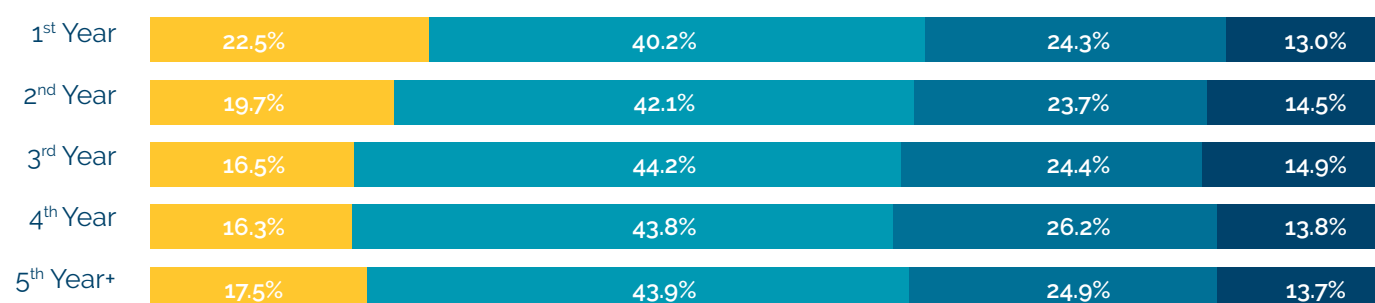
## I feel unable to meet personal or family obligations.




## I feel confident in my ability to handle personal problems.



## I feel confident that I can reach out to seek help.





A photograph of two young men sitting on a grassy lawn in front of a house. The man on the left, of Asian descent, is wearing a dark blue sweater over a light blue collared shirt and is looking down at a small white object in his hands. The man on the right, of African descent, is wearing a dark blue sweater over a light blue collared shirt and large silver headphones. He is looking towards the first man with a slight smile. A laptop is open in front of him. In the foreground, there is a stack of books, including a prominent red one. The background shows a house with a brown roof and white trim under a clear sky.

*I feel like it is hard to make friends.  
People come to class and go home.  
I'm not sure if it's just me but I find  
it hard to make meaningful close  
friendships with other students. ”*

*– Male student from Indonesia*



## 4.4. Feelings of Safety

Student respondents generally indicated high degrees of perceived safety, especially in their own accommodations, on-campus and workplaces. They were less at ease in online and social media environments, and students reported the lowest feelings of safety in public spaces, especially on public transit.

Women were slightly more concerned about their safety in each category, with the sharpest differences relevant to public transportation. By cultural/ethnic identity, Asian students reported the lowest feelings of safety in all categories, followed by Black students.

### Feelings of Safety by Location and Cultural/Ethnic Identity

	Asian	Black	Indigenous	Mixed or self-describe	White
On-campus	3.53	3.61	3.69	3.70	3.73
My accommodation	3.62	3.65	3.72	3.73	3.71
My workplace	3.54	3.56	3.70	3.68	3.72
Online /social media	3.35	3.31	3.54	3.49	3.49
Public spaces off-campus	3.09	3.19	3.52	3.32	3.31
Public transport	3.12	3.21	3.40	3.27	3.27

Average Feelings of Safety (Scale of 1 (Not Safe) to 4 (Very Safe))

When feelings of safety are examined by gender, respondents who indicated a gender identity other than male or female report the lowest levels of feelings of safety in each category, followed by female respondents.

Differences between male and female respondents are widest in the perceived safety of public transit, where men's mean response is 0.19 higher than women's at 3.28 (compared to 3.09). While these differences are slight, they are statistically significant.

When segmented by source country, there are differences in feelings of safety. South Korean students report the lowest feelings of safety in all categories, followed by Chinese and Vietnamese students. French students have the highest overall average feelings of safety.

### Feelings of Safety by Location and Gender

	Females	Minority Genders	Males
On-campus	3.56	3.45	3.64
Your accommodation	3.65	3.54	3.66
My workplace	3.59	3.43	3.61
Online /social media	3.35	3.23	3.43
Public spaces off-campus	3.10	2.97	3.26
Public transport	3.09	2.93	3.28

Average Feelings of Safety (Scale of 1 (Not Safe) to 4 (Very Safe))

## Feelings of Safety by Location and Top Source Countries

	On-campus	Your accommodation	My workplace	Online / Social Media	Public spaces	Public transport
India	3.64	3.69	3.64	3.43	3.29	3.36
China	3.31	3.49	3.38	3.28	2.79	2.79
France	3.80	3.75	3.78	3.57	3.44	3.39
Iran	3.64	3.62	3.61	3.34	3.20	3.20
Vietnam	3.44	3.54	3.45	3.24	2.92	2.89
South Korea	3.22	3.46	3.31	3.19	2.77	2.66
Philippines	3.57	3.68	3.47	3.30	3.13	3.09
United States	3.57	3.71	3.65	3.47	3.17	3.10
Nigeria	3.63	3.71	3.76	3.63	3.22	3.24
Mexico	3.82	3.79	3.62	3.38	3.48	3.41

Average Feelings of Safety (Scale of 1 (Not Safe) to 4 (Very Safe))

## 4.5. Experiences of Discrimination

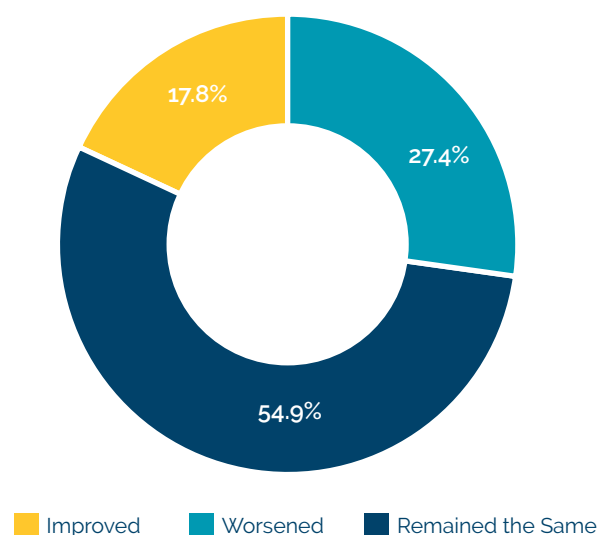
Student respondents also reported having experienced the highest levels of discrimination or harassment within the off-campus community. Student respondents who indicated a gender other than male or female reported the most substantial experiences of harassment across all locations. The differences for minority gender respondents were especially marked in online environments and social media platforms. Across six of seven indicators examined, male respondents were more likely to report having experienced harassment or discrimination than females. With the 'off-campus and in the community' indicator, males and females had identical scores.

Across all indicators, students who identify as Black reported the highest levels of harassment and discrimination and students who identify as White reported the lowest. Within classroom settings, Asian respondents reported having experienced the highest levels of discrimination and harassment.

When asked whether the COVID-19 pandemic affected their experiences with harassment and discrimination, approximately one in four respondents (27.4%) said the pandemic made the situation worse.

For Asian respondents, the impacts were even more pronounced, with one-in-three indicating a worsening

## Experience with Discrimination or Harassment during the COVID-19 Pandemic



of harassment and discrimination. By gender, minority gender respondents were more likely to indicate that discrimination had worsened (31.2%), followed by women (27.6%) and men (26.7%).

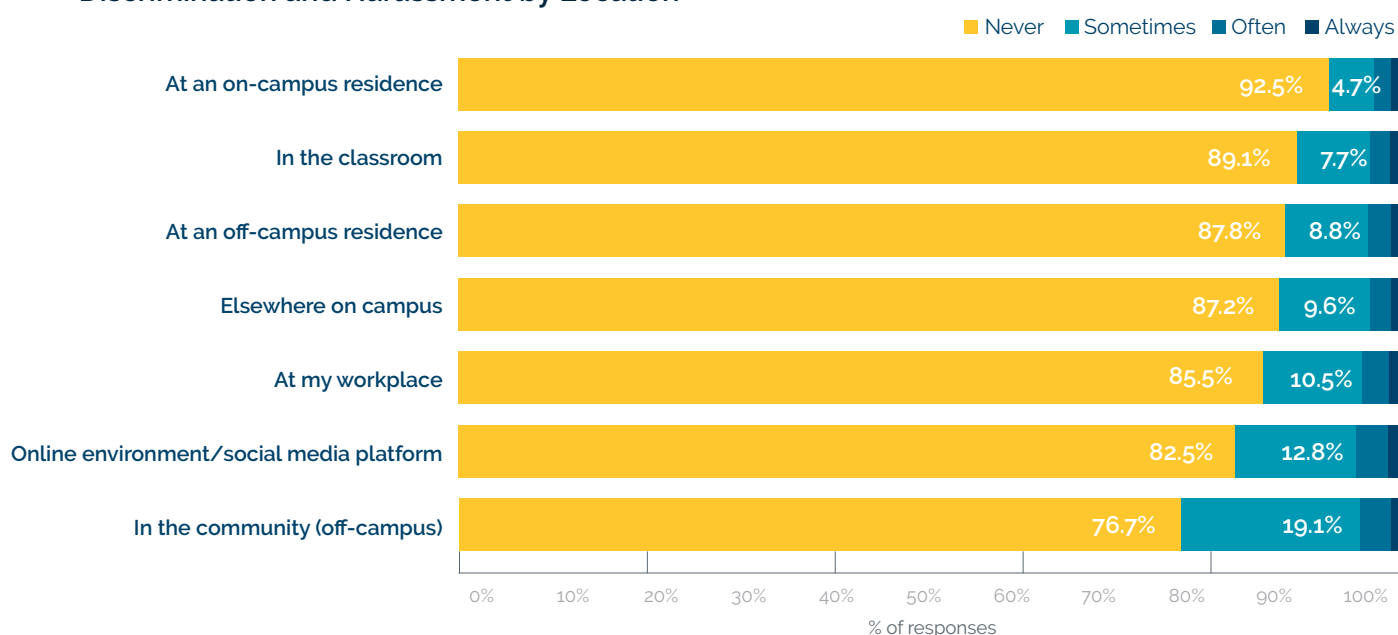
Absent data on historical trends, it is difficult to establish causality for why Asian student respondents reported feeling the highest levels of harassment and

discrimination and the lowest perceived levels of safety in public spaces. One possible explanation is that this is part of the unfortunate legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, throughout the survey period, there were high-profile media reports of Asian communities experiencing racism and being unfairly harassed.

That said, continued vigilance is essential. It is critically important that Canadian authorities and institutions aggressively track reports of international students experiencing harassment and discrimination and,

where necessary, take timely and decisive action to mitigate these concerns. Protecting the health, safety, and well-being of all students in Canada, international and Canadian, is paramount. It is contrary to Canada's values that any individual or group should experience discrimination, harassment or be made to feel unsafe or unwelcome, and as an advocate for Canada's international education community, we are mindful of the reputational risks this situation poses for Canada.

## Discrimination and Harassment by Location



## Discrimination and Harassment by Cultural/Ethnic Identity and Location

	Asian	Black	Indigenous	Mixed or self-describe	White
In the classroom	1.17	1.16	1.20	1.14	1.10
At an on-campus residence	1.13	1.14	1.12	1.07	1.06
Elsewhere on campus	1.18	1.23	1.20	1.15	1.11
At an off-campus residence	1.19	1.20	1.17	1.13	1.09
At my workplace	1.21	1.25	1.22	1.17	1.13
In the community (off-campus)	1.29	1.35	1.32	1.30	1.22
Online environment / social media platform	1.27	1.23	1.21	1.17	1.16

Average Experience of Discrimination or Harassment (Scale of 1 (Never) to 4 (Always))

## Experience with Discrimination or Harassment during the COVID-19 Pandemic by Cultural/Ethnic Identity

	Asian	Black	Indigenous	Mixed or Self-describe	White
Worsened	33.0%	14.9%	23.1%	21.5%	20.3%
Remained the Same	48.1%	66.4%	65.4%	65.5%	65.5%
Improved	18.9%	18.7%	11.5%	12.9%	14.3%

### 4.6. Institutional Response to Harassment and Discrimination

While student respondents were generally confident in their institution's ability to address harassment or discrimination, they expressed uncertainty about the process for reporting their experiences. Overall, women and minority gender respondents were less likely to express confidence in their institution's ability to respond to reports of discrimination and harassment.

Asian respondents were most familiar with how to report harassment, and they also expressed higher confidence

in their institution's ability to address issues. This may be explained by their experience with discrimination, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Minority gender respondents expressed the lowest levels of knowledge on how to report harassment and discrimination and of confidence that their institution will resolve these issues. Women also have slightly less confidence in their institution's ability to resolve harassment and discrimination.



*Unfortunately, both my family and I have experienced some discrimination or racial microaggressions from members of our community. The times it has happened, it is very difficult and sad to see some people can still act like that towards others.*



– Female student from Mexico



## Reporting Discrimination or Harassment by Gender

	Females	Minority Genders	Males
If I experience or observe an act of discrimination or harassment at my institution or online, I know whom to contact to report the incident.	3.26	3.00	3.35
The process for reporting acts of discrimination or harassment at my institution is clear to me.	3.18	2.83	3.31
I am confident that the institution would take the necessary steps to address/resolve the issue.	3.70	3.16	3.79

Average Feelings on Reporting Discrimination or Harassment [Scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)]

## Reporting Discrimination or Harassment by Cultural/Ethnic Identity

	Asian	Black	Indigenous	Mixed or Self-describe	White
If I experience or observe an act of discrimination or harassment at my institution or online, I know whom to contact to report the incident.	3.41	3.21	3.21	3.10	3.16
The process for reporting acts of discrimination or harassment at my institution is clear to me.	3.37	3.18	3.12	2.98	3.04
I am confident that the institution would take the necessary steps to address/resolve the issue.	3.80	3.66	3.80	3.65	3.65

Average Feelings on Reporting Discrimination or Harassment [Scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)]

# Section 5

## Experience with Work

### 5.1. Working while Studying

The number of student respondents who indicated they were working (48.5%) versus not working (47.8%) was almost evenly split.

Female respondents (50%) were slightly more likely to be working than males (47.2%). By work type, women were more likely to be working off-campus in part-time positions and more likely to be engaged in on-campus or volunteer work.

### 5.2. Difficulties Finding Work

Among student respondents who had worked or were working, 43% indicated difficulty finding work. There were also minor differences reported between female (44.4%) and male (42%) respondents. Urban students reported greater challenges in all kinds of work searches except for part-time off-campus work (28.3% of urban and 31.7% of rural students). Notably, only 7.1% of rural students reported difficulties securing a co-op position, compared to 11.7% of urban students.

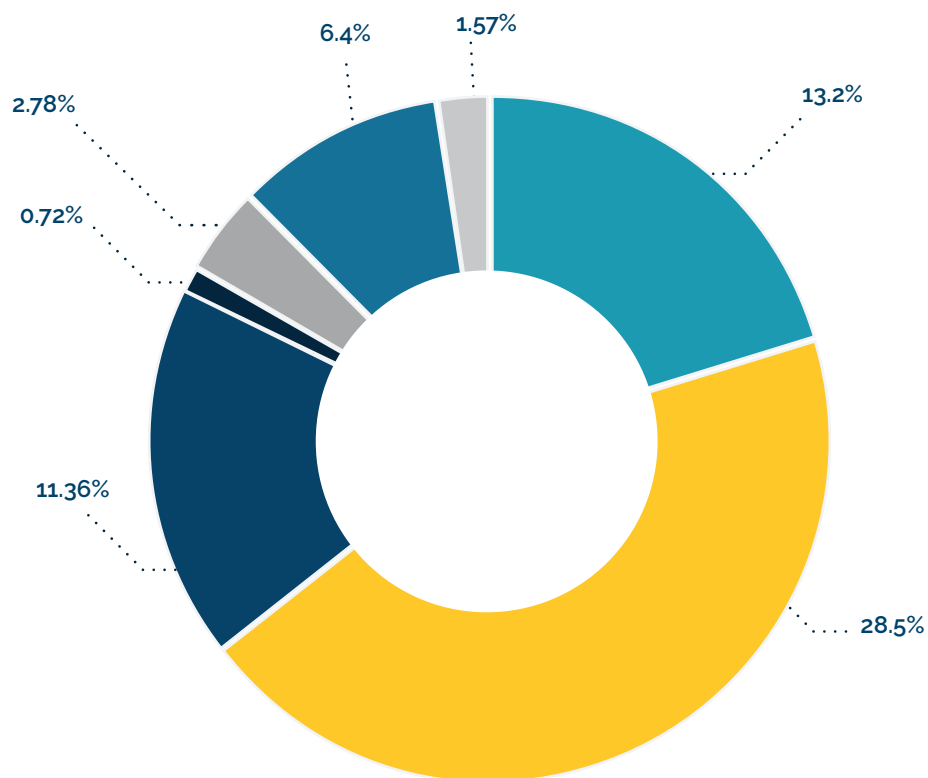
A significant number of student respondents attributed their difficulties finding work to their inability to understand the expectations of Canadian employers and to their prospective employers being unfamiliar with regulations for hiring international students. Female student respondents were more likely than males to attribute their difficulties finding work to not having enough Canadian work experience or work experience overall. They were also more likely to indicate challenges in describing their skills and were more likely to cite a lack of confidence than males (7.9% of women as compared with 5.4% of men).

These findings point to where institutions can play a more proactive role, which might include institutions providing expanded job readiness training for international students and ensuring a gender focus in this training. Institutions may also consider increased outreach to employers and community groups about how to hire international students or develop information products on hiring rules that international students can share with prospective employers.

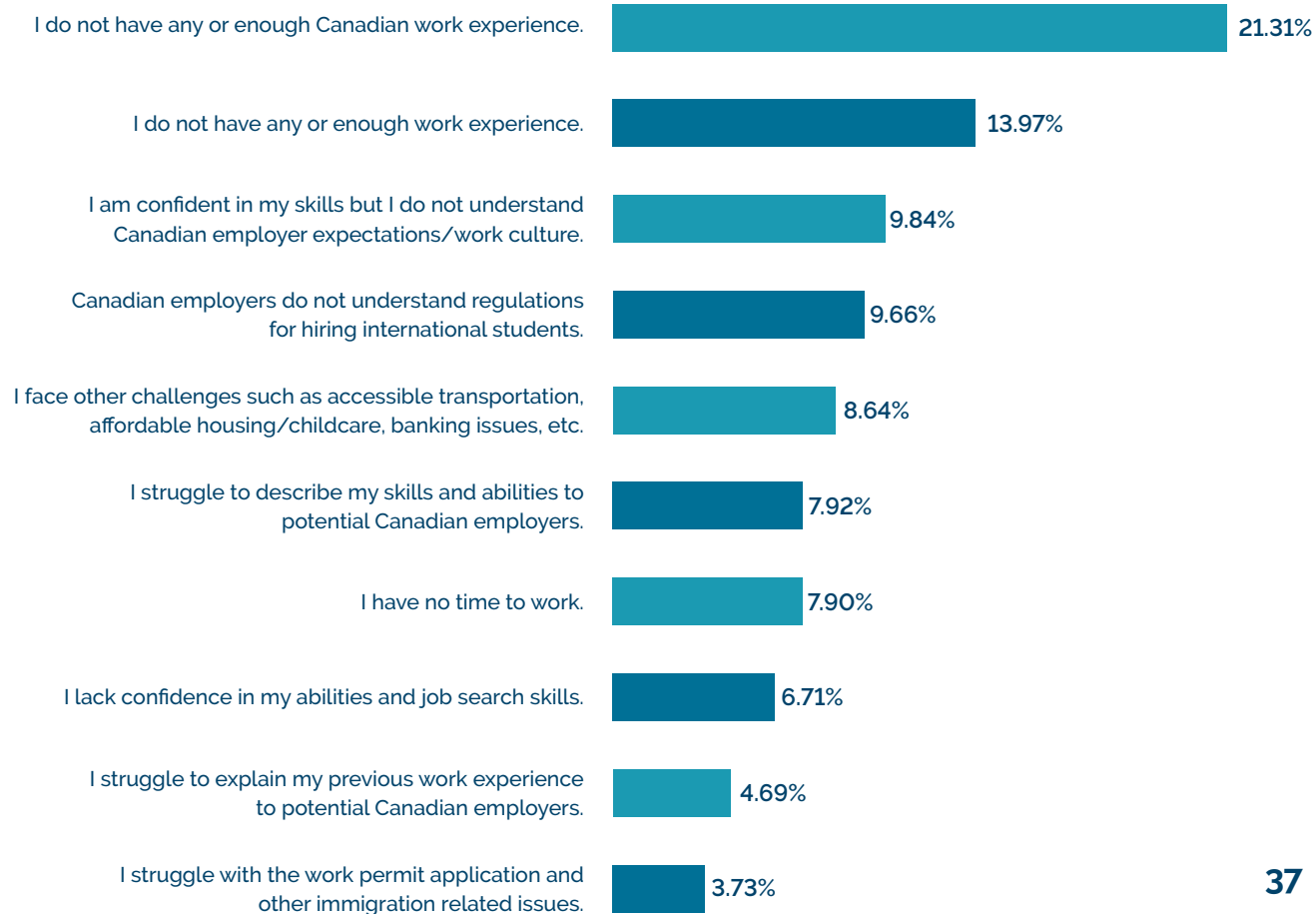


## Difficulty Finding Work by Type

- On-campus work
- Part time
- Co-op/WIL
- Unpaid work
- Volunteer work
- Full-time, post-graduation work
- Virtual WIL



## Perceived Challenges in Finding Work



# Section 6

## Post-Graduation Plans

### 6.1. Post-Graduation Intentions

When asked to describe their post-graduation plans, student respondents' most frequently cited plan was to work for up to three years in Canada and then pursue permanent residency (43.3%).

Another 18.8% planned to work for up to three years in Canada and then return home. There are no significant gender differences in selecting these options.

While 28.4% of student respondents indicated that they planned to work for a period of time and then resume their studies, 20.9% expected to continue their studies either at their current institution (20.9%) or at another Canadian institution (17.8%). Overall, women were less likely to cite plans to continue their studies.

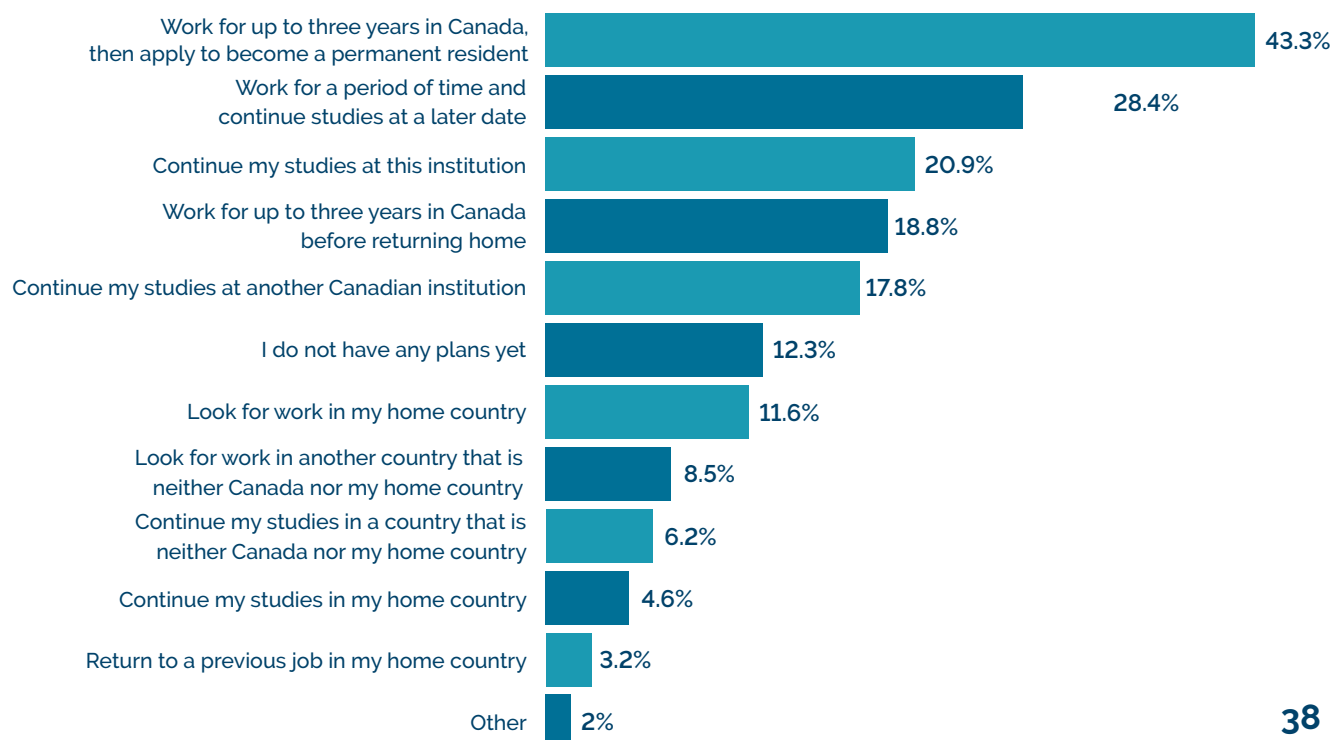
For those pursuing work opportunities elsewhere, 12.7% of respondents indicated they planned to return to their home countries to look for work, while 3.9% intended to return home to a previous job.

Almost one in ten indicated they would look for work outside of Canada and their home country.

There were some noteworthy differences among student respondents indicating their intentions to work in Canada by the degree length of study and post-graduation plans. Students in one-year programs were less likely to plan to continue studies either at their institution or at another Canadian institution. They were also less likely to plan to look for work in their home country. Students in one-year programs were more likely to plan to work for a period of time before continuing studies or work in Canada for up to three years before returning home.

Students at urban institutions were more likely to plan to work in Canada and then apply to be a permanent resident (43.6% compared to 39.3% of rural students).

### Post-Graduation Intentions

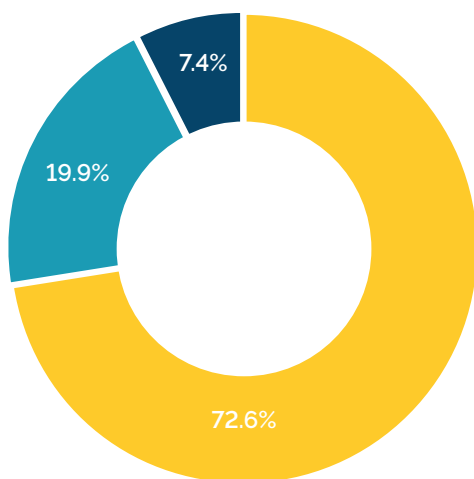


## 6.2. Intentions to Stay in Canada

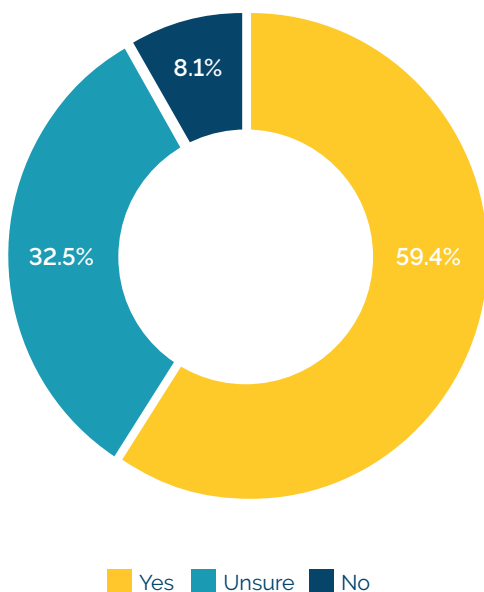
A substantial majority of respondents (72.6%) indicated they intended to apply for a post-graduate work permit, and 7.4% said they had no plans to do so, while 19.9% indicated they were unsure.

At the same time, 59.4% of respondents indicated they intended to apply for permanent residence, 8.1% had no plans to do so, while approximately one-third were undecided.

### Plan to Apply for a Post-Graduate Work Permit



### Plan to Apply for Permanent Resident Status



*I feel very safe here.  
The hope of a future  
full of opportunities.  
I expect a better  
future for my  
daughter. ”*

– Male student from Ecuador



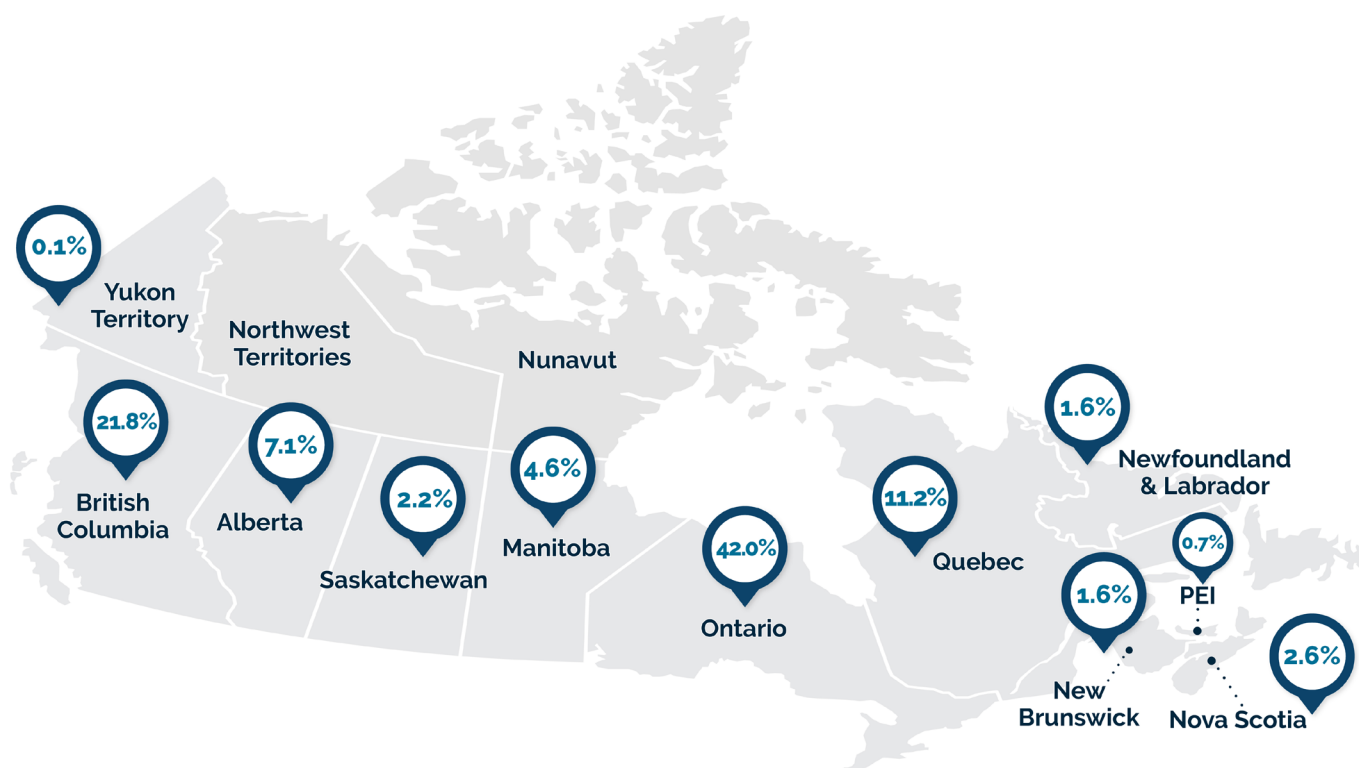


### 6.3. Location of Post-Graduation Stay in Canada

Overall, most international students who planned to seek permanent residence in Canada reported largely intending to remain in the province where they completed their education when they obtained permanent residence.

When asked why they would like to live in the selected province, 33.1% of respondents noted that they enjoy the lifestyle of the province, while 25.3% are concerned with employment opportunities, and 20.6% want to be close to family or friends.

#### Intended Province/Territory of Stay After Receiving Permanent Resident Status



#### Percentage of Students Currently Living in the Province/Territory Who Intend to Stay There After Receiving Permanent Resident Status



# Section 7

## International Students as Champions

Respondents were asked to rate their likelihood of recommending both their institution and Canada to other international students using the Net Promoter Score (NPS). The NPS is a metric to measure experience and loyalty, allowing for additional layering of student satisfaction responses regarding Canadian institutions and Canada itself.

The NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of 'detractors' (those giving scores of 6 or less) from promoters (those giving scores of 9 or 10) on a 10-point scale. A total NPS score of -100 to 0 indicates that improvement is needed. A score of 0-30 is indicative of good levels of satisfaction, while a score between 30-70 is an excellent rating, and anything above a score of 70 is exceptional.

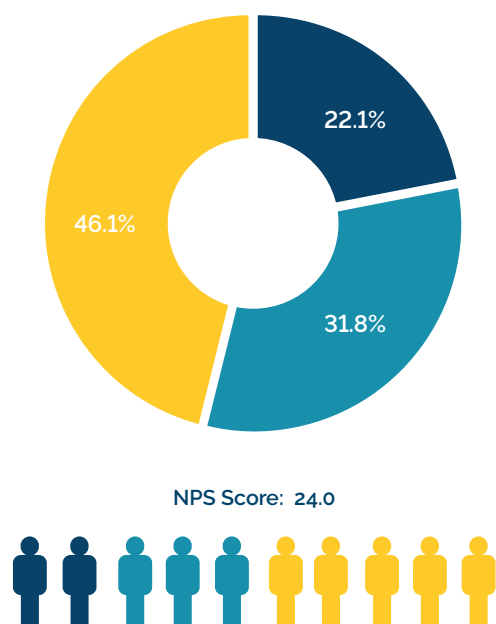
As noted in Section 2, 'recommendation from someone I know' was cited by 63.7% of student respondents as one of the factors that influenced their decision to choose their institution, making these questions of

particular relevance when considering Canada and our institutions in relation to global counterparts. When asked whether they would recommend their institution of study to other prospective students, just under half of student respondents reported their likelihood as a 9 or 10, making them the most likely institutional promoters.

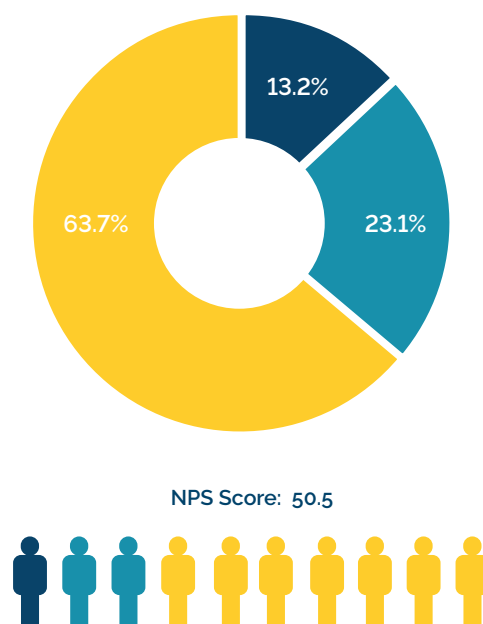
There are also some noteworthy differences in results based on cultural/ethnic identity. Overall, Asian student respondents were less likely to be supportive of their institution or of studying in Canada than other cultural/ethnic identity groups.

Students who reported lower agreement with 'I feel valued as an individual at my institution' and 'I feel I belong at my institution' were more likely to be detractors. Students who reported lower levels of safety in their work or studies were also less likely to be 'promoters'. Student respondents who reported lower levels of safety in their work or studies also were more likely to be detractors.

Would you recommend your institution to other international students?

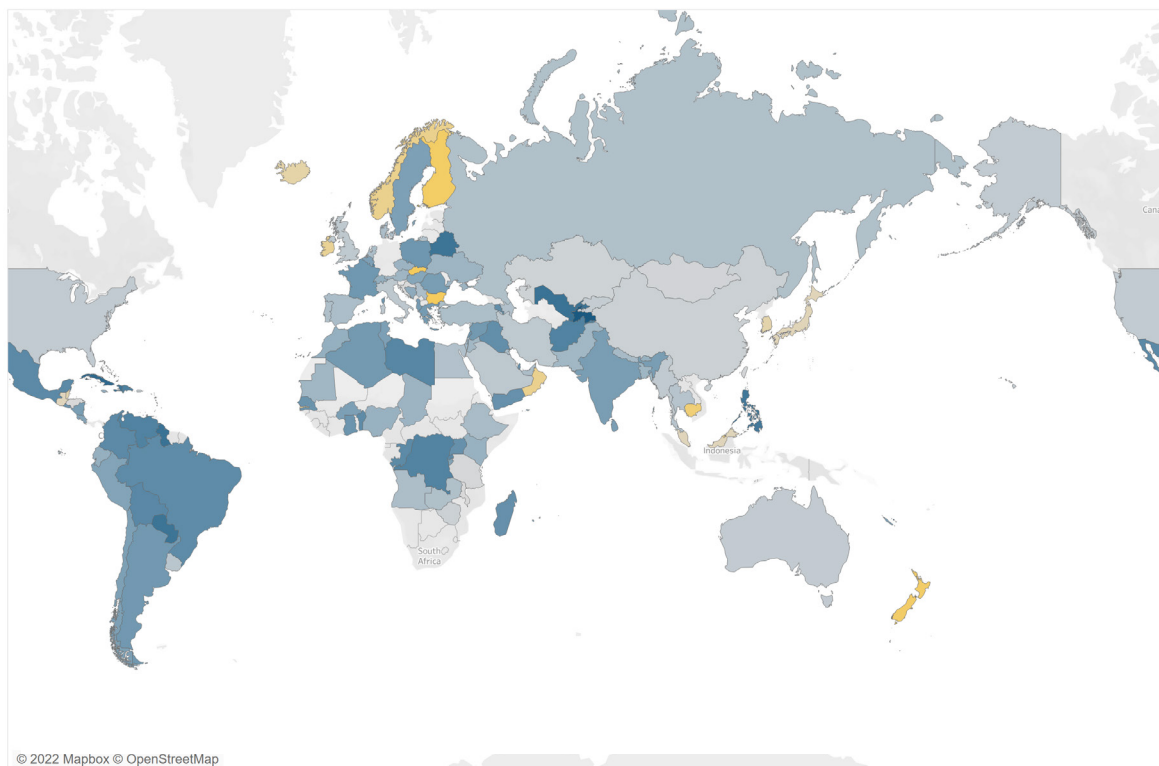


Would you recommend Canada as a study destination to other international students?



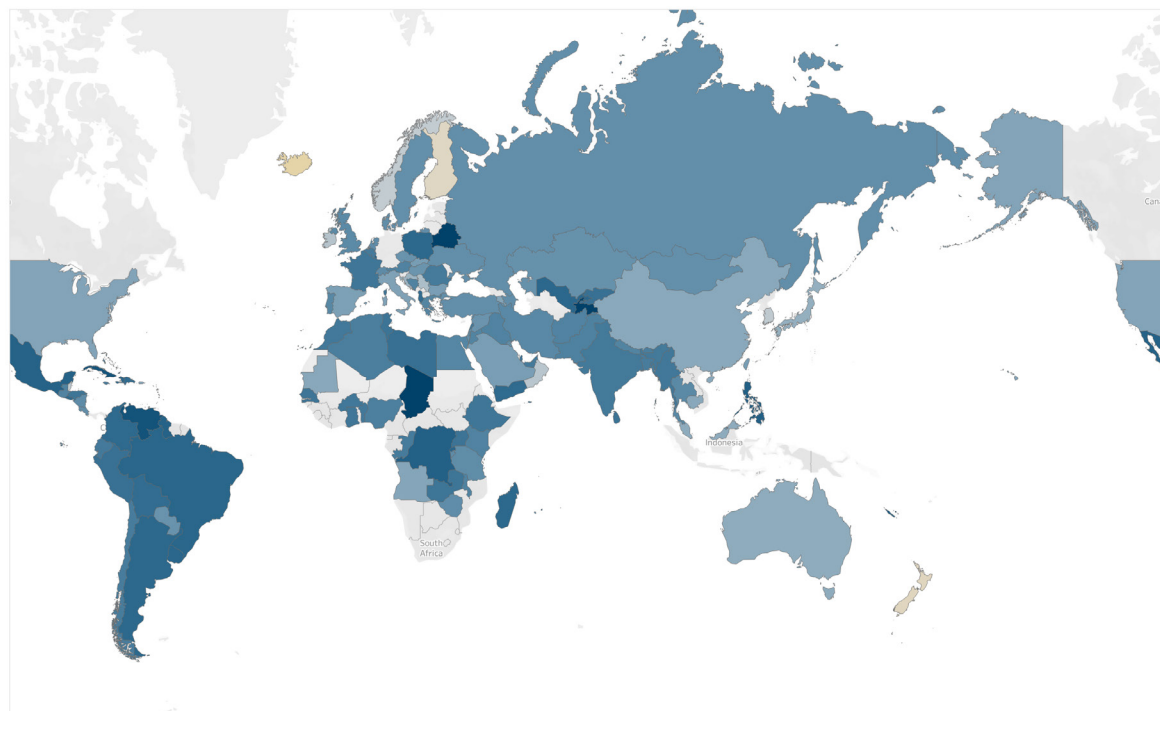
## Recommending the Institution of Study to Other International Students

NPS\_Institution  
-45.0 100.0



## Recommending Canada as a Study Destination to Other International Students

NPS Scores  
-45.0 100.0



# Conclusion

The International Student Survey results indicate that Canada's reputation as a safe, stable and tolerant country with a strong education system remains intact and continues to make us a destination of choice for prospective international students.

While it is difficult to draw direct causality between COVID-19 restrictions and the challenges reported by student respondents with regard to finding accommodations, supporting themselves financially by working off-campus, connecting and belonging, increased instances of discrimination or harassment, and heightened levels of stress and anxiety, these can be inferred.

Student respondents were generally satisfied with the support they received from Canadian border officials and their institutions with quarantine and transitioning to online learning. A large number of international students, both in Canada and outside of Canada, completed their studies exclusively virtually. While the survey results do not provide evidence that this affected academic performance, as most respondents reported being able to work online, engage with their classmates and meet with their professors or advisors during working hours, other challenges were clear.

This survey indicated that there are opportunities for Canadian institutions to be more nuanced in their international recruitment efforts and proactive in their support services for international students. Overall, student respondents indicated a relatively high degree of familiarity with the scope and availability of services provided by their institution to support their diverse needs. They were also generally comfortable with navigating these services. Moreover, they expressed confidence that their institution would take seriously and address any concerns regarding discrimination, harassment, and safety, and they were mostly aware of how to initiate complaint procedures.

That being said, a number of respondents, non-white respondents in general and Asian students in particular, reported having experienced discrimination or harassment during their tenure in Canada and having felt concerned about their safety, especially off-campus and on public transport. With several indicators assessing feelings of inclusion, well-

being and ability to manage competing demands, a significant minority of student respondents reported distressingly low scores. Despite this, the likelihood of respondents availing themselves of the support services offered by their institutions in these domains was often quite low.

The survey results regarding awareness of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and their history and culture were of note. The results indicated various levels of engagement across the country. What also comes through is a strong desire of international students to learn more about the Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Institutions can play a critical role in facilitating this learning for all students as Canada continues on its path toward Truth and Reconciliation.

While many student respondents indicated an interest in pursuing Canadian permanent residency after completing their program of study, this was not universal. Policymakers and employers, who frequently identify international students as a vital, willing and potentially inexhaustible pool of skilled labour and future immigrants, should further explore the inclination of international students to remain in Canada after graduation.

A relatively substantial number of international students attributed their difficulty in finding employment to being unable to understand their prospective Canadian employers' expectations or work culture, unable to explain their expertise, or that Canadian employers did not sufficiently understand regulations for hiring international students.

This data further highlights the importance of institutions in reviewing the existing support programs for international students regarding job readiness training. There would also be a benefit in reviewing strategies to ensure employers understand the benefits and process of hiring international students. Given the growing and pervasive labour shortages across Canada, there may be higher receptivity by employers, business groups and community economic development authorities for more structured and proactive engagement with institutions on these issues.



Recommendation by word-of-mouth was the third most frequently cited factor in selecting an institution of study. Survey respondents indicated good levels of overall satisfaction with their institutions. Given the important role of international student alumni as advocates, ambassadors and de facto recruiters for Canada and our institutions, a deliberate, inclusive and proactive approach is needed to address some of the concerns identified.

Absent comparative indicators for Canadian students, it is difficult to gauge the extent to which some of these more noteworthy results are specific to the experiences of international students or are common to all students in Canada.

Tracking these issues and concerns for international students and addressing them more comprehensively is both an ethical imperative for Canadian institutions and essential to maintaining Canada's strong reputation in international education.

Finally, the impact of COVID-19 on student respondents has been significant, and it is not possible to assess the direct effects with this data alone. CBIE is committed to offering ongoing iterations of the International Student Survey to allow for comprehensive analysis of short and long-term trends and to continue building a national body of evidence for the international education sector in Canada.





# List of Participating Institutions

Algoma University	Seneca College
Assiniboine Community College	Simon Fraser University
Bow Valley College	Southern Alberta Institute of Technology
Camosun College	St. Lawrence College
Canadore College	Thompson Rivers University
Carleton University	Université de Moncton
Centennial College	Université de Montréal
Collège Boréal	Université de Sherbrooke
Columbia College	Université de St-Boniface
Conestoga College	Université du Québec à Montréal
Confederation College	Université du Québec à Rimouski
Dalhousie University	Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières
École de technologie supérieure	Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue
Fanshawe College	Université du Québec en Outaouais
George Brown College	Université Laval
HEC Montréal	University of Alberta
Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec	University of British Columbia
Institut national de la recherche scientifique	University of Lethbridge
International College of Manitoba	University of Manitoba
La Cité collégiale	University of New Brunswick
Lakehead University	University of Northern British Columbia
Langara College	University of Ontario Institute of Technology
McMaster University	University of Prince Edward Island
Memorial University of Newfoundland	University of Regina
Mohawk College	University of Saskatchewan
Mount Allison University	University of Victoria
Niagara College Canada	University of Waterloo
Nipissing University	University of Winnipeg
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology	Vancouver Community College
Okanagan College	Vancouver Island University
Polytechnique Montréal	Wilfrid Laurier University
Royal Roads University	York University
Ryerson University (now Toronto Metropolitan University)	Yukon University
Saint Mary's University	

# Acknowledgements

Much has changed in the world since CBIE administered the last iteration of the International Student Survey in 2018. In the summer of 2021, we took the opportunity to engage with our international education community to seek their input in updating the survey. A working group was formed that provided strategic and operational input in the refinement of this tool. We are thankful to our working group members for their time and thoughtful input in the finalization of this important instrument. Working group members included: Kumari Beck, Amy Braye, Roopa Desai Trilokekar, Amira El Masri, Pascale Lafrance, Keith Monroe, Cynthia Murphy, Alison Pickrell, Karen Schwartz, and John Soltice.

On the basis of the updated survey tool, CBIE worked with 67 participating member institutions in the data collection phase. CBIE wishes to also thank our institutional partners for providing exceptional support in the administration of this survey. The breadth of institutional participation in this survey reflects the commitment of institutions to continuously improve their offerings and support for international students during their studies in Canada.

We are tremendously grateful to the 41,512 students who provided their 'voice' for this comprehensive report. Your input is critical in helping the Canadian international education sector effectively and sustainably create impactful learning experiences and outcomes through study in Canada.

We also thank Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada for data which informed several sections of this report.

A report of this scope requires the input of many individuals, including the efforts of our team. We would like to acknowledge the initiative and contributions of our colleagues Melissa Toupin-Laforge, Melissa Payne, Michel Amar and Janna Ferguson.



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