



Profile of Canada's International Student Movement: From Temporary to Permanent Residents

Pathways to Prosperity
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Vancouver, BC



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

Canada 

Purpose

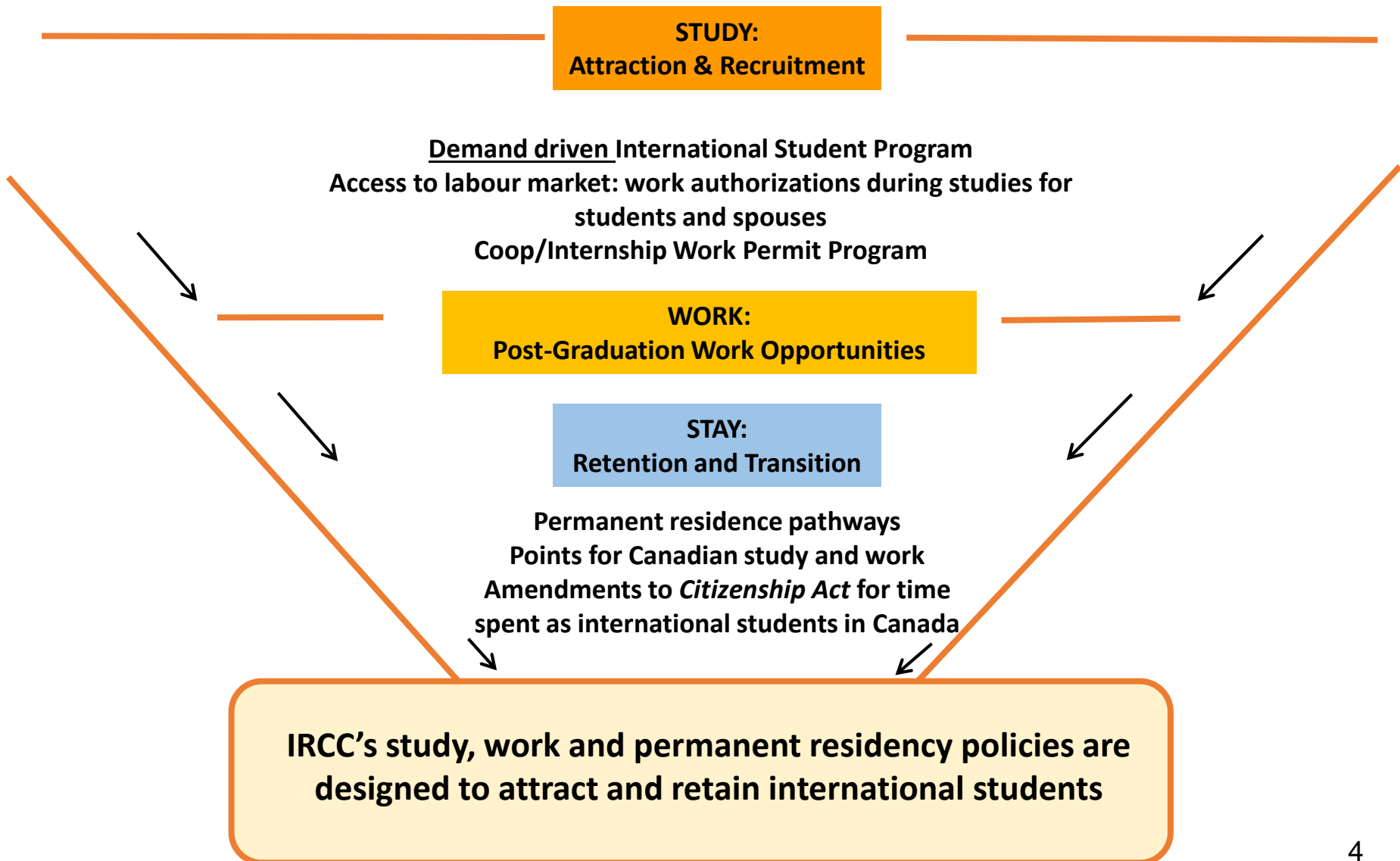
- Take stock of IRCC's approach to international students
- Share information on the profile of Canada's international student movement and emerging trends
- Signal areas of focus moving forward

Why do International Students matter to Canada

- Contribute \$15.5 B annually to the economy
- Generate significant revenue, innovation and growth in education sector
- Enrich the academic experience of domestic students and contribute to the internationalization of Canadian institutions
- Address labour market needs, skills shortages and demographic needs (in short and long term)
- Potential pool of qualified candidates for permanent residence given high human capital attributes

Over the last decade, the immigration focus has shifted to view international students as more than temporary residents, but also as a source of temporary workers and a pool of potential permanent residents

IRCC plays a key role attracting and retaining International Students

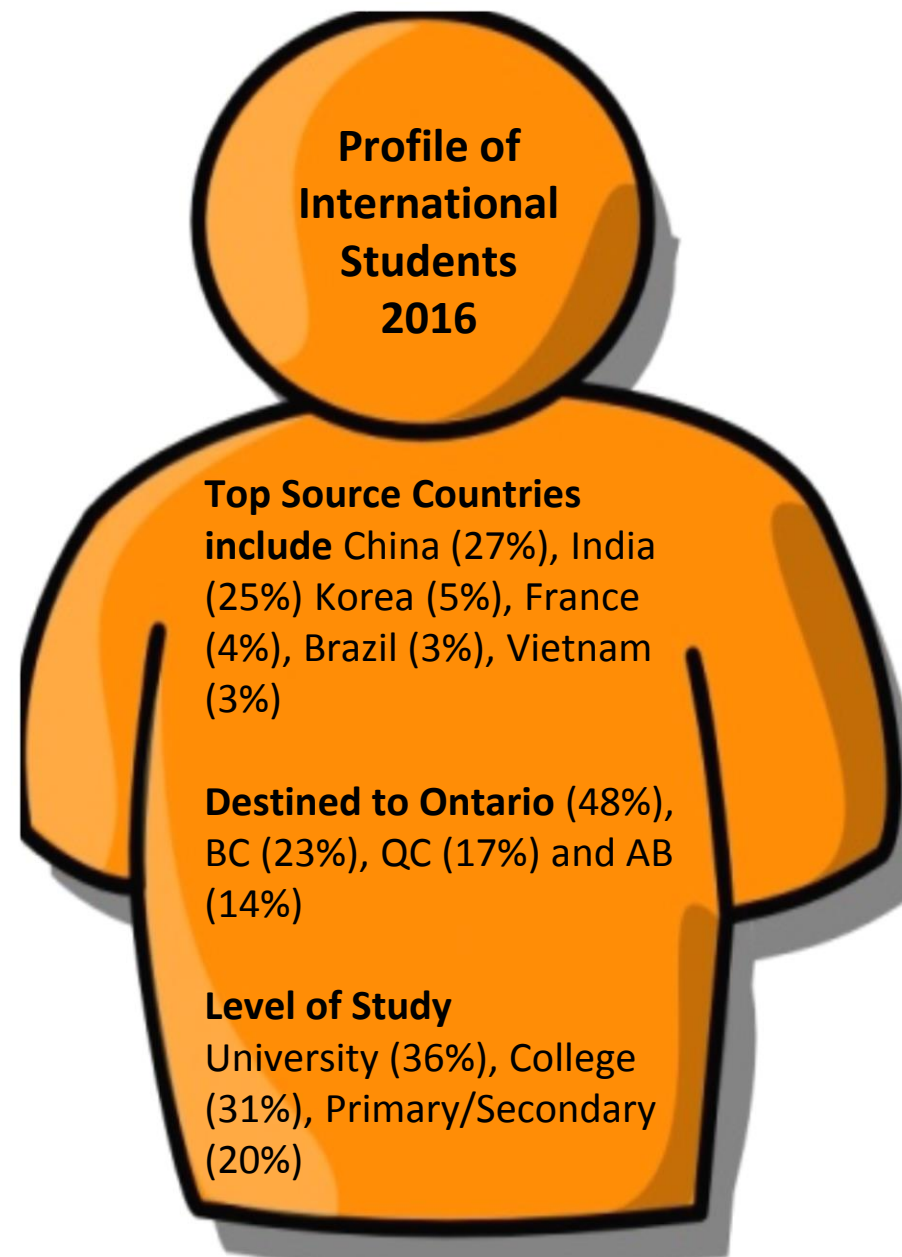


Study: By the Numbers

- ✓ The International Student Program (ISP) facilitates issuance of study permits to foreign nationals destined to Canada for study purposes
- ✓ There are no numerical quotas, but students must meet all program requirements (i.e., health, financials and security)
- ✓ Study permit holders must enrol at a designated learning institution and actively pursue studies while in Canada

ISP has more than doubled since 2008:

- Over 268,000 international students entered in 2016 – up 22% from 2015
- Over 410,000 study permit holders on December 31, 2016 – up 18% from 2015
- Growth driven by students destined to colleges in the GTA in 2016
- Canada has the second least diversified student pool amongst competitor countries



Study: Attraction and Recruitment of International Students

Successes

- ✓ Canada ranks in the top 10 study destinations and has continued to avoid fluctuations in international student numbers compared to competitor countries like Australia and the UK
- ✓ International Education Strategy target of 450,000 by 2022 will be met much earlier than expected. Demand for study permits on the rise

Challenges

- Policy shift in traditional source countries for international students could impact student movement to Canada significantly. However, attempts to diversify student pool is a challenge given documented cases of fraud resulting in high study permit refusal rates
- Impacts of Canada's selection approach to international students which does not assess the quality of potential candidates, what programs of study are valued, where, in Canada are students and potential PR candidates needed on immigration and labour market objectives are understudied
- Motivations and implications for increased demand in Canada's College programs by students with higher levels of post-secondary education is unclear and warrants examination (i.e. effects of under-skilling)

Key Question

- How can IRCC and relevant stakeholders work together to diversify and optimize the selection of international students? Are there best practices or work underway that can be leveraged?

Work: By the Numbers

- ✓ Generous work authorizations during and post-studies are intended to complement Canada's study offering
- ✓ Enhance Canada's attractiveness as a study destination and helps candidates qualify for permanent residency

Increasing number of students accessing Canadian labour market:

- In 2017, over 332,000 international students were eligible to work on or off campus, a population size greater than the Temporary Foreign Worker and International Mobility Program streams combined
- Over 27,000 postgraduate work permits issued to university graduates in 2016- up 25% from 2015
- Over 24,000 postgraduate work permits issued to college graduates in 2016 - up 158% from 2015

Post-Graduation Work Permit Holders have weak employment outcomes and concentrated in Ontario:

- Low median earnings (\$23,690 in 2013) suggest many may be working in low-wage/low skilled and part-time employment



PGWPP Holders Employment Sector 2013

Accommodation & Food Services	22%
Retail Trade	12%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	10%
Administrative and Support, Waster Management and Remediation Services	10%
Education Services	8%

Work: Maintaining an Effective Work Pathway

Successes

- ✓ Canada's generous study/work offering is successful in attracting international students to Canada
- ✓ Canada's approach to international students which combines study and skilled work experience plays a key role in successful transition outcomes

Challenges

- Documented evidence to suggest that students and institutions are prioritizing access to PGWPP and possibly permanent residency without considering quality of program or job potential
- PGWPP holders are largely working in sectors that may not facilitate the best post-transition outcomes
- Lack of information on employment situations and the factors may expose international students to potential vulnerabilities (e.g., passport confiscation, wage theft, payment in exchange for employment)

Key Questions

- What are the impacts of shifts in focus from study to work on quality of education, economic outcomes of students, and impact to labour market?
- What are the barriers faced by international students seeking to transition from studies to the labour market? What is the role for post-secondary institutions, employers and other stakeholders?

Stay: By the Numbers

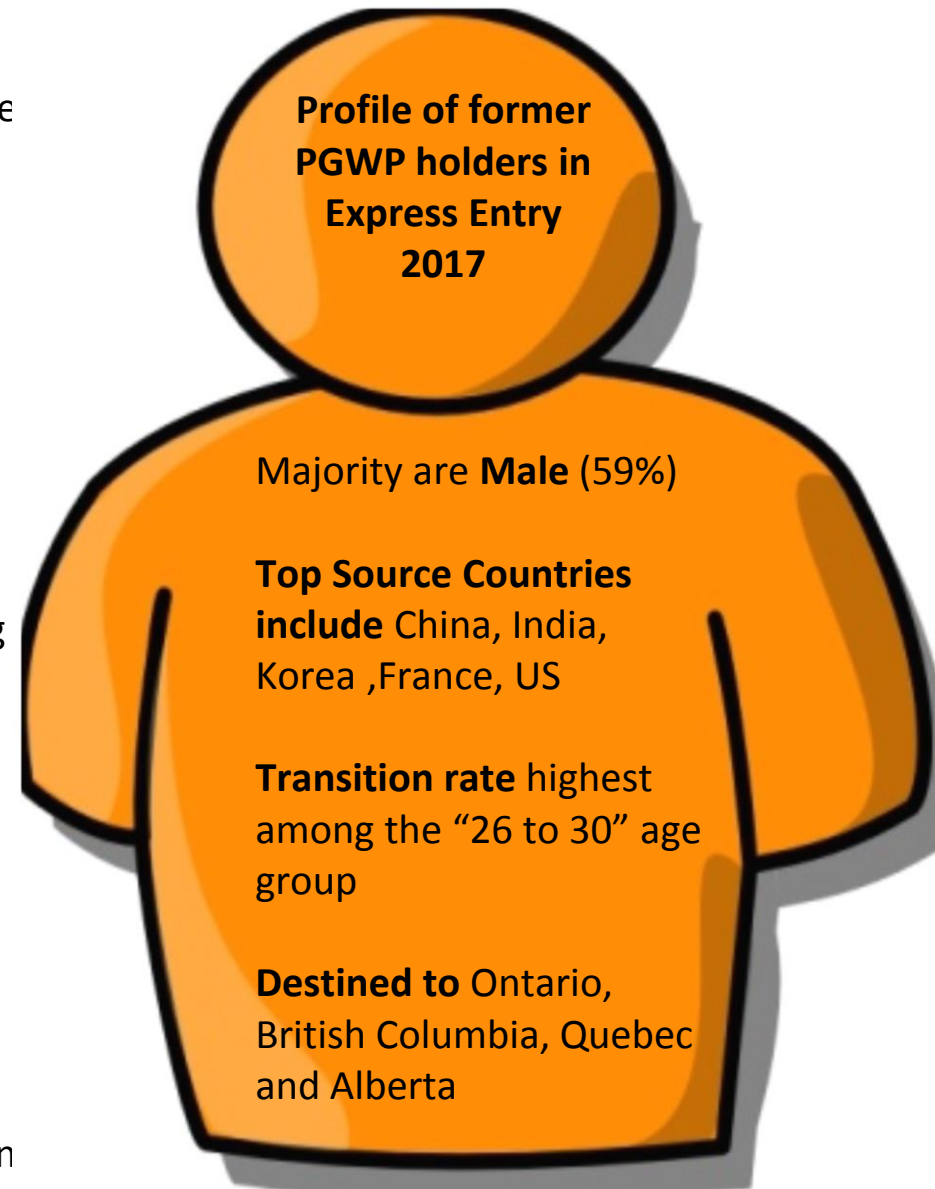
- ✓ All pathways to permanent residence are available to former international students who meet program requirements
- ✓ Express Entry points for Canadian study and work experience

Transition rates are increasing:

- Canada's retention rate is comparable to OECD countries at 25%
- In 2016, over 30,000 former study permit holders became permanent residents, with over $\frac{3}{4}$ entering as economic immigrants

Former PGWP participants have the highest transition rate and are the main source of candidates under Express Entry:

- 70% of PGWPP participants become permanent residents over a period of 5 years after obtaining PGWPP permit
- Majority of former PGWPP participants hold a university degree but obtained a lower credential in Canada



STAY: Retention and Transition

Successes

- ✓ Introduction of Express Entry in 2016 was a “game changer” as Federal Economic programs became the main immigration pathway for former international students seeking to transition
- ✓ Immigrants with Canadian study and skilled work experience (e.g., international students) have better labour market performance after landing when compared to immigrants selected for permanent residency directly from abroad and immigrants who had prior skilled work experience in Canada (e.g., foreign workers)

Challenges

- Unclear how the profile of former PGWP participants who are transitioning to permanent residency (e.g., effects of under-skilling, under-employment) will support the achievement of Canada’s immigration and labour market objectives
- Limited information on factors such as the field of study prevents IRCC to get a full picture of the immigration and labour market outcomes of former international students and contributions to the economy

Key Questions

- What are the potential impacts and unintended consequences of Canada’s study-immigration pathway on Canada’s academic institutions, labour market and the overall integration outcomes of international students?

Areas of Focus Moving Forward

Immigration-Study Pathway

Attract and Recruit

Impact of current selection approach on Canada's education system, labour and immigration objectives

Work

Employment profile of international students during studies and post-graduation to reveal trends, gaps and vulnerabilities

Transition

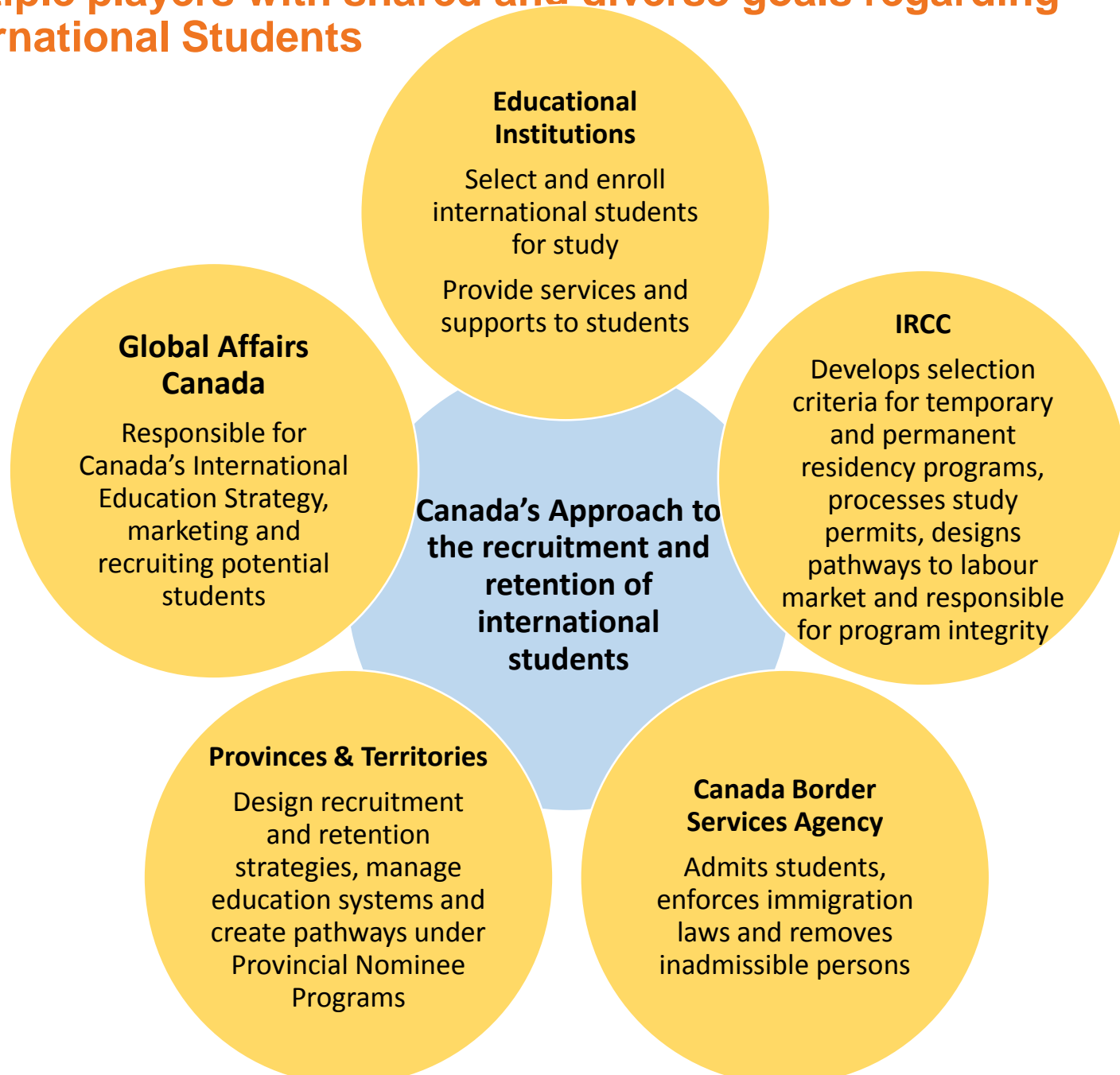
Continue to study the outcomes of former international students and PGWP participants

ANNEXES

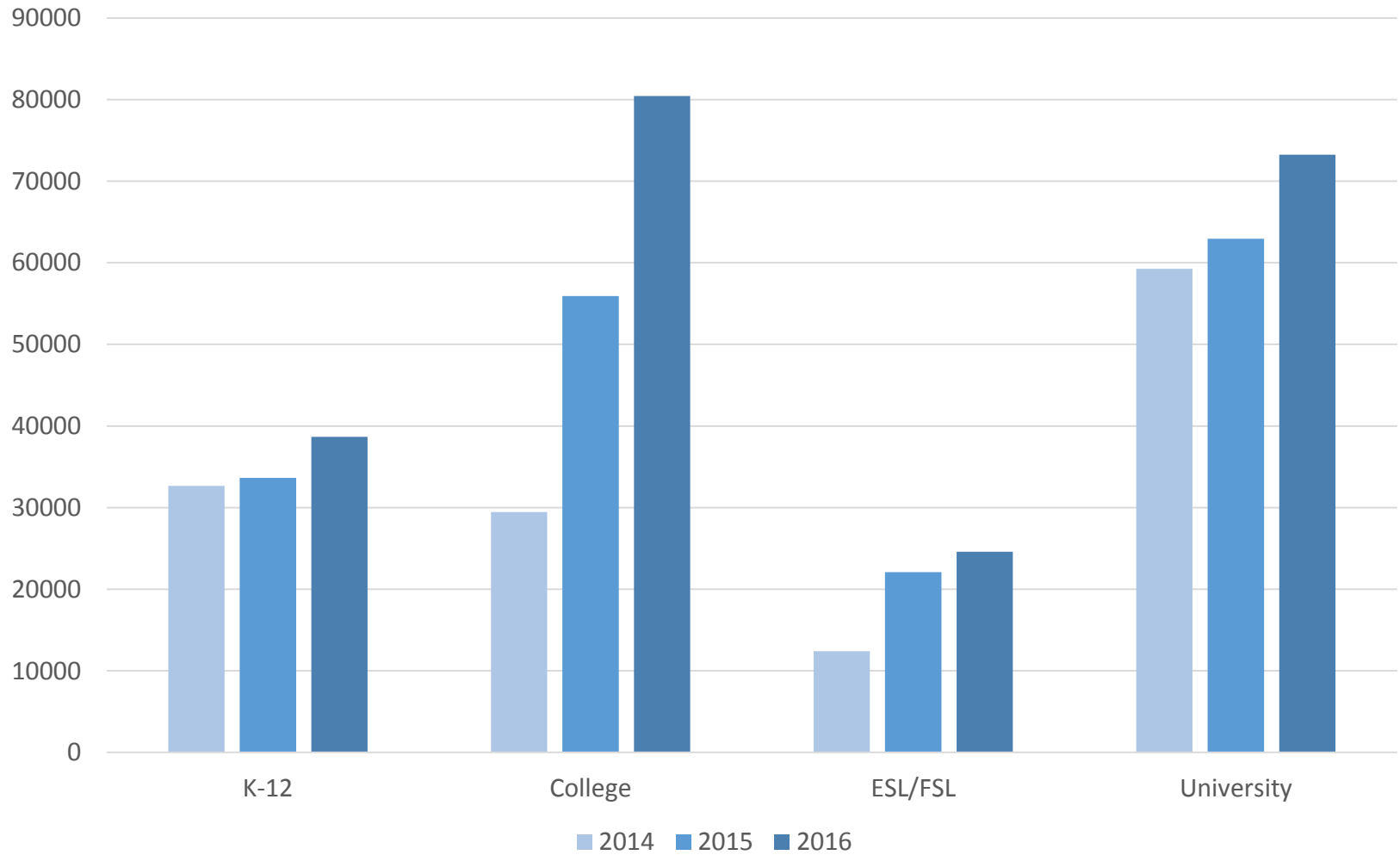
Evolution of Canada's Approach to International Students

- In the mid-1980s, the federal government adopted a national strategy to attract more international students to Canada, and three new work permits exempt from a labour market test were launched:
 - On-campus work permits;
 - Open work permits for spouses; and
 - One-year, employer-specific post-graduate work permits.
- The 1990-2000s saw further facilitative measures to attract international students:
 - removal of study permit requirement for short-term courses (e.g., less than six months);
 - removal of work permit requirement for on-campus;
 - significant expansion to post-graduate work permit opportunities (2008);
 - introduction of Canadian Experience Class (2008).
- June 2014 regulatory amendments to strengthen Canada's International Student Program:
 - Limit study permit issuance to institutions vetted by provinces and territories
 - Removal of work permit requirement for off-campus work
 - Expansion of off campus work to private career colleges
 - Allowing certain temporary residents to apply for an initial study permit from within Canada (e.g., FNs attending prerequisite courses, minors enrolled at the secondary level)
- November 2016
 - Additional points under Express Entry for Canadian studies
- October 2017
 - Amendments to Citizenship Act to count a portion of time spent as temporary residents (e.g., international student) in Canada

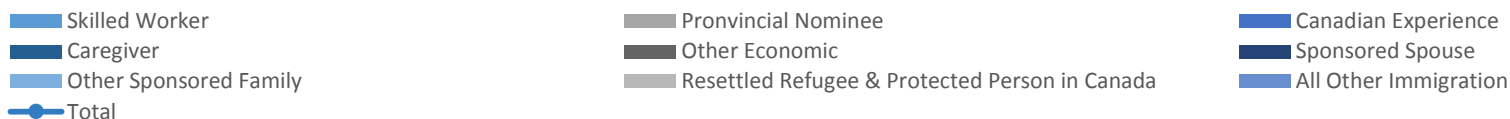
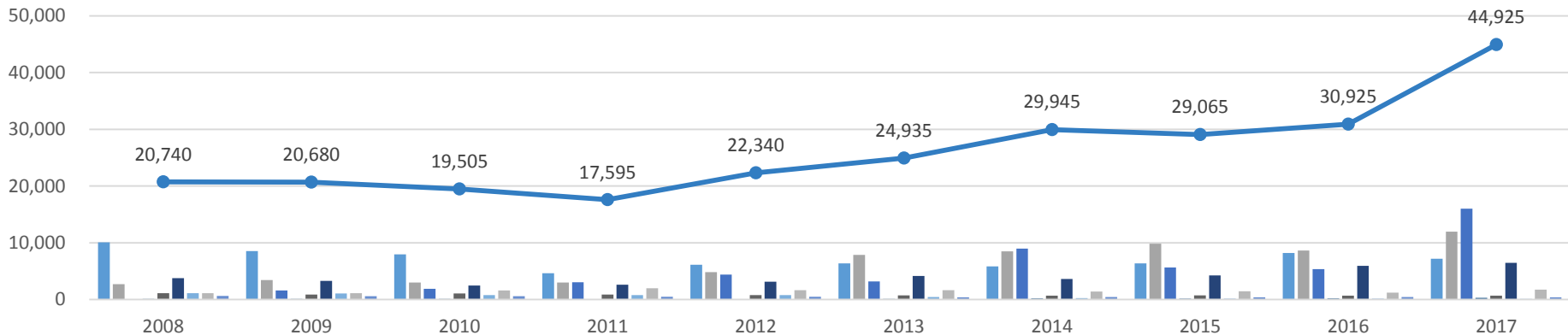
Multiple players with shared and diverse goals regarding International Students



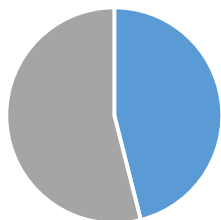
Applications processed by levels of study 2016



Demographics, TRs Who Ever Held a Study Permit, Land Years 2008 to 2017

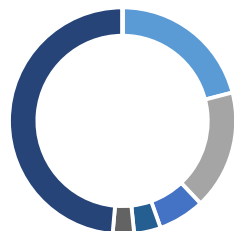


Gender

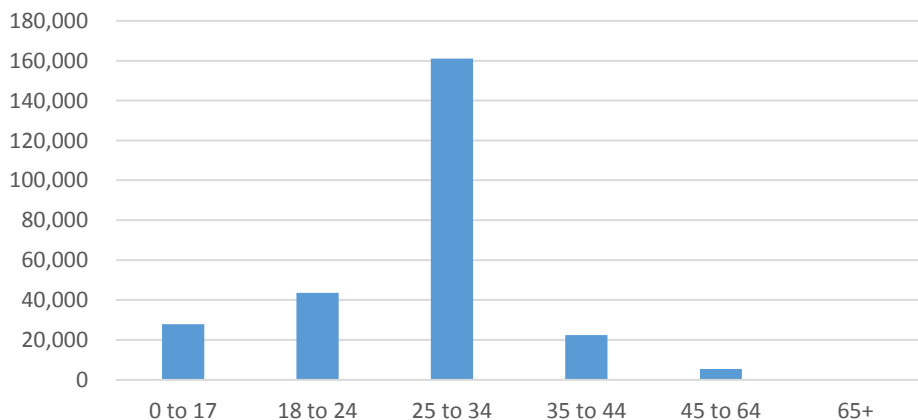


Female Male

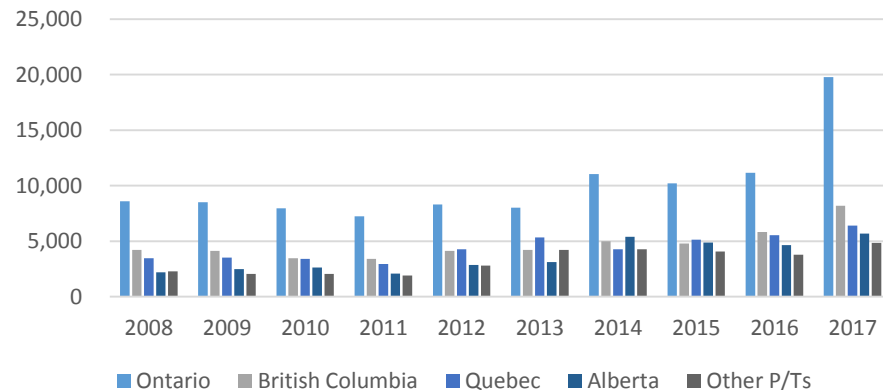
Country of Citizenship



Age at Landing



Intended Destination



75% reported knowledge of English only, 6% French only, 11% both official languages and 9% reported no knowledge of either official languages.

Source: IRCC, R&E TR data, December 31st 2017