



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeurs et professeurs d'université

Memorandum 24:05

Date: January 22, 2024

To: Presidents and Administrative Officers
Local, Federated and Provincial Associations; FQPPU

From: David Robinson, Executive Director

Re: **Federal Cap on International Students**

The federal government announced a cap on international students today, something federal Immigration Minister Marc Miller, just three months ago, likened to doing "surgery with a hammer."

For the next two years, Ottawa will restrict the number of new international study permits by 35% from 2023 levels. Provinces will be allocated a proportional share of study permits based on their share of population. Those pursuing master's and doctoral degrees are not included in the cap. Current study permit holders will not be affected.

The cap and the proportionality formula will hit particularly hard in Ontario, which will lose about 50% of its current intake. British Columbia and Nova Scotia will also feel the impact, whereas the other provinces may see a gain.

Provinces will be given the authority to determine how permits will be allocated to designated learning institutions. The federal Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) department will expect provinces to provide students with a letter or certificate attached to their applications, indicating the institution that the student is to attend. This arrangement already exists in Quebec.

The government also announced changes to the Post-Graduate Work Program (PGWP). International students attending a private college under a curriculum licensing agreement with a public college will no longer be eligible for a PGWP. This will likely further decrease international student applications, particularly for Ontario colleges, most of which have public-private partnerships.

The government is also limiting open work permits to spouses of international students in master's and doctoral programs. The spouses of international students in other levels of study, including undergraduate and college programs, will no longer be eligible.

These changes are in addition to the new verification system for acceptance letters, the doubling of the amount of money a student must have in their bank account to study in Canada, and the development of a new Recognized Institution Framework put in place by IRCC in recent months.

CAUT has long expressed concerns about fraud, abuse, and exploitation of international students.

We will be closely monitoring the impact of the changes to international student study and work permits on tuition, finances, and quality of education. We will continue to advocate for institutions and governments to address fraud and abuse and for public investment to ensure high quality, accessible and affordable post-secondary education.

CAUT has made a series of [recommendations](#) for renewal of public funding for post-secondary education and on Canada's [International Education Strategy](#).

If you have any questions, please contact Justine De Jaegher, Director of Political Action and Communications, at dejaegher@caut.ca.