



Studying and working abroad transforms Canadian students into global citizens, helping them develop inter-cultural awareness, adaptability and problem-solving skills. It also gives them a hiring edge with today's employers. Leaving one's home province to study can also be a transformative experience, increasing students' understanding of the diverse cultures, histories and values that make up our country.

Whether learning abroad or in another province, these experiences deepen students' awareness of the diversity of Canadian and international communities, while strengthening bonds between campuses across Canada and worldwide.

Too few Canadian students, however, benefit from the mobility experiences that can prepare them to enter a globalized labour market. Improving the international and interprovincial mobility of university students is a crucial step in developing our next generation of leaders and sharpening Canada's competitive edge.

What Canada's government should do

Canada needs to do more to encourage a culture of mobility among Canadian students. Universities Canada recommends that the federal government invest in a bold program of support for short-term domestic and international student mobility – in celebration of Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017 – to help graduates better understand their country and the world.



The facts

Global and interprovincial experiences matter to employers

Studying in another country or another province helps students develop the cross-cultural skills that today's employers increasingly demand. Canada's export-driven economy depends on international trade, and Canadian businesses need to work seamlessly with partners across the country and around the world. Graduates who've studied and lived in another province or another country are highly sought-after by today's employers, and are crucial to Canada's global competitiveness.

2/3 say Canada at risk

Two out of three hiring managers say Canada is at risk of being left behind by dynamic global economies like China, India and Brazil unless young Canadians learn to think more globally.¹

Global experiences enhance competitiveness

Eighty-two percent of employers that hire recruits with international and intercultural experiences say employees with cross-cultural knowledge and an understanding of the global marketplace enhance their company's competitiveness.²

Employers value interprovincial experiences

Seventy-two percent of employers who seek recruits with interprovincial experience believe these graduates perform better in their job than others without these experiences.³

Better employment outcomes

Europe's Erasmus international mobility program is a successful example of how international experiences help students get ahead. Erasmus offers opportunities for European students to work and study abroad. Five years after graduation, the unemployment rate for Erasmus students was 23 percent lower than for those who had not gone abroad.⁴

“An overseas exchange program to study or work is a fantastic way to develop creative thinking and adaptability.”

Todd Hirsch, chief economist at ATB Financial in *The Globe and Mail*, Aug. 29, 2014

“Canada’s future will be largely shaped by the educational experiences of our young people, now and in the years ahead. And in a world of growing complexity, these experiences must increasingly extend beyond our own borders.”



Vianne Timmons, president of the University of Regina, in *Embassy News*, December 10, 2014



The facts

What Canada’s universities are doing

Universities across the country are committed to building international and interprovincial connections for students. While strengthening mobility opportunities that already exist, universities are working to embed more opportunities directly into academic courses and programs, and address the barriers that prevent students from engaging in these experiences.

97% offer study abroad opportunities

Ninety-seven percent of Canadian universities offer their students international experiences such as academic coursework, field schools, work-terms and community service learning.⁵

92% have exchange agreements

Ninety-two percent of Canadian universities have reciprocal exchange agreements with foreign partner institutions for students to complete either study or research practicums of one to six months.⁶



The facts

Addressing barriers to mobility

Improving mobility for Canadian students is an ongoing challenge. Despite universities’ efforts to offer programs and financial support, too few Canadian students benefit from these valuable career-boosting experiences. Canada’s approach to mobility must also include increased emphasis on new study destinations, as well as provisions for non-traditional learners who face unique barriers to studying away from home.

Only 3% of students go abroad

Just 3.1 percent of full-time undergraduates (about 25,000) had a short-term international experience in 2012-13. Only 2.6 percent had a for-credit experience abroad. These figures have remained steady over the past eight years.⁷

Only 10% of students leave their province

Current estimates suggest that only one in 10 young Canadians crosses a provincial border to complete their university degree.⁸

91% say financing a challenge

Although 78 percent of institutions provide some funding to support student participation in study abroad programs, 91 percent of universities say that lack of funds or financial support is one of the top three reasons for low student mobility rates, and more than half cite it as the top reason.⁹

Improving access for all learners

Indigenous students, first-generation Canadian students, students who are the first in their family to pursue postsecondary education, and those who work in addition to their studies face significant barriers to mobility.

#1 destination is the U.K.

Canadian students prefer to gain international experience in major western European and English-speaking nations,¹⁰ rather than in countries such as China, Brazil and India which are strategic priority countries for Canada. Encouraging students to develop experience and linguistic skills in these emerging economies is essential to growing a globally competitive Canadian economy.

Sources

1,2,3 Leger Marketing employer survey for Universities Canada, 2014

4 European Commission, Erasmus Charter for Higher Education 2014-2020, 2014

5,6,7 Universities Canada, Canada’s Universities in the World: AUCC Internationalization Survey, 2014

8 Statistics Canada, Postsecondary Student Information System, 2012

9,10 Universities Canada, Canada’s Universities in the World: AUCC Internationalization Survey, 2014

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