The International Learner Journey in Ontario Postsecondary Education:
Enabling Supports for Success

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Authors

Alexander Hughes, PhD
Research and Foresight Associate,
eCampusOntario

Graeme Cannon, MA
Research and Foresight Coordinator,
eCampusOntario

Laura Viselli, MI
Senior Manager, Research and Foresight,
eCampusOntario

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Executive Summary

"I'm happy to be here today. Hopefully my story can help other international learners out." – an international learner studying at an Ontario college

International education has become a recurrent issue in Ontario postsecondary education, as Ontario and, indeed, the entire country grapples with increased international student enrolment as a way to raise revenue for the sector. Over the past several months eCampusOntario has conducted research on the international learner journey. Our goal is to support our sector with digital solutions to improve the international learner experience in Ontario.

We have placed the voice of the international learner at the center of this work, which has involved consultations with international learners about the challenges they face and supports they could use along their journey in Ontario's postsecondary sector. International learners who are currently studying or have recently graduated from Ontario's colleges and universities face a plethora of unique challenges throughout their entire postsecondary journey – a process that extends from applications to institutions through the transition to post-graduate life. Through direct conversations with international learners, we can better understand their experiences and journey through the Ontario postsecondary sector, and their needs for and responses to solutions. The experiences of international learners as uncovered in this research provides learner-validated digital solutions to the barriers they face. eCampusOntario is providing this information to our members, federal and provincial governments, and other valued stakeholders, in order to promote the collaborative co-design of digital-by-design solutions.

The research consisted of an online survey and interviews, which involved outreach to international learners who were defined as currently enrolled in, or recently graduated from (since 2019), an undergraduate degree, certificate, or diploma program at a publicly-assisted Ontario college, or university.

The Ontario International Learner Journey online survey was open from July 1 through September 14, 2023, receiving 251 qualified responses to the survey. Eleven (11) qualifying learners chose to participate in interviews, held in September and October of 2023.

The survey addressed the international learner journey as follows:

- Researching and applying to an Ontario postsecondary institution
- Applying for a study permit (or other visa)
- Experience arriving in Ontario
- Experience studying in Ontario
- Post-graduate plans
- Challenges faced and barriers to overcome

Thematic areas addressed in interviews:

- The learner journey
- Institutional, systemic, technological, and educational barriers
- Learner solutions to challenges and barriers
- Learner reactions to eCampusOntario's proposed digital-by-design solutions
- Reviewing learner proposed digital solutions

Key Findings

International learners in Ontario overwhelmingly indicated that there is a significant information barrier when it comes to access to validated and clear information to support the different stages of their journey. Their top concerns are:

- Finding safe and affordable housing,
- Locating reliable employment, and
- Navigating immigration processes.

Learners indicated that they may not understand Canadian cultures, customs, regulations, and academic processes. International learners also indicated that they do not feel prepared for the Ontario postsecondary classroom, including online and hybrid modalities, digital fluency skills, communications, academic expectations, and learning styles. International learners feel lonely and isolated in a foreign country. By identifying these barriers and challenges, eCampusOntario was able to work with learners to discuss, ideate and validate digital-by-design solutions.

Learner Identified Solutions:

- All encompassing website with validated information and AI chatbot
- Student portals for housing, employment, and mental health
- Education agent portal

eCampusOntario Identified and Learner Validated Solutions:

- Digital Fluency Micro-credential
- Study in Ontario Micro-credential
- Open education resource uptake
- Digital peer mentorship
- Digital credentials and virtual wallets

eCampusOntario Identified Solutions:

- Working group on international learners in postsecondary education
- Blockchain acceptance letters
- Supporting the re-calibration of the post-graduation work permit
- eCampusOntario policy work
- Labour market connectivity and a study-and-stay program
- Mandatory licensing of agents
- Co-curricular Micro-credential framework
- Synchronization of education and immigration policy

Acknowledgments

Introduction

Through 2023, headlines in Canadian news have referenced "international students" in relation to stories about fraudulent immigration, the housing crisis, employment, social services, cost of living, and higher education. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) defines international students as postsecondary students in Canada who do not have a permanent residency status in Canada and have entered the country on a visa (most commonly the study permit program) or as a refugee.[1] The number of international students studying in Canada has grown exponentially in the last decade, from 300,000 in 2013 to an anticipated 900,000 by the end of 2023.[2] While the number of international students in Canada fell during the COVID-19 pandemic amid its associated travel restrictions, 2022 and 2023 saw unprecedented rates of international students entering the country. International students are recognized as a significant source of revenue to postsecondary institutions and a potential source of labour to replace Canada's aging workforce. Postsecondary institutions in Canada aggressively recruit international students and charge them higher tuition fees to increase revenues to supplement reductions in public spending.[3] Statistics Canada has also reported that the share of international students who worked while studying has been increasing.[4] At a time when education and economic policy have become intertwined on the subject of international learners, the study of the international learner journey in Ontario is of utmost significance.

Reports in news media suggest that there has also been a plight of problems directly impacting the international student journey in Canada. In August 2023, the Canadian Minister of Immigration, Marc Miller, told the *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, "Core to this is actually trying to figure out what the problem is we're trying to solve for. It isn't entirely housing, it's more appropriately the integrity of the system that has mushroomed, ballooned in the past couple of years." Miller points to a ballooned system, a system experiencing exponential growth, but also a system that is failing to appropriately support the increasing number of international learners. This group of learners faces challenges ranging from navigating cultural differences, finding suitable housing, navigating unfamiliar education systems, difficulty finding employment, exploitation by employers, and struggling with English and French comprehension. News reports highlight far more dire situations, such as students facing disenrollment and deportation because of the alleged actions of postsecondary education agents abroad. Some learners have reported that agents have taken advantage of their lack knowledge of the Canadian immigration system, shared false information and fraudulent documents, and charged exorbitant fees for their services.[5] This has fuelled a growing

1   This group also includes those enrolled in a program from a Canadian institution that is not located in Canada (also known as 'offshore students') and those studying online and living abroad. Statistics Canada, "Education Matters." February 24, 2011. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/81-004-x/2010006/def/intlstudent-etudiantetranger-eng.htm

2   Statista, "Number of study permit holders with a valid permit in Canada from 2000 to 2022." July 2023. https://www.statista.com/statistics/555117/number-of-international-students-at-years-end-canada-2000-2014/ and Pass-Land, Christian. "Integrity of immigration system at risk as international student numbers balloon, minister says." *CBC News,* August 27, 2023.

3   Kumar, Rahul and Clinton Kewley. "Quality, Cost and Time: The Iron Triangle of International Postsecondary Programs in Ontario," *Journal of Thought,* Fall/Winter 2021, 20-38, 21.

4   Statistics Canada, "International students as a source of labour supply: Transition to permanent residency." June 23, 2021. https://doi.org/10.25318/36280001202100600002-eng

5   Singh, Satbir. "Dozens of students who could be kicked out of Canada say they were duped by immigration agents in India," *CBC News,* March 17, 2023.

concern about the forgery of acceptance letters and enrollment documents used to obtain student visas in the process of international student recruitment. Other reports indicate that some female international students are afraid to report sexual assault, fearing reprisal and deportation from Canada.[6]

Ontario is the most popular destination for international students in Canada. In 2022, 52% (289,835) of all study permits were issued to learners going to Ontario institutions, followed by British Columbia with 19% of total study permits.[7] Ontario is an attractive destination based on the sheer number of postsecondary institutions in the province: 56 publicly-assisted Indigenous institutes, colleges, and universities (9 Indigenous Institutes, 24 colleges, and 23 universities), 513 private career colleges, and 6 private universities. Ontario is also home to the largest urban, cultural, and economic centres in Canada, making it an attractive destination for both post-graduate immigration and employment opportunities. As many learners who participated in our interviews indicated, familial connections to Ontario (specifically the Greater Toronto Area) fueled their desire to study in the province. Recognizing the significant role that Ontario plays in the international learner ecosystem, eCampusOntario, a provincially-funded non-profit organization that leads a consortium of the province's publicly-assisted Indigenous Institutes, colleges, and universities to further digital transformation in higher education, has engaged in research on international learners in

Ontario. As a convening power in the Ontario postsecondary sector, eCampusOntario is in a unique position to work with the sector to understand the needs of international learners and identify solutions to some of the problems they face. Between July and October 2023, the eCampusOntario Research and Foresight unit engaged with international learners at the undergraduate level at Ontario's publicly-assisted colleges and universities to identify the problems they face and to explore possible digital by design solutions.

The data collected by the research team reveals that undergraduate international learners in Ontario face a myriad of problems at different stages in their learner journey. We spoke to learners about five pivotal moments in their journey: researching and applying to Ontario postsecondary institutions, applying for a study permit or other visa, arriving in Ontario, studying in Ontario, and post-graduate pathways to citizenship in Canada. At each of these stages, international learners have reported information (and misinformation), communication, access, social, cultural, economic, employment, and educational barriers. Understanding these barriers from the international learner's perspective is of utmost importance to rectify these issues with digital solutions and improve the international learner journey. The voices of international learners are central to the digital transformation of Ontario's postsecondary sector and the future of Canada.

Background and Literature Review

In 1827, when the first higher education institution opened in Ontario, international learners were not remotely considered as potential learners who

would one day bask the halls of these institutions. These institutions of higher education pre-date Canadian Confederation and were established

6   Pottie, Erin. "Some female international students afraid to report sexual assault, says CBU students' union president." *CBC News,* January 11, 2023.

7   Packer, Helen. "Over 800,000 international students in Canada in 2022." *Professionals in International Education (PIE) News.* February 16, 2023.

by religious orders to educate the elites of Upper and Lower Canada.[8] Following Confederation in 1867, the Canadian constitution gave the federal government responsibility for trade and commerce, while individual provinces were responsible for education.[9] These divisions of powers came to overlap in the postsecondary sector, especially on the topic of international learners. The first international learners in Ontario came from the United States and Britain, seeking professional programs and training that they could not obtain at home.[10] Following the Second World War, economic and cultural transitions in post-war Canada led to the rapid expansion of the university sector, and the creation of the applied arts college system.[11] By the 1960s, international students, mostly Americans, accounted for 5% of all students in Ontario's postsecondary sector. In the context of the Cold War, there were underlying fears of the so-called "radical ideas" these learners brought to Ontario.[12] In 1962, to address these and other concerns related to international learners, the Federal Department of Citizenship and Immigration introduced the Student Visa as a class of non-immigrants; individuals of fit physical health with intellectual goals for being in Canada.[13] However, the division between federal and provincial postsecondary education interests reared its head in the 1970s when federal immigration policy shifted from international learners as vehicles for achieving Canadian goals and to support the development of the Third World to economistic, marketized evaluations of student access.[14]

The commodification of international students extended from the 1980s through the 2000s, as the federal government supported recruitment abroad for geopolitical and economic gains, while institutions saw offshore campuses, offices, and recruitment as a solution for their institutional funding models.[15] While a snippet of Canadian political, institutional, immigration, and economic history may feel out of place in a report such as this, these events set in motion the roots of now.

There is a vast amount of academic literature on the topic of international learners in postsecondary education, including, institutional views on international learners, international learners' rationale for studying abroad, advertising and recruitment, acculturalization, isolation and homesickness, and seeking solutions for social and cultural issues international learners face. The research team examined literature primarily from Canada and the United States, with an emphasis on the Ontario context. Much of the literature focuses on the arrival and transition to study, with little focus having been spent on the post-graduate transition to employment and immigration.

A review of the literature reveals that international learners choose Canada for several reasons; it is a safe and stable country whose postsecondary intuitions have a reputation for providing a quality education, and Canada is seen as a generally tolerant and non-discriminatory society, further augmenting the safety an international learner

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8   McKillop, A.B. *Matters of Mind: The University in Ontario 1791-1951.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994.

9   Department of Justice. *The Constitution Acts 1867-1982.* (Accessed October 18, 2023) https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-2.html#h-11

10   McKillop.

11   Jones, Glen A. "Ontario Higher Education Reform, 1995–2003: From modest modifications to policy reforms." *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education.* 34:3, 2004. 43.

12   This included Communism, Socialism, anti-war sentiment, and countercultural movements. McCartney, Dale. *From "friendly relations" to differential fees: A history of international student policy in Canada since World War II.* Doctoral Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 2020. 150-152.

13   McCartney, 85-86.

14   McCartney, 112.

15   Kumar, Rahul and Clinton Kewley. "Quality, Cost and Time: The Iron Triangle of International Postsecondary Programs in Ontario," *Journal of Thought,* Fall/Winter 2021, 20-38, 21.

may experience.[16] Four key themes emerge in the literature regarding institutional approaches to engaging international learners: recruitment, student services, intercultural awareness, and post-graduation transitions. According to Buckner, Brown, and Morales, institutions most predominantly focus on recruitment. They further suggest colleges tend to frame international students in terms of their contributions to diversity and link this diversity to domestic students' intercultural understanding, awareness, and competencies. Buckner, Brown, and Morales also note that there is much less focus on international students' post-graduation plans, including integration into the labor market or future immigration.[17] International learners and institutions have different understandings of one another, specifically one another's role, function, and purpose.

A key feature of international learner experiences covered in the literature revolves around the arrival in a new country and navigating its social, cultural, educational, and economic systems as a daunting situation. In the news over the last five years, there have been stories of students having to retake their International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exams, colleges that accepted the students closing, enrollment suspensions, international learners falling victim to phone and text scams, harassment of international learners based on their country of origin, and agents providing fraudulent acceptances and study visas leading

to deportation.[18] Moreover, during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, international learners faced increased challenges which increased their anxieties about the culture and required greater support from trans-national families. Many students did not meet the requirements for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit provided by the government of Canada as they were not working prior to the pandemic in order to focus on their studies.[19]

The research team has identified the divide between international and domestic students as one of the factors making acculturalization difficult, and a significant contributor to the feelings of isolation and loneliness experienced by international students. According to Tavares, international students with more friendships with local students experienced "higher levels of satisfaction, contentment, and significantly lower levels of homesickness". For domestic students, interacting with international learners affords local students the development of intercultural sensitivity.[20] Groupwork between students of different nationalities also has a strong impact on learning and friendship. Many international students report feeling ignored by domestic students even after weeks of close contact in the classroom. Social activities domestic peers engage in may not be enjoyable for international learners (clubbing, drinking) and Tavares thus suggests that peer mentorship to navigate the postsecondary institution and encourage structured intergroup

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16   Canadian Bureau for International Education, "International Students in Canada 2022," 2023, https://cbie.ca/infographic/

17   Buckner, Elizabeth, Taiya Brown, and Sarah Morales, "Local Mandate, Global Market: How Canadian Colleges Discuss International Students," *Community College Journal of Research and Practice,* 47:6 2023, 413-427, 418.

18   The following articles cover each of the mentioned cases of problems learners are facing in Canada. Hune-Brown, Nicholas, "The Shadowy Business of International Education," *The Walrus,* October 2021. Hill, Brian, "International students, arrested, facing deportation for working too many hours," *Global News,* May 13, 2019. Bascaramurty, Dakshana, Neha Bhatt, and Uday Rana, "Canada's international student recruiting machine is broken," *The Globe and Mail*, November 4, 2021. Sachdeva, Seema, "Jarring notes: Issues Indian students face in Canada," *The Tribune,* September 26, 2022. Todd, Douglas, "Douglas Todd: Would-be immigrants to Canada being sold 'false dreams'," *Vancouver Sun,* April 2, 2019. Keung, Nicholas, "'No parents should have to bury their child': How a Canadian funeral home owner is trying to stop suicides among international students," *The Toronto Star,* December 4, 2021.

19   Hari, Amrita, Nardon Luciara, and Hui Zhang, "A transnational lens into international student experiences of the COVID-19 pandemics," *Global Networks,* 23, 2021, 1-17, 10.

20   Tavares, Vander, "Lock Us in a Room together: Local Student Suggestions for Improving Socialization with International Students," *Open Journals in Education,* 14:4 2022, 22-36, 23.

socialization may be the solution.[21]

The research team's review of the literature found a variety of supports that international learners may require during their studies. According to Ankomah, there are many factors to keep international students happy and engaged in their studies, including financial and emotional support from family, responsive instructors, employment opportunities, learning and engagement in extracurriculars with colleagues and friends, professionalism of non-teaching staff (such as learning centres and residence staff), good learning management systems and online learning platforms, virtual access to campus software and resources, and reduced travel time.[22] According to Mesidor and Sly, the most important supports for international learners include mental health supports to help with adjustments; counselling and mentorship services; welcoming activities; on-campus job opportunities; having assigned academic advisors; holistic supports for health, mental health, time management, and study skills; and having a smooth transition website to help students learn about the institution, and how to navigate the local area's culture and geography.[23]

Another study on learner acculturation and isolation conducted by Gebhard in the United States suggests that international learners are challenged by academics, social interactions, and emotional reactions to their new life. Gebhard finds that students feel stresses in new countries because they may be perceived as a foreigner and experience gender, racial, and language discrimination. The study suggests solutions such as study groups, office hours, and imitating domestic students.[24] This literature is significant to developing an understanding that international students cannot be treated as a monolithic group and have individual experiences which require different supports. Further, the literature reveals that learners need wraparound supports, not just academic supports, to ease their transition to study.

While there is not significant literature on the transition to employment or immigration after study, the existing literature reveals that much like domestic students, international students struggle with what to do after graduating. Liu and Guo examined how race, gender, and class intersect in shaping immigrants' experiences of transition to work as lifelong learning progresses. Barriers include refusal to accept non-Canadian credentials and racialized complexities of credentials and how to fit into a predominantly white work landscape.[25] Through interviews with international learners, Netierman, Harrison, and Freeman found that for most students, the decision to stay in Canada is formed gradually and shaped by many factors, such as familial obligations, the cultural climate they experience in Canada, employment opportunities available to them upon graduation, and the possibility of obtaining permanent residency.[26] This suggests that the pathway to post-graduate employment and immigration is not clear, and supports may be required to ease this transition for students.

21   Ibid, 24 and 32.

22   Ankomah, William, "Conditions Fostering International Graduate Students' Happiness and Engagement During the COVID-19 Pandemic," *World Journal of education,* 12:1 2022, 1-16, 13.

23   Mesidor, Jean and Kaye F. Sly, "Factors that Contribute to the Adjustment of International Students," *Journal of International Students,* 6:1 2016, 262-282, 273-275.

24   Gebhard, Jerry. "International Students Adjustment Problems and Behaviours," *Journal of International Students,* 2:2 2023, 184-193, 185.

25   Liu, Jingzhou. and Shibao Guo, "Navigating transition to work: Recent immigrant's experiences of lifelong learning in Canada," *International Review of Education,* 67 2021, 733-750, 747.

26   Netierman, Elena, Lauren Harrison, Angela Freeman, et al., "Should I Stay or Should I Go? International Students' Decision-Making About Staying in Canada," *International Migration & Integration,* 23 2022, 43-60, 57.

Methods

All project activities from conceptualization, literature review, survey development, participant recruitment, data collection, focus groups, analysis, and dissemination of research took place between June and November 2023. A survey and interviews were conducted between July and September 2023. Research participants were recruited through targeted Google and Meta advertisements (run in Ontario, India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, South Korea, Philippines, and Japan), eCampusOntario's social media feeds, and emails sent to groups of learners with pre-existing relationships to eCampusOntario.

A survey of up to thirty-nine questions was created and hosted on the web based Qualtrics platform. Some questions were revealed based on how respondents answered previous questions, such as a series of questions for learners who took or are taking primarily online or hybrid classes. As not all respondents were invited to answer all questions, the number of respondents to specific questions varies and has been indicated throughout this report. The data also includes the responses of survey respondents who did not complete the entire survey, so the number of respondents per question likewise reflects these discrepancies. The survey contained quantitative questions (e.g., five-point Likert scales, multiple choice, select your favorite option, yes or no) and optional qualitative questions (e.g., long answer text responses). Questions in the survey were grouped

chronologically through the different periods in a learner's journey: researching and applying to study in Ontario, applying for a study permit or Canadian visa, arriving in Ontario (the initial arrival period and first semester of study), studying in Ontario (second semester of study through completion of program), and post-graduate pathways. Survey participants had the opportunity to enter a raffle to win a $50 gift card. The survey was opened on July 1st and closed on September 13th, 2023.

At the end of the survey, participants were offered the opportunity to participate in an hour-long interview, with $100 Visa gift card offered as compensation for their participation. 57 participants indicated interest in participating in interviews. Two emails were sent to this group inviting them to participate. Of the 57 respondents invited, 11 participated in hour-long interviews with the research team. These 11 interviewees represent 4% of all qualifying learners, or 19% of interested participants. Interviews sought clarification on trends identified in the survey and qualitative responses and were conducted between September 18th and October 2nd, 2023.

The research team conducted data analysis in October 2023. Qualitative responses were transcribed and coded in the NVivo qualitative analysis software to identify trends and patterns in interview and survey responses.

Inclusion Criteria

eCampusOntario surveyed 301 total respondents, 251 of whom qualified as international students who are currently enrolled in or recently graduated from (since 2019) an undergraduate degree, certificate, or diploma program at a publicly-assisted Ontario Indigenous Institute,

college, or university. These groups were selected as they represent the bulk of international students studying in the Ontario postsecondary environment, have current experiences, and in the case of the 2019 onward graduate, can highlight the transition from study permit student to post-

graduate employment.[27] Of the 251 qualifying international learners, 11 participated in interviews with the research team.

The survey and interviews revealed the demographics of international learners, how they overcome information barriers, the informal digital practices and communities they use to succeed in Ontario, places they trust for information, the kind of information and supports they require, and validated digital solutions for some of the problems they face at different stages in their learner journeys. As one interview participant said, "There are many thorns along the international path, hopefully the rose in the end [Canadian residency] is worth it." The learners surveyed and interviewed by eCampusOntario expressed optimism for their futures in Canada, but are seeking support along the way to ensure a successful future.

Demographics

This section provides a demographic overview of our survey and interview participants:

- *Country:* The survey reached learners from 33 different countries. Ranked by number of respondents, we reached learners from India, the Philippines, China, Bangladesh, Colombia, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Bhutan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, Haiti, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iran, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, Panama, Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, Vietnam. Interviews were conducted with learners from 4 countries: Hong Kong, India, the Philippines, and Russia

- *Institution of Study:* 25 different publicly-assisted colleges and universities were represented by survey respondents. Listed by number of respondents, survey participants attended: Seneca College, Humber College, Nipissing University, Algoma University, Mohawk College, Conestoga College, University of Toronto, Brock University, Centennial College, Toronto Metropolitan University, Algonquian College, Cambrian College, Durham College, Fanshawe College, Georgian College, Northern College, University of Waterloo, Collège Boréal, Fleming College, Niagara College, OCAD University, Ontario Tech University, University of Ottawa, Western University, and York University

- *Level of Study:* 76 (46%) respondents were studying at the diploma level, 57 (35%) were studying at the certificate level, 23 (14%) were studying at the Bachelors level, and 7 (5%) did not answer or are unknown.

- *Visa Status:* 81 (55%) respondents were on a Study Permit, 41 (28%) were on a Post-Graduation Work Permit, 8 (6%) respondents were Permanent Residents, and 17 (12%) respondents chose not to answer or had other status in Canada such as a work permit or refugee status.

Limitations

eCampusOntario sought to reach international learners from a diverse set of countries at a variety of institutions across Ontario. As such, we relied on a convenience sample. To reach these learners, we relied on the use of paid advertisements to expand survey reach and increase research participant recruitment. These advertisements were run on Google and Meta platforms and targeted at

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27   Graduate students were excluded from the research as they come to Ontario with pre-existing postsecondary experience. Graduate students may experience similar concerns and journeys to the undergraduate research subjects, so similar digital solutions may also apply to them. This leaves an opportunity for future research with graduate students.

specific geographies and user profiles (international learners who study in Ontario, residing in Ontario, and residing in India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, South Korea, the Philippines, and Japan). As such, we may not have reached those who are not users of Google or Meta services or in countries where Google and Meta services are not available (such as China). Further, because advertisements were tailored to specific geographies, international students who study in Ontario, but were living in different provinces or in non-targeted countries at the time of the advertisements may not have seen our advertisements. We also sent email blasts to emails on the eCampusOntario email list of students, which consists of learners who have used any of eCampusOntario's services. By recruiting from this list, we recognize we may have a disproportionately large number of students from specific institutions, such as Seneca College.

We recognize that the countries of origin for interview participants does not align with the international student make-up in the province of Ontario. Specifically, the lack of participants from China (one interview participant was from Hong Kong and is now a Canadian Permanent Resident) means that their perspective is not captured amongst the in-depth interviews.

The time of year that this research took place over may have impacted our ability to recruit research participants. The survey ran from July 1st to September 13th, 2023. This timeline overlaps with two key times for students: the summer, when many students may not be in Canada or checking their student emails, and the start of the semester, when students are focused on moving and starting their classes. This is especially true for international students, who may be moving between countries and becoming used to life in a new place in this period. Interviews were conducted from September 18th to October 2nd, 2023. Participants for interviews were survey respondents, and as such the pool of potential interviewees was affected by the aforementioned limitations. Similarly, these interviews took place near the start of the new academic year, which is a busy time for students who are getting prepared for classes, looking for work (or working), and getting settled in a new

community. However, times later into the semester run into exams and holidays: there is no ideal time to conduct research with learners.

International learners may have a potential fear of reprisal for talking about issues, governmental processes, or institutions that affect them, this may have led to interview participants not being entirely candid in their responses. International learners may be unsure of who can report to government agencies or institutions, or come from countries with strong distrust of government and adjacent organizations. We recognize that some respondents could be fearful of reprisal should they speak negatively about their institution or provincial or federal governments. To remedy this fear, the research team: talked to former international students working at eCampusOntario, conducted a literature review and environmental scan to familiarize ourselves with the landscape, made the survey responses anonymous and protected the data, confirmed consent at various points throughout the interview process, and asked interviewees to use pseudonyms during interviews to protect their identities. We further attempted to remedy this by taking what we learned from one interview and using that to inform subsequent interviews.

The final limitation to our findings is the lack of participating learners from Indigenous Institutes. Learners from Indigenous Institutes were welcome to participate in our survey, but no respondents indicated they attended these institutions. We recognize that Indigenous Institutes are the third pillar of the postsecondary education sector in Ontario. That is to say, this report cannot definitely be reflective of the sector as it does not encompass the experiences of international learners from all three pillars of postsecondary education in Ontario.

The International Learner Journey

For the purpose of this research and this report, the research team identified different steps or milestones in the international learner's journey. These steps, or the journey is referenced throughout this report. The journey for international learners coming to a new country is comprised of five major steps: researching and applying to Ontario institutions, visa applications, arriving in Ontario, studying in Ontario, and then finally the transition (or plan) to post-graduate employment and immigration.

5 Steps in the Journey

Research and Applying to Postsecondary Institutions

Study-permit Application

Arriving in Ontario

Studying in Ontario

Transition to Employment and Immigration
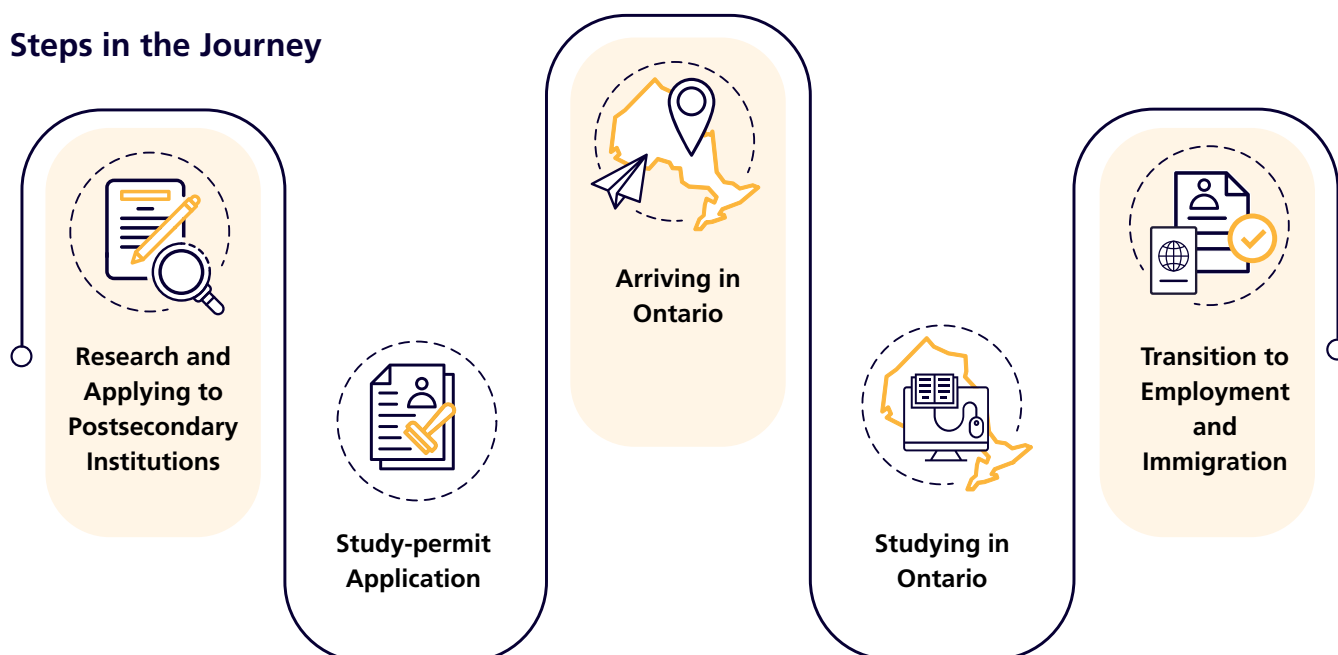
First, in the research and application to Ontario institutions step, an international learner makes the decision to study in Ontario and looks into programs to decide where to go. This can involve the hiring of an education agent, a common experience for our interview participants from India, to assist with or facilitate the application process. An international learner (potentially in conjunction with their educational agent) researches programs they are interested in and applies to them with the requisite documents over online portals. They then wait for acceptance, which can take from only a few days to months. In this time, the international learner is also conducting research on where they will be living and what they will need in anticipation for the next step.

Second, once the learner is accepted into a program at an institution in Ontario, they are presented with a Letter of Invitation from the accepting institution,

and are able to apply for a study-permit (sometimes called a visa). In this step, the international learner (and potentially their educational or immigration agent) produces the necessary documentation to complete the study-permit application, this includes; proof of acceptance to a Canadian designated learning institution, proof of identity, proof of financial support ($10,000 not including tuition or $833 per month of study), a letter of explanation (sometimes called a "study plan," which answers why they want to study in Canada, and that they understand their responsibilities as a student), academic transcripts, family information form, medical exam record, and passport sized photos. After submitting this documentation, learners start to investigate life in Canada such as locating housing and preparing to travel to Canada. Once approved, learners are permitted to travel to Canada. This process includes using the

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) website, visiting local or regional Canadian embassies/consulates/high commissions.

Upon arrival in Canada, learners are met by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), whereupon the international learner must produce their study permit and supporting documentation for a border services officer. These processes, especially the visa acceptance, can take time and thus can provide short timeframes for international learners to prepare to fly to a new place and find housing before classes start.

The third stage of the learner's journey starts after arriving in Ontario, before classes start. This step involves rapidly establishing a life in a new space, including finding a place to live and often the start of the search for part-time work. International learners have to navigate a new city or town and their campus, find groceries, learn a transit system, and purchase other necessities such as internet, mobile data, or technology devices.

Then, during the fourth step, classes begin, and the learner starts studying in Ontario. This stage often happens in tandem with the third stage as a learner continues to establish a life in a new country, but now has educational responsibilities included. The styles of teaching and learning in Ontario may differ from other places in the world and this can provide a barrier for international learners who are not used to that style of teaching. Moreover,

Ontario institutions have been utilizing hybrid and online modalities of teaching which international learners may be unprepared for. Other academic factors such as interacting with peers, approaching faculty for assistance, and navigating learning management systems and other items and processes used in teaching even in primarily in-person contexts in Ontario postsecondary classrooms may also prove challenging. Data from Statistics Canada reveals 76% of children of immigrants are first generation postsecondary learners.[28] While a data set does not exist specifically for international learners, it can be assumed that many international learners are also first generation postsecondary learners, who cannot be supported by family members on how to navigate the postsecondary environment.

Finally, once a learner has completed their program, they can apply for a post-graduation work permit (PGWP) which allows them to work in Canada full time. The post-graduation work permit may be valid between eight months and three years, depending on the length of the program of study they completed in Canada. However, understanding the process of applying for the PGWP and finding full-time work in their field can be difficult. For the purposes of this research, the journey of an international learner ends at this stage. While some research participants made the transition from the PGWP to Permanent Residency, we focused our attention on the transition from international learner on study permit to PGWP.

Actors

Along their journey in postsecondary education, international learners are exposed to a series of formal and informal actors who support their path. Actors include, but are not limited to, governmental agents, institutional employees, peers, teaching and learning communities, off-campus communities, friends, family, educational agents, employers, and other wraparound supports.

Each of these actors can provide learners with advice and information to support their journey, and may overlap their role at different stages of the journey. The motivations of some actors, and the validity of the information they provide, was identified by our survey and interview participants as one of their concerns.

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28   Statistics Canada, "Postsecondary Education Participation Among Underrepresented and Minority Groups." 2011.

Information Overload and the Complex Web of Actors

Researching PSE in Ontario	Application	Visa Application	Studying in Ontario		Post Graduation
Educational Agents	Educational Agents	Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada	International Student Office	Students Union /Student Services	Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada
Family and Friends	Family and Friends	Canada Border Services Agency	Professors and Instructors	Fellow Students (Domestic and International)	Employers
Local Schools and PSE	Ontario University Application Centre	International Student Office	Teaching and Learning Centres	Libraries (Public and Institutional)	Community/Alumni Network
Financers	Ontario Colleges Application Service	Local Healthcare/ Notary	English/French Language Supports	Health Services (Mental and Physical)	Leave Canada
Their Country's Government	Registrar's Office	Former Educational Institutions	Residence Life or Landlords	Funding Agencies and Financial Institutions	
Ontario PSE Websites	Ontario PSE Websites	Unofficial Forums/ Websites/Support Groups	Off Campus Communities	Local Transit Systems	
Ontario PSE Representatives	Ontario PSE Representatives	Connections with Lived Experience	Professional Services	Employers	
Government of Canada and Provincial Websites	International Student Office	Embassy/Consulate High Commission of Canada	Employment Services/Co-op/ Placement		

■ **Stage in Journey**　　■ **Actor**

Graphic 1: System Map of some of the different actors supporting learners at each of the stages in their postsecondary journey. Note that some actors overlap their role at different stages of the journey.

Agents

Perhaps the most notable actor to emerge in the support of international learners through researching and applying to Ontario postsecondary institutions is the educational agent, advisor, broker, consultant, or councillor. As per the Government of Canada's EduCanada, educational agents are "individuals or organizations located in Canada or abroad offering marketing, promotion, recruitment and other services in the education sector. The Government of Canada does not qualify, accredit, guarantee or endorse any particular agent."[29] Educational agents are commercial operations who either charge learners for their services (often called Consultants), or have a commission structure with a postsecondary institution for finding successful candidates. Some Canadian institutions prohibit agents from directly charging students, and in turn offer them

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29　EduCanada.ca, "Education Agents." Updated June 9, 2023. https://www.educanada.ca/study-plan-etudes/before-avant/education-agents.aspx?lang=eng

a proportion of the incoming student's tuition.[30] Because of this fee structure, some agents may be motivated to have students rapidly apply. Some learners expressed that they were encouraged by agents to apply to institutions after receiving fake information about the location of institutions, institutional demographics, job opportunities, and life in Canada.

Headlines from multiple Canadian publications have indicated that some agents play significant roles in the use of fake acceptance letters. EduCanada recommends "that each student research the background, experience and expertise of the agent; determine which Canadian institutions are authorizing their services; and seek references before engaging with an agent. Confirm directly with an institution of interest to determine authorization for agent representation." Every learner we interviewed who used an education agent (8 of 11 interviewees) indicated that they selected their agent based on familial connections, reputation, and word-of-mouth to avoid fraudulent and scamming agents. However, it was evident in interviews that some of these learners felt that their agents provided them with false information about ease of finding employment and life in Ontario cities.[31]

Supporting learners through the immigration process is often handled by an immigration agent, who is paid a fee by the individual learner or educational agents. Sometimes specific agents may play both roles.[32] Our interviews revealed that educational agents, not immigration agents, played a significant role in study-permit applications. The Government of Canada's EduCanada states that "It is important to note that education agents cannot provide advice on Canada's immigration process. In 2011, the Government of Canada

amended the *Immigration and Refugee Act* to make it illegal for anyone but an authorized representative to charge fees to help people with immigration and refugee applications to Canada. This includes education agents."[33] However, 3 of 11 interview participants told eCampusOntario that their education agents helped them compile documentation, fill out forms, and rewrite their learning plans as part of their study-permit application process. One interviewee indicated that their educational agent handed their file to an immigration agent, who did a subpar job working on their visa application. The learner said that they found grammatical and language errors throughout the documents and did not understand the value of this immigration agent. When asked why they used an agent for this support, despite finding errors in their work, the learner said, "they had been successful, and got other international students into Canada." This learner further explained, "While I could have done it myself, my parents told me to trust my agent, because it's their job."

Despite being legally prohibited from supporting visa applications, it is evident that some education agents are financially motivated to ensure their clients successfully arrive in Ontario and overstep their boundaries to ensure this success. As one learner explained to the research team, their education agent helped them with Canadian banking processes to open a Student Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC), which they were told would expedite their study permit application by showing proof of funds. This was a clear case of an education agent overstepping their boundaries and supporting an immigration application. Another interviewee suggested that they felt uneasy with sharing their sensitive information (banking, medical, and passport) with their agent to help

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30   Council of Ministers of Education, "The Role of Education Agents in Canada's Education Systems." December 2013, 2.

31   For example, one student studying at a northern institution revealed that their agent told them it was "close to Toronto" and a "big city." The student said that this was not the reality of the situation.

32   Council of Ministers of Education, 6.

33   EduCanada.ca, "Education Agents." Updated June 9, 2023. https://www.educanada.ca/study-plan-etudes/before-avant/education-agents.aspx?lang=eng

their study permit application. The learner said, "I shared it by email, which is dumb, I know. I'm sure it's all somewhere online now." The financial motivations of education agents has led to cases of supporting the visa process. Furthermore, by granting education agents access to personal documents in support of their visa applications,

learners risk the privacy and security of their personal information and future in Canada.

This section has described the processes and key actors involved in the international learner journey. We will reference these stages, actors and their roles, and the journey throughout this report.
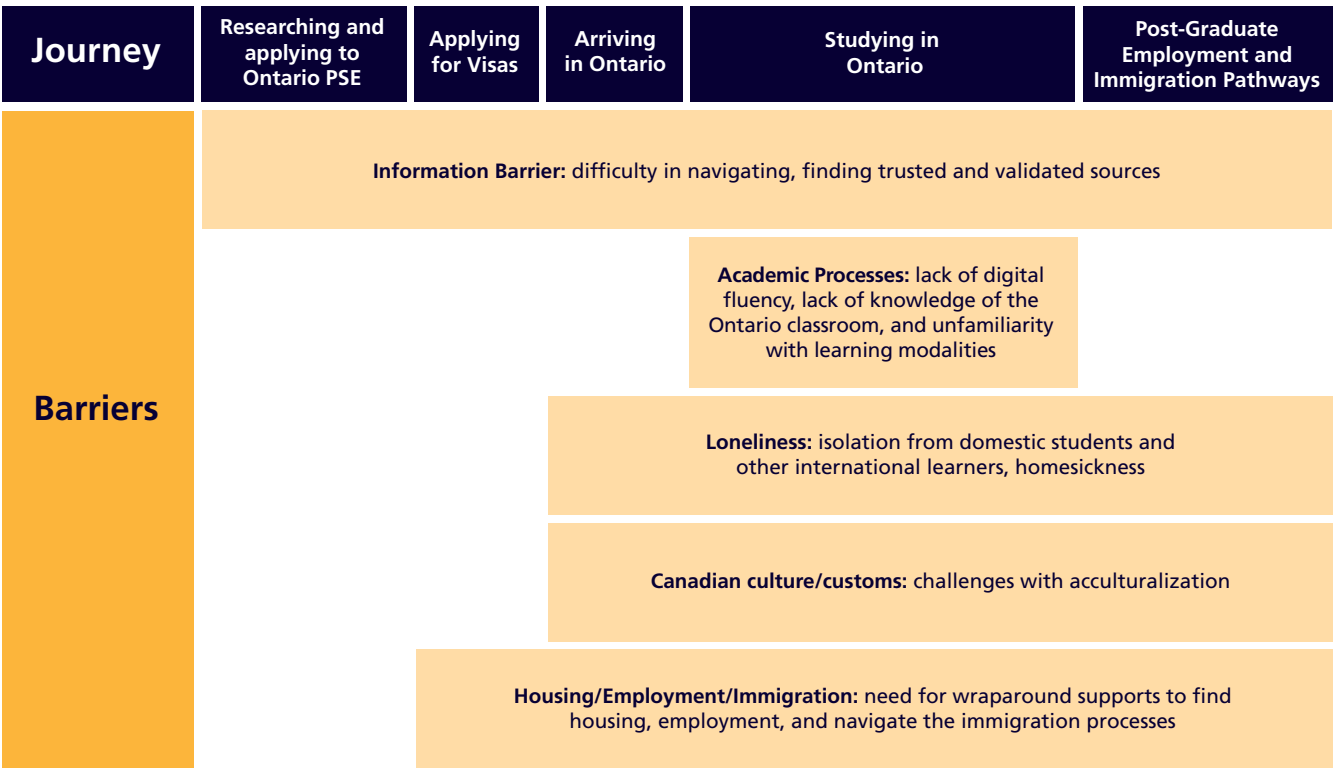
Listening to Learners: Our Findings

The research conducted by eCampusOntario was an opportunity for the research team to capture the attitudes, experiences, and nuances of international learner journeys directly from learners. We asked learners about their journeys in chronological order, starting from researching and applying to Ontario institutions and programs, visa applications, arriving in Ontario, studying in Ontario, and then finally the transition (or plan) for post-graduate employment and immigration. At each of these stages, learners revealed digital sources they used to find information, the actors who supported their decision making and journey, barriers they experienced, and suggested the need for new supports at each of these stages. While this section is presented chronologically, learner concerns emerged across all temporal spaces: learners identified the need for informational supports, understanding what is legitimate and what is not, understanding the Canadian classroom, understanding Canadian culture, wraparound supports for all aspects of their lives, and being presented with realistic account of living and studying in Ontario.

Central to this report is the importance of listening to the learner to improve their journeys and experience in Ontario postsecondary education. As one interview participant indicated, "I'm happy to be here today. Hopefully my story can help other international learners out." eCampusOntario places the voice of the international learner at the centre of seeking solutions to improve their journeys in Ontario and the centre of the digital transformation of the postsecondary sector.

Challenges across the International Learner Journey

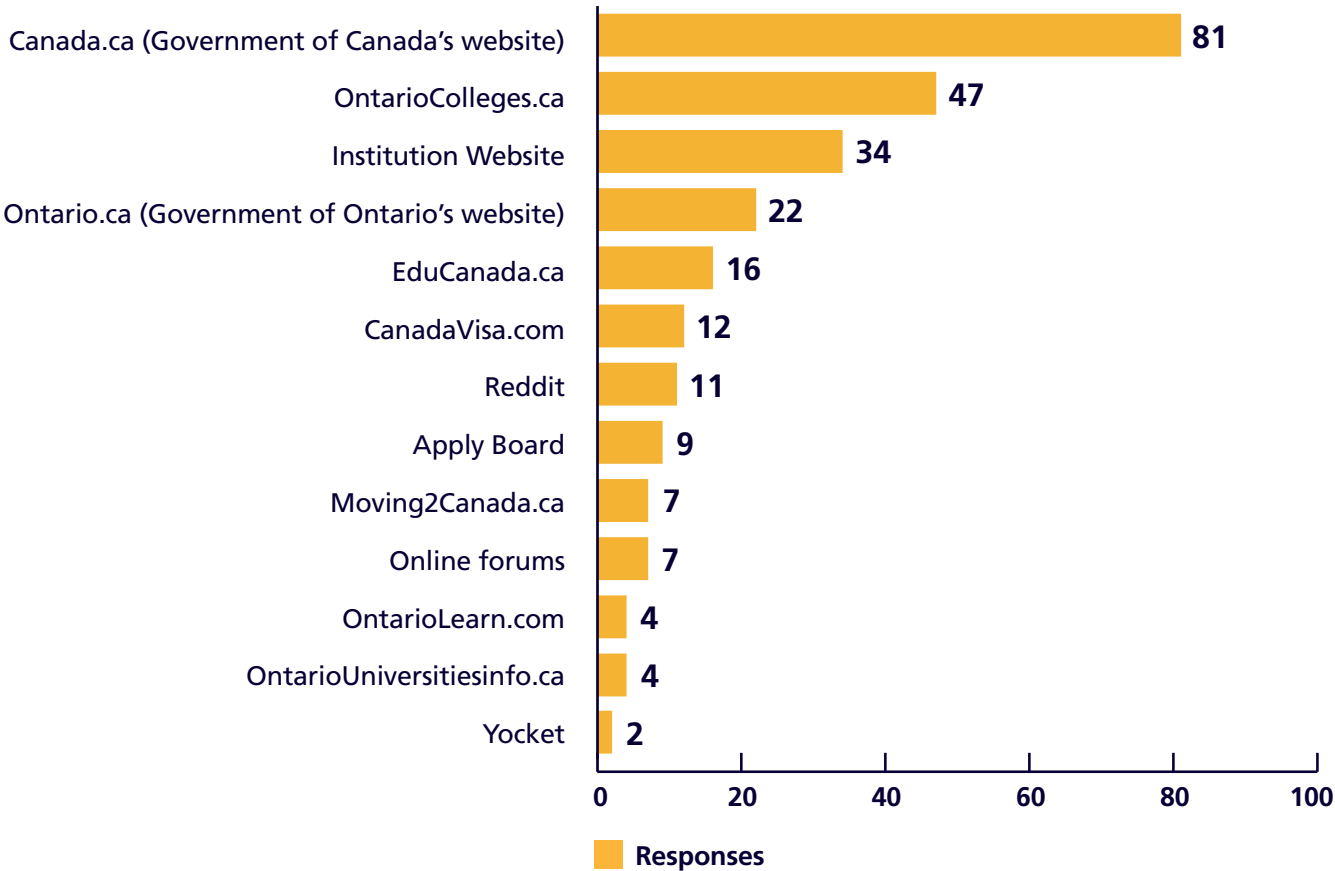| Journey	Researching and applying to Ontario PSE	Applying for Visas	Arriving in Ontario	Studying in Ontario	Post-Graduate Employment and Immigration Pathways
Barriers	Information Barrier: difficulty in navigating, finding trusted and validated sources				
				Academic Processes: lack of digital fluency, lack of knowledge of the Ontario classroom, and unfamiliarity with learning modalities	
				Loneliness: isolation from domestic students and other international learners, homesickness	
				Canadian culture/customs: challenges with acculturalization	
			Housing/Employment/Immigration: need for wraparound supports to find housing, employment, and navigate the immigration processes		

Graphic 2: Key Challenges identified across the international learner journey.

Researching and Applying to Institutions

The preliminary interaction any learner has with a postsecondary institution is through research, which employs a variety of formal and informal methods. Our survey asked international learners about their main sources of information when researching and apply to Ontario postsecondary institutions. Survey respondents overwhelmingly indicated that Canada.ca, the webpage managed by the Government of Canada, was the most popular resource, with 60% of respondents (151 of 251 respondents) indicating they used the resource. The OntarioColleges.ca webpage managed by Colleges Ontario was used by 35% (88 of 251) of participants, followed by 25% (63 of 251) using institution-specific webpages, 16% (40 of 251) using the Government of Ontario's webpages, and 12% (30 of 251) using the Government of Canada's EduCanada.ca website. While official sources of information were the most popular, 63 of 251 (25%) respondents indicated that they used unofficial sources of information such as CanadaVisa.com, Reddit, Apply Board, Moving2Canada.ca, Yocket, and online forums. 4 of 11 interview participants indicated that they struggled to identify which web resources have the correct answers and could be trusted as sources of knowledge to plan their move to Ontario.

Web Sources Used for Research and Application Information

Web Source	Responses
Canada.ca (Government of Canada's website)	81
OntarioColleges.ca	47
Institution Website	34
Ontario.ca (Government of Ontario's website)	22
EduCanada.ca	16
CanadaVisa.com	12
Reddit	11
Apply Board	9
Moving2Canada.ca	7
Online forums	7
OntarioLearn.com	4
OntarioUniversitiesinfo.ca	4
Yocket	2

Graphic 3: Bar Graph of web sources used for information when researching and applying to Ontario postsecondary institutions. Data collected from survey respondents. The graph displays the total number of responses to each option, sorted by number of survey participants who selected it. Survey participants were allowed to select all options that applied.

9 of 11 international learners participating in our interviews revealed that they find navigating institutional websites difficult. Of 119 surveyed learners, 53 (46%) indicated that they found it "somewhat easy," to access or find information and resources to support their application to an Ontario college or university. However, interview participants indicated that they struggled to find basic information like program start dates, program requirements, or tuition fee structure. One interview participant indicated that they could only find the tuition structure from 2016 and not the current 2023-2024 rates. This suggests the need to improve the user experience and navigation of these websites, keeping in mind the needs of learners with English or French as a second language and learners with low digital fluency skills.

Learners were asked about why they selected Ontario for postsecondary education. Survey respondents overwhelmingly indicated interest in the program of study (27%, or 67 of 251 respondents), experience of living abroad (22%, or 54 of 251 respondents), opportunity to live in Canada (20%, or 52 of 251 respondents), opportunity to gain Canadian work experience (17%, or 43 of 251 respondents), and unique educational experiences (such as co-op, work integrated learning; 15%, or 37 of 251 respondents) as their top reasons for applying to study in Canada. Interestingly, the opportunity to live in Ontario was only selected by 31 of 251 (12%) respondents. Through qualitative discussions with interviewed learners, we found that more learners were willing to indicate that finding employment and immigration were actually the top factors behind their decision to pursue postsecondary in Ontario. 10 of the 11 interviewed learners indicated immigration and employment opportunities as their primary motivation. 4 of the 11 participants revealed that they had close friends or family in the province, specifically in the Greater Toronto Area, which motivated their decision to select an institution within this region. However, despite these factors, 10 of 11 learners indicated that both the program of study and the reputation of the institution contributed to the selection of an Ontario postsecondary institution.

Study-Permit Applications

Several international learners who participated in our interviews expressed how quickly they received acceptance to the Ontario postsecondary institution of choice, with two receiving their acceptance in under seven days. Following a letter of acceptance, international learners must apply for a study permit or other applicable visa. Every international student we interviewed indicated that applying for a study permit, using the IRCC website, and dealing with CBSA upon arrival were the most stress inducing parts of their journey to Ontario.[34]

When asked about any barriers they experienced in the visa application process, survey respondents overwhelmingly indicated that costs associated with the process was the largest barrier (50 of 128 respondents, or 39%), followed by the volume of paperwork (45 of 128 respondents, or 35%), locating documents from various sources (such as medical, transcripts, financial; 29 of 128 respondents, or 23%), and difficulty navigating government websites (17 of 128 respondents, or 13%).

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34   Learners indicated that the immigration process with CBSA Agents at ports of entry was particularly stressful because they needed to produce a multitude of documents as hard copy printouts. Learners indicated that the lines were long, filled with plenty of other students, and led to the risk of missing connecting flights. Solutions presented in the final section of this report indicate that digital credentials may be of assistance to the IRCC study permit application, but could also expedite entry into Canada if CBSA recognized these digital documents.

Some institutions should be commended for the work they are currently doing to assist students through this process. In our survey, 45 of 128 (35%) of respondents indicated that they felt their institution provided a lot of support, 36 (28%) indicated some support was provided by their institution, 25 (20%) indicated minimal support was provided, 14 (11%) said no support was provided, and 8 (6%) were unsure. While 81 of 128 (63%) respondents indicated they felt supported by their institution, there remains a lot of room for improvement. At a high level, learners encountered unclear information across sources, felt lost in bureaucratic processes, and complained of processing times. Interviews also revealed the prevalent role many educational agents play at this stage of the learner journey, despite being barred from supporting this process since 2011.[35]

Information regarding visa applications can be found from a multitude of sources including the Government of Canada websites (including EduCanada and IRCC), Government of Ontario website (which directs learners to IRCC), and institutional websites (which also directs learners to IRCC). When discussing these formal sources of information, one interviewee indicated that the "IRCC website is difficult to understand... it's legal language." Learners have navigated away from these formal sources of information and turned to friends and family with lived experience, educational agents, and informal internet communities such as Reddit and Facebook groups. One interviewee from the Philippines indicated that they used a Facebook group for Filipino Students in Ontario to ask about writing a study plan (one of the documents created by a learner to support a study permit application). This group provided the learner with multiple successful examples that they were able to copy for their application. However, this variety of sources has led learners to suggest that information became unclear. As one interviewee said, "I find that when I ask the same questions to different parties, they give me a different answer. It took forever to resolve the problem."

Some interviewees indicated that they felt lost in the process of applying for the study-permit. One of the most contentious points mentioned by 6 of 11 interviewed learners was that they had to indicate that they plan on returning to their country of origin as part of the Study Plan (letter of explanation) section of their application. As one interviewee indicated, "I came to study and use the [post-graduate] work permit. I plan to immigrate. I had to lie and say I don't." 9 of the 11 interviewed learners also felt that there was duplication in the processes of applying to an institution and applying for a study permit, when they had to re-present documents like their IELTS score, and previous educational transcripts. One interviewee said, "I get that they [institutions and IRCC] look at documents differently, but they both need to see them."
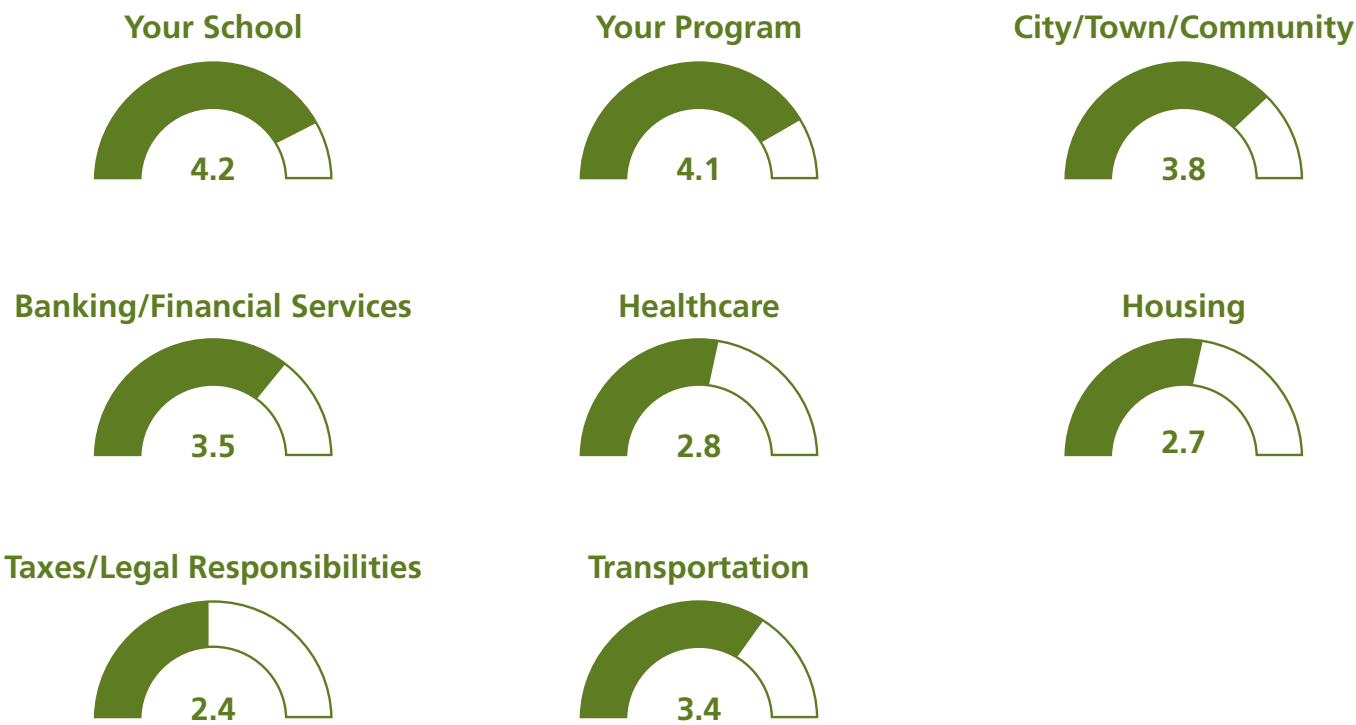
Time was one of the most important themes to emerge from discussions of study-permit applications. As our inclusion criteria was open to learners who have studied and graduated in Ontario postsecondary institutions since 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic played a significant role in their visa application process. 5 of 11 learners interviewed, applied for their visas, and arrived in Canada between 2020-2021. These learners expressed significant delays with the processing of their visas, and the struggle to reach IRCC and institutional supports during this time. Four interviewees indicated that they only received their study permit approval between one-to-two weeks before the academic semester started. This created difficult timelines to travel across the world, find housing, and start classes. One learner deferred their acceptance for a semester and was forced to re-apply for a study permit because the timeline between getting their first study permit and arriving in time for the academic semester would have been too tight. Significant delays and realistic timelines for the processing study permits have not been communicated with many of the learners we interviewed.

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35   EduCanada.ca, "Education Agents." Updated June 9, 2023. https://www.educanada.ca/study-plan-etudes/before-avant/education-agents.aspx?lang=eng

Arriving in Ontario

Every interview participant commented about Ontario's climate when prompted to recall their first weeks in the province. While weather severed as the gateway to this discussion, learners quickly revealed a myriad of problems they faced when arriving in the province. The top issues learners mentioned were housing and employment.

Learner Ranking of Availability of Information by Topic

Your School
4.2

Your Program
4.1

City/Town/Community
3.8

Banking/Financial Services
3.5

Healthcare
2.8

Housing
2.7

Taxes/Legal Responsibilities
2.4

Transportation
3.4

Graphic 4: Gauge chart of how learners ranked the availability of information available when they first arrived in Ontario. The graph displays the median responses on a 5-point scale, where 5 means a lot of information was available and 1 means no information was available for each category.

Interviewed learners revealed that finding suitable housing when they first arrived in Ontario was very difficult because they did not know where to look online to find listings, they did not know their rights as tenants/renters in Ontario, and they felt a rush to get housing secured before the semester started. While two interviewed learners indicated that they lived in on-campus residence because it was presented as a "simple solution," they revealed that they did not know that on-campus residence had much higher associated costs when compared to off-campus private rentals. 5 of 11 interviewed learners indicated that their housing needs were supported by friends or family already residing in Canada. Family and friends provided both short-term accommodations (such as sleeping on a couch), met with landlords, paid rental deposits, or provided resources to support finding accommodations.

The second largest issue presented by students was finding employment. Employment can be divided into two categories: to support cost of living (we will refer to this as a "student job") and career-focused (starting or advancing a career related to their program of study in Canada). The bulk of employment related issues were related to student jobs. Interviewees indicated that they were

seeking part-time employment to support their cost of living and that this was not a permanent career solution. Interviewees struggled to find employment, did not know of Ontario labour laws (minimum wage, breaks, health and safety), and felt exploited by their employers. They also indicated that it was difficult to find part-time employment with no Canadian experience, that they did not know Canadian-style resumes, and that they found it difficult to balance the demand of employers with school. When it comes to career-focused employment, learners feel that institutional career offices, co-op departments, and placement coordinators provide the resources needed to support them.

Studying in Ontario

Learning at a postsecondary institution is central to the international learner's journey in Ontario. In our survey and interviews, we spoke to international learners about their experience of learning and studying in Ontario, and any barriers they experienced in the learning process.

In our survey we asked learners to select from a list the top barriers they face academically in Ontario. Of 117 respondents to the question, the following list shows what students identified as barriers:

1. Cost of tuition

2. Finding a job/employment

3. Time management (School-Employment Balance)

4. Understanding academic expectations (what makes an "A" paper)

5. Approaching professors, instructors, and/or teaching assistants for support

6. Teamwork and collaboration

7. Becoming part of a learning community and Navigating the learning culture (contradicting others in a constructive manner, asking questions in lectures, etc.)

8. Language (English or French)

9. Finding academic support services (such as learning centre, writing centre, etc.)

10. Using a Learning Management System and Other Technological Skills

Our survey revealed that 45 of 117 respondents (38%) were primarily enrolled in classes with a hybrid modality, 43 of 117 respondents (37%) were primarily enrolled in in-person classes, and 22 of 117 respondents (19%) were primarily enrolled in online classes.[36] In our interviews, 5 of 11 learners expressed preferences for hybrid and online classes as this provided them with flexibility to work part-time while studying. However, 9 of 11 interviewees and 22 of 46 (48%) survey respondents expressed concerns about their preparation for online learning. Qualitative interview responses revealed that learners did not feel prepared for online test taking, using Learning Management Systems (such as Blackboard, Moodle, and D2L, commonly called LMS), virtual lecture note-taking, online group work, submitting online assignments, and other features related to their varying levels of digital fluency.

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36   The remainder of respondents choose not to answer the question or responded with "I don't know."

Feelings of Preparedness for Online and Hybrid Learning
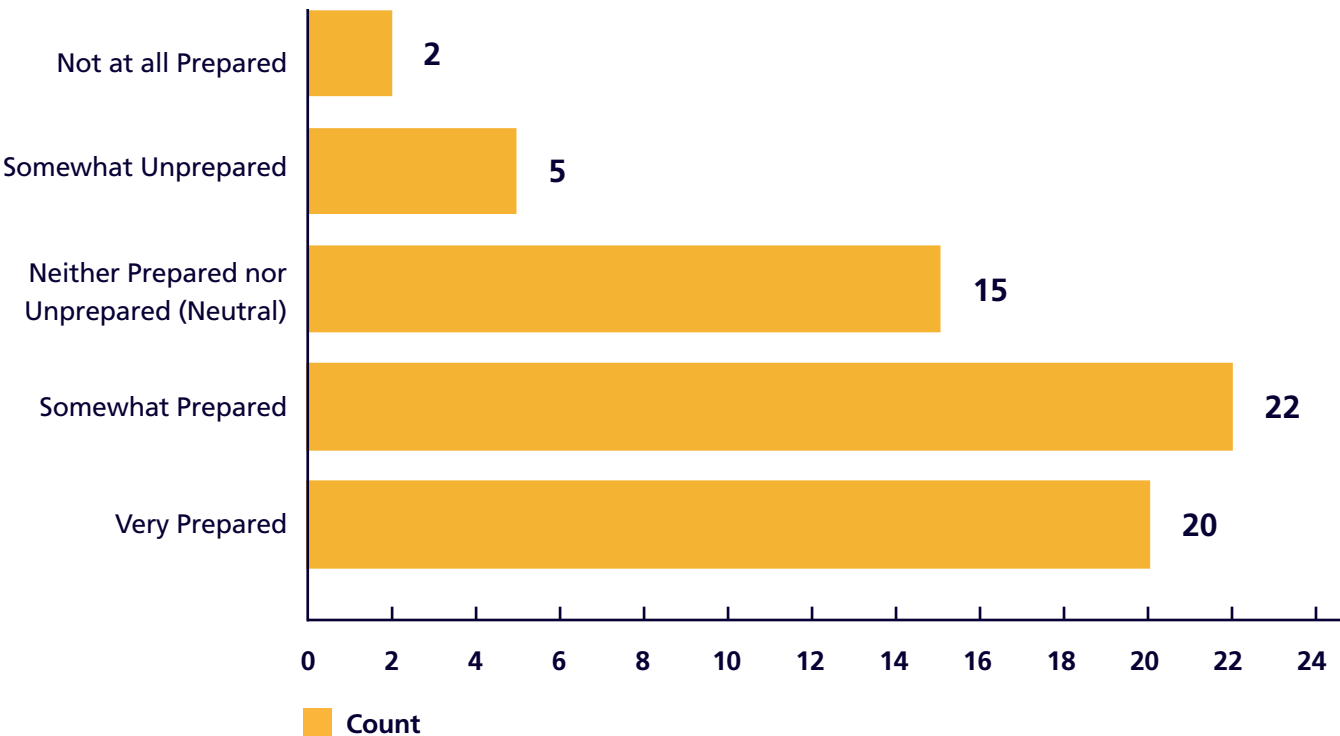
Graphic 5: Bar Graph of How Prepared Online and Hybrid Learners from our survey felt for those modalities of learning. On a 5-point scale where 5 means very prepared and 1 means not at all prepared, the graph displays the total number of responses to each option.

Interview participants noted that they were not prepared for the cultural differences associated with experiencing education in an Ontario classroom. As one interviewee indicated, "In India, classes are textbook driven, and no assignments, just a big exam at the end…I wasn't ready for lectures, multiple assignments, and an exam." Another interviewee explained, "It is weird being able to disagree with my prof. At home they should not be challenged, yet here I can ask them questions." Learners indicated many cultural differences between classrooms in Canada, and those abroad.

Outside of the formal learning process, interviewees also indicated cultural differences between student interactions. One interviewee indicated that she had experienced high levels of sexual harassment from other international students in her class. Other classmates used the LMS to find her name, then found her on social media, and messaged her asking for dates or sexual activities. Recognizing that this behavior was unacceptable, the student reached out to their institution's Office of Student Affairs, but indicated that not all international learners recognize boundaries between classroom and social space, and appropriate social interactions. Another learner explained that she felt isolated in the classroom from both international learners and domestic students. She explained, "Although we are all from India, we speak a different language, and they retreat into their own language group in class." Other interviewees expressed feeling distant from domestic students, with only 4 of 11 mentioning domestic students as friends or classmates. This information was validated by survey responses, where 65 of 117 (56%) surveyed learners indicated that they turn to friends or roommates for assistance in contrast to 36 of 117 (31%) who indicated they turn to other students in their class.

Transition to Employment and Immigration

For many international learners, the post-graduation work permit is the bookend to their study-permit and one of their goals for selecting postsecondary education in Canada. As we identified in the survey, the opportunity to live in Canada and the opportunity to gain Canadian work experience were top reasons amongst learners to purse postsecondary education in Ontario with 52 of 251 (20%) respondents and 43 of 251 (17%) respondents answering accordingly. When asked if their institution provided them with any resources or supports to find a work permit or pathways towards permanent residency after their study, 61 of 112 (54%) learners indicated that their institution provided some support, but 22 of 112 (20%) indicated that they found better answers outside their institution. In qualitative discussions with interviewees, they revealed that these supports primarily come in the form of links to the IRCC website or a short workshop. As one interviewee said, "I was told I was on my own, [college] says that its better if they don't help you out, and you do it yourself." Another interviewee who transitioned from a post-graduation work permit to Permanent Residency indicated that they were supported by an Immigration Lawyer through the process. An additional interviewee claimed that neither their employer, nor the institution they attended supported them, and they believe that, "I don't even have a valid work permit, yet I'm here working." Based on this, learners feel unsupported for post-graduation plans in Ontario.

Supporting the Journey: The Current State of Affairs

Research participants identified many challenges and barriers they have faced on their journeys in Ontario. This section will review some of the challenges introduced in previous sections of this report, and share the existing supports that learners used to navigate them. These supports can include resources, tools, and/or technologies used by international learners. This speaks to the multitude of actors engaged in the postsecondary sector and the difficulties international learners have navigating the system. At each stage in their journeys, learners turn to people with lived experience, people in the same scenario (usually fellow students), and experts to support their decision-making processes. Unfortunately, because of the plethora of actors involved in each stage, learners experience disinformation, information overload, and multiple different answers to the same question. While learners try to seek out legitimate and validated information, they sometimes have to create their own supports to navigate the process. This section of the report follows the learner journey chronologically to review the different supports they used at each stage and the need for improvement along the path.

Application Supports

In the first phase of their journey, international students are in their home country and looking for what programs and institutions interest them. Ontario does not exist in a vacuum and is one of the many international destinations that international learners investigate at this stage of their journey.[37] As our research revealed, in some countries this involves hiring an education agent who provides input and assists with the research and application process. Research participants also identified social media as important to this process. Social media provides a helpful support as it allows potential students to interact with and learn about a program or institution. However, it is also a double-edged sword; social media is a tool of advertising and thus can distort the reality of what life and experiences at an institution or in Ontario in general may be like. One learner said that they "find that some of the website makers stand like rose-coloured glasses". This need to understand the reality of life in Ontario extends beyond social media and to the role of the education agents. Education agents are paid by ensuring students attend school abroad and as such may distort the realities of the experience for favourable views. International learners indicate they want to know what the reality is, not the ideal. For example, one international learner relayed that "listening to it from a person who is already staying [there] would have been really helpful for me. It would have mentally prepared me for all the things... because I have seen a couple of students, like they had some different expectations from Canada and other cities and it was all different when they came and they were really shocked about the situation". As another research participant explained, there is a market of international student influencers on social media platforms, who talk about how to prepare your application and overcome immigration hurdles, however, "they don't talk

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37   Canada is the third top destination for international learners, behind the United States and United Kingdom. Closely following Canada are China and Australia. Within Canada, Ontario is one of the many provincial options for study, with British Columbia being the next most popular market.

about the day-to-day."[38] While learners turn to websites and education agents for the official statements, they are making their own supports online to discover the reality of life in Ontario.

Visa Supports

Interviewed learners generally described the second stage of their journey, the visa process as smooth, whether supported by an agent or not, but they also identify shortcomings with the information surrounding the production of their application. The application and acceptance, aside from unclear timelines, tend to not pose the largest problems. The largest problems, and where international learners would appreciate clear support, is understanding the conditions of their study permit. Specifically, they would like more clarity on how many hours they can work and in what forms, as well as enhancements to their understanding of Ontario (and Canadian) labour laws. International learners who need part time jobs to pay for their education want to understand the laws that govern that realm of their time in Canada and Ontario more clearly. They find the information presented on the IRCC website unclear. As one learner explained, despite figuring out their work limitations and explaining them to their employer, their employer did not comprehend the regulations. Employers, like students, must be educated on the rules of study permits. These understandings also apply to international learners completing co-ops and placements as part of their programs. One interviewed learner explained their experience of "flag-poling" whereby they had to leave Canada, via the United States, and re-enter, in order to have their study permit updated to allow for co-op employment. Our research also found that problems related to immigration and work permits re-emerge following graduation when applying for post-graduation work permits.

Arrival Supports

Once students land in Ontario during the third stage of their journey, a new set of challenges appeared—living, studying, and adapting to a new life abroad. As the previous section of this report indicated, the top three barriers to acculturalization identified by the interviewed learners included housing, employment, and loneliness. One student described this process "like a difficult journey coming here [to Canada]. But then after that, it just gets better. So I'm not really concerned about these problems right now, but when I was in these situations, I was really panicked." Students seek out solutions to support this transition and make Ontario home.

Acculturation, or the process of becoming adjusted to a new place, is one problem area that international learners identified. Specifically, learners identified the arrival centers and international student help desks at their institutions as places that were the most helpful in providing the information that they needed. However, learners explained that student services are not perfect. As one learner explained, "[Student services] can't help everyone. What one person from one cultural background may need, another may not." One-size-fits-all approaches have not helped to alleviate the barriers associated with moving to a new country and becoming accustomed to it. One learner noted that, where reasonable, the international student help desk could employ support from different cultural backgrounds to be best responsive to international learners from those same backgrounds. This learner stated "I feel like it shouldn't be that the services or the support group shouldn't be a

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38   This learner indicated that influencer videos are primarily made in English rather than local or regional languages and appear on YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and regional-specific applications.

generalist kind of support group because each ethnicity is different. Our adjustment, you know, in a new country is definitely different. Our pacing is definitely different, so that aspect is absent." International learners also noted that international student orientation could be more frequent (not just in the September semester, but in January and May as well) to facilitate meeting other students, as well as promotion of student groups, clubs, and activities to increase socialization amongst students. Another interviewed learner highlighted arrival seminars that their institution hosted as an important support. These seminars helped to orient students to life in Ontario and covered a variety of topics ranging from the importance of social insurance number cards, responsibilities around taxes, using transit, and finding employment. These seminars could have been useful at other institutions as well, where learners face similar barriers. Again, learners turn to formal resources from their institutions to support this transition and find validated information.

Finding part time employment to supplement the cost of study is something that weighed heavily upon the international learners who participated in our research. Some institutions provide support with job boards and carer preparation centres (resume writing, interview skills, etc.). Despite these resources, many international learners noted that finding employment is still a struggle. Specifically, they cite the actual job search to be the hardest part, as applications are time-consuming, and there is no

guarantee of an interview or employment. Many of our interviewed learners want to parley they experiences in their home countries into a job in Ontario, but find that without Ontario experience, employers will not interview them. Moreover, international learners do not know what industries, careers, or opportunities are available in their new region, or which employers are most likely to grant them interviews and employment. For a small minority of participants, finding employment was not difficult because of their reliance on family, friend, and cultural connections for support. For the majority, the lack of supports caused stress, worry, or the potential for homelessness.

International learners suggested they would like a clearer understanding of the job market and associated processes. Moreover, an understanding of labour laws both for the learners and for the employers would be helpful. As one learner relayed "they [their employer] weren't aware of how many hours I could work... the taxes I was supposed to put in the tax bracket... Even when I worked part time... my boss had no idea how to pay me and how to hire me and how to keep me on what benefits to get me. And they just, they had no idea". Anything that could support the process of securing part-timer employment would be helpful. While offered institutional supports, learners have come to rely on unofficial channels and luck to find employment to support their studies.

Studying Supports

The fourth step of the international journey, studying in a new country, is a difficult transition. Interviewed learners revealed that they found many supports for their learning at their institutions. These supports included extra materials, helpful faculty and academic support staff, mentorship programs, tips for how to use the learning management systems, and the international students help desk. However, students did not feel entirely equipped to study in Ontario. After paying for their housing and tuition costs, one learner lamented the price of the textbooks they were required to buy for their program. They said

"all the things which are costing like $100 for each subject. And we had to do that for two or three subjects. And it's a little bit difficult for us to survive here: in the first couple of months we didn't have any job, right? So we just need to survive as we can. But even after we got the job, spending $300 is a lot for us." Furthermore, while the supports from academic staff were helpful, appointment times were limited to times when learners had classes and work at part-time jobs; that is, during typical work hours (9-5). This made these appointments difficult to access for many interviewed learners. International learners need wraparound with

flexible access, the support of OER materials, and easy access to academic supports.

When it comes to the classroom, learners noted two major concerns related to the quality of classes and online learning. One learner said there were "one or two classes I thought were outdated… I don't think I learned anything that I am using in my life." Learners suggested early access to syllabi and course outlines prior to enrollment may allow them to engage with the program material prior to making a course selection. Further, some learners indicated that online and hybrid course delivery modalities were difficult to grasp because of the required technological skills, time management skills, and study strategies. While some learners indicated that their professors reviewed course technologies and learning management systems during the introductory weeks of their study, this was not a universal experience. Solutions to alleviate these barriers associated with learning can support the acculturalization of learners.

Post-Graduate Supports

The fifth and final stage of the international learner journey comes after graduation, when many recent graduates are posed with the question "now what?" For international learners, this period of transition presents a lot of stress because of the immigration requirements needed to plan for their futures. Learners have to consider if they will stay in Canada, find employment, seek pathways to Canadian immigration, return home, or go elsewhere. As one interviewed learner indicated, "I know [town] isn't for me. Maybe I'll go elsewhere in Ontario, maybe Alberta, maybe home, I don't know yet." Learners need to make a lot of important decisions before making this transition. To transition from study to employment, international learners need to re-apply to IRCC to get a post-graduate study permit. As such, this is a clear place that institutions can do more to alleviate barriers for international learners and support their transition to their post-graduation futures. Learners noted a few specific ways this could be done, such as providing career mentorship for students looking to navigate their career paths, providing a student consulting program that will allow them to network with others in their chosen fields, and providing supports to prepare their post-graduate study permit applications. Supporting learners in this transitionary period will ensure that Ontario's

postsecondary institutions play an important role in ensuring that Ontario-trained learners can remain in Ontario and support labour market demands.

In October 2023, Centennial College in partnership with BorderPass announced an online portal for international learners to access the support of trusted immigration lawyers and legal services.[39] This portal supports learners as long as they are enrolled at Centennial College, and will notify learners of key dates, provide learners with group workshops, email/chat support, and one on one access to legal professionals to support permanent residency pathways, and additional services such as social insurance number registration.[40]

While there are a variety of existing supports easing barriers faced at various stages of their learner journeys, the multitude of actors supporting international learners presents a convoluted message. This ensures that the barriers will remain present. Institutions can provide further wraparound supports to ensure that these barriers are broken. The next section of this report provides recommendations for digital supports to improve the international learner journey.

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39   Centennial College. "Centennial College and BorderPass team up to help international students navigate Canadian school and work journey." NewsWire.ca October 25, 2023.

40   Ibid.

Other Notable Jurisdictions

To understand how Ontario can improve the support for all phases of the international learner journey, we looked to other Canadian provinces and Australian states to identify programs, supports, and tools they have created to support the unique needs of these learners.[41] Particular attention was paid to the recruitment, pre- arrival supports, and post-graduate pathways to immigration and employment in each of these jurisdictions. By examining other geographies, eCampusOntario can collate this information with findings from the survey and interviews to create recommendations idealized from best practices used elsewhere.

Recruitment and Pre-Arrival Supports

Other jurisdictions such as British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec City (municipal government), New Brunswick, and Australia (federally) utilize consolidated marketing to market their postsecondary institutions to international learners. Websites such as EducationPlannerBC.ca, StudyInAlberta.ca, QuebecCentete.com, ChooseNB. ca, and StudyAustralia.gov0 are the result of partnerships between federal and provincial governments, postsecondary institutions, non-profit conglomerates, and other valued stakeholders. These websites allow learners to search for different degrees and program information, read about employment and immigration opportunities from validated sources, find links to institutional websites, and access additional data related to social and community supports. Several of the websites pay significant attention to post-graduate pathways to immigration and supporting the immigration of family members and dependents. These websites serve as a strong first point of contact for learners researching institutions, but lack resources to continue supporting learners once they arrive in the jurisdiction.

The StudyAustralia website is most notable for its use of an AI Chatbot, which learners can use to explore program, degree options, and scholarships. The chatbot also supports marketing efforts by collecting information from the visitor. As such, a chatbot could be expanded to support learners through their journey. The chatbot and the entire website are translated into 12 different languages to support international learners, unlike the Canadian examples, which are only available in English and French.

In 2016, Australia overhauled the Simplified Student Visa Framework (SSVF) which consolidated eight student visa classes into two, and fully digitized the application process through the Department of Home Affairs ImmiAccount website.[42] Furthermore, Australian education providers are incentivised by the government to recruit what they term, "genuine international students," as opposed to those using education as a pathway for employment and residency. This is accomplished by examining a student's financial status and English language competency for

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41 Australia has been used as a case study as it is the research team has identified it as the most direct comparison for the Canadian international learner market, as a primarily English-speaking country, which takes in a similar amount of international students per year. The United States and United Kingdom, are the top two destinations for international learners, followed by Canada, China, and Australia. Australia specifically has 41 universities, 59 Technical and Further Education (TAFE's), and 500 Registered Training Organizations (RTO's). The Australian universities and TAFE's are comparable in scale to Ontario's postsecondary sector.

42 Australian Department of Home Affairs, "Simplified Student Visa Framework." November 24, 2020.

the government as part of the immigration risk framework.[43] This is similar to IRCC's proposal to introduce a "Trusted Institution Framework" for Canadian colleges and universities in 2024, which, like Australia's program, will account for faster study permit processing.[44]

Post-Graduate Supports

Post-graduate work programs are an important factor in ensuring that international learners continue to reside in geographies and contribute to the labour force and economy. While learners in Ontario can take advantage of 1-3 year post-graduation work permits, there is no institutional assistance in helping find employment, nor ensuring that they stay in Ontario. In Nova Scotia, EduNova's Study and Stay program was designed to attract and retention international students studying at community colleges and universities in their province. The program provides participants with enhanced one-on-one and group support throughout their final year of study, a managed mentorship component, career supports, networking, employer connection development, community integration, immigration support, and entrepreneurship opportunities.[45] In New Brunswick, the International Student Retention Program (ISRP), organized by CAFi (Centre d'accueil et d'accompagnement francophone des immigrants du Sud-Est du Nouveau-Brunswick), was focused on the retention of Francophone international students interested in settling in the Greater Moncton area. The program was funded by the provincial government and IRCC for international students at the University of Moncton and New Brunswick Community College. The program organizers worked with partners to build workplace skill training modules, English language training and testing, orientation and career fairs,

networking opportunities, and one-on-one job search support.[46]

Many of the websites with pre-arrival supports highlight that learners could consider applying for permanent residency through provincial nominee programs or the Canadian Express Entry program for skilled workers and in-demand fields. For example, the government of British Columbia is currently seeking health care workers, early childhood educators, certain tech employees, and entrepreneurs.[47] In Ontario, the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) only has one educational stream, which is for learners with a Masters or PhD from an Ontario university (this is the same for British Columbia); meanwhile Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Atlantic Immigration Program (New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island) offer provincial nominee pathways for learners who have graduate from institutions in the province or region.

43   Australian Department of Home Affairs, "Simplified Student Visa Framework Appraisal." May 2018, 7.

44   El-Assal, Kareem and Julia Hornstein. "Study in Canada: What we know about IRCC'S propose Trusted Institutions Framework." *CIC News,* September 5, 2023.

45   EduNova, "Study and Stay Nova Scotia." (Accessed October 20, 2023) https://studynovascotia.ca/studyandstay-2-2/

46   CAFi, "Sharing Settlement and Integration Practices that Work: International Student Retention Program." March 2019. http://p2pcanada.ca/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2020/04/DEB-Nominations2-Brief-CAFI-EN.pdf

47   WelcomeBC, "About the BC Provincial Nominee Program." August 1, 2023. https://www.welcomebc.ca/Immigrate-to-B-C/About-The-BC-PNP
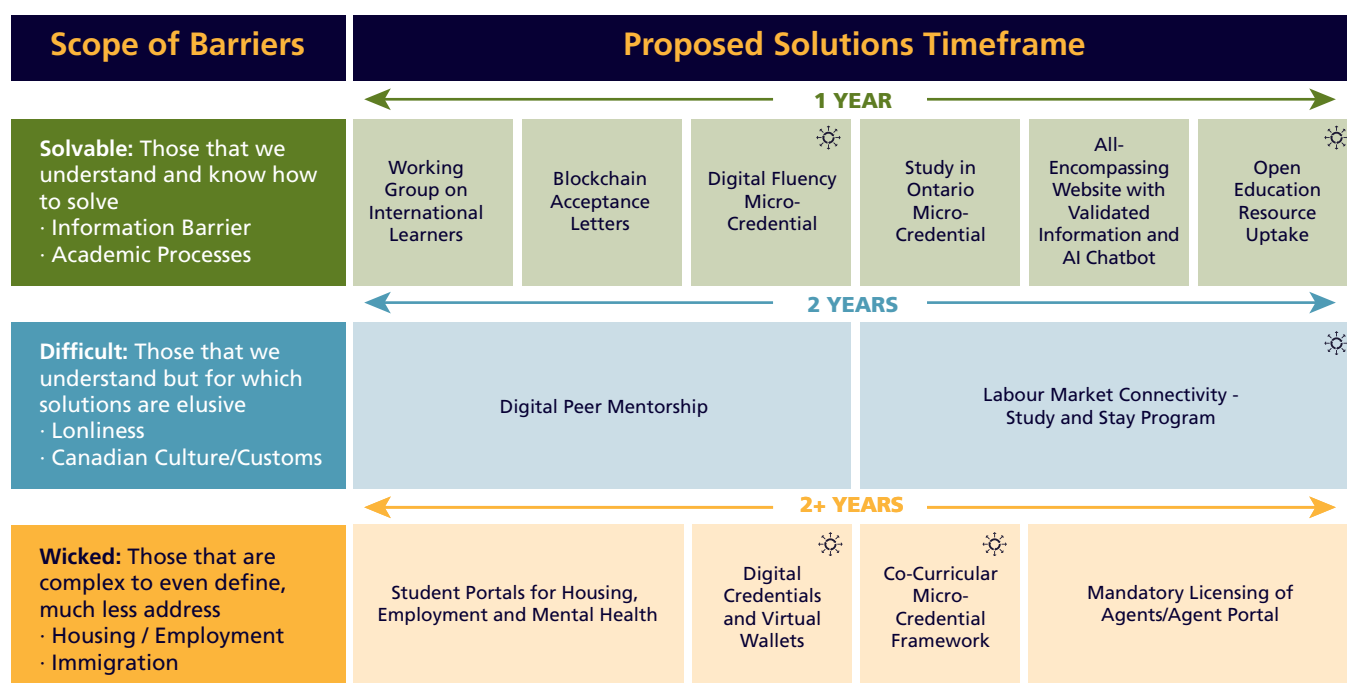
Recommendations to Improve the International Learner Journey

This report has served to provide the voice of international learners on their journey through postsecondary education in Ontario. Learners indicated that they may not understand Canadian cultures, customs, regulations, and academic processes. International learners also indicated that they do not feel prepared for the Ontario postsecondary classroom, including online and hybrid modalities, digital fluency skills, communications, academic expectations, and learning styles. International learners feel lonely and isolated in a foreign country. By identifying these barriers and challenges, eCampusOntario was able to work with learners to discuss, ideate, and validate digital-by-design solutions. This section of the report presents those digital solutions, which have been grouped into three categories:

- *Learner Identified and Validated Solutions.* Solutions presented to eCampusOntario during interviews with learners, which were then validated by other learners.

- *eCampusOntario Identified and Learner Validated Solutions.* Solutions ideated by eCampusOntario during research findings and survey results, which were then presented to interviewed learners for validation.

- *eCampusOntario Identified Solutions.* Solutions ideated as a result of interviewed learners' initial impressions and questions, along with an environmental scan of other jurisdictions and best practices

Solutions are organized by how rapidly they can be achieved. Each solution lists potential partners who can work with eCampusOntario. Specific features from each solution have been presented to eCampusOntario by international learners through surveys and qualitative interviews.

Scope of Barriers	Proposed Solutions Timeframe					
	1 YEAR					
Solvable: Those that we understand and know how to solve · Information Barrier · Academic Processes	Working Group on International Learners	Blockchain Acceptance Letters	Digital Fluency Micro-Credential ☼	Study in Ontario Micro-Credential	All-Encompassing Website with Validated Information and AI Chatbot	Open Education Resource Uptake ☼
	2 YEARS					
Difficult: Those that we understand but for which solutions are elusive · Lonliness · Canadian Culture/Customs	Digital Peer Mentorship			Labour Market Connectivity - Study and Stay Program ☼		
	2+ YEARS					
Wicked: Those that are complex to even define, much less address · Housing / Employment · Immigration	Student Portals for Housing, Employment and Mental Health		Digital Credentials and Virtual Wallets ☼	Co-Curricular Micro-Credential Framework ☼	Mandatory Licensing of Agents/Agent Portal	

Existing program or initiative suggested for reuse/expansion ☼

Graphic 6: Proposed Solutions to Improve the International Learners' Experience

Learner Identified and Validated Solutions

All Encompassing Website with Validated Information and AI Chatbot (1.5 Years)

All eleven interviewed learners requested a "one stop-shop" to find all the information they need for their learner journey. Learners are seeking wraparound supports that encompass all parts of the student lifecycle, including housing, employment, health, transit, cultural supports, and academic supports. While learners recognized that these supports can be found in multiple places, they identified the difficulty of navigating governmental and institutional websites, outdated information, or different information from different resources. As part of the first Virtual Learning Strategy, eCampusOntario funded the development of the EducationOntario.com website. The website provides international learners with supports for all stages of the educational journey from application through to studying and life in Canada. However, our survey revealed that only 4 of 119 respondents had used the website as part of their research. Qualitative interviews revealed that learners sought information from spaces that they believed they could trust, such as the Government of Canada, Province of Ontario, and institutional websites. Learners explained that any additional sources of information needed to be explicit about their validity and legitimacy. As of its current state, it is not evident who created the EducationOntario website or that it contains legitimate and valid up-to date information. A significant investment is required to explicitly demonstrate the legitimacy of the website, demonstrate that knowledge comes directly from knowledgeable sources (such as federal and provincial governments and institutions) and market the resource to appropriate groups of learners.

When looking at similar websites in other Canadian jurisdictions (British Columbia and Quebec City, for example) and Australia, the consolidation of validated wraparound supports has been supported by government-funded organizations and consortiums.[48] This sets significant precedent for the work of eCampusOntario and the suggested Working Group on International Learners in Postsecondary Education to establish this website. This website would need to be built with seamless user experience and in partnership with reputable sources of information.

Every interviewed learner expressed that they can struggle on which individual or department to ask when they have questions about their learner journey. eCampusOntario presented them with the solution of having an AI Chatbot embedded on the all-encompassing website. All learners interviewed supported this solution. However, 6 of 11 learners were cautious of AI, fearing that it would be like Chat-GPT and produce wrong or incorrect information. These learners were told that this disinformation comes from the training of the AI model, and this solution would be trained on proper information. This satisfied the response of those learners. Other learners suggested that the Chatbot also features a live-human assistant in the event that the AI is unable to respond accordingly. Significant resources would be required to produce an AI chatbot which can answer complex questions about international learner applications, visas, study supports, work allowances, and post-graduation work permits. The Australian government's StudyAustralia is a prime example of an all-encompassing international student support website which uses an AI chatbot to help perspective learners select program, institutional, and delivery options.

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48 British Columbia's EducationPlannerBC.ca is a higher education journey support website managed by EducationPlannerBC, a partnership between British Columbia's universities and colleges and the provincial government. Quebec City's Québecentête.com is an immigration support website, with specific education supports, created in partnership by the Ville de Québec, the provincial and federal governments, and private partners – Air Canada, BB Immigration, Desjardins, Eduinter, Groupe Perspective, Logisco, Option Travail, Reloc Quebec. Australia's StudyAustralia.gov.au is a partnership between the government of Australia and Austrade (The Australian Trade and Investment Commission).

Student Portals for Housing, Employment, and Mental Health (2.5 Years)

Learners who participated in our survey and interviews indicated that housing and employment are some of the largest barriers they face when studying in Ontario. Qualitative interviews revealed that these barriers, along with isolation and loneliness associated with moving abroad, contribute to poor mental health conditions. We presented learners with three possible portal solutions to alleviate the strains they feel in each space.

1. *Housing Portal:* A space where learners can learn about their tenancy rights in Ontario, read about on-campus and off campus housing solutions, and find links to reputable resources to find housing. This could be created by eCampusOntario in conjunction with the Provincial Ministry of Housing, member institutions, and municipal governments.

2. *Employment Portal:* A space where learners can learn about employment law in Ontario, find resources to support a job search (such as resume writing, interview tips, etc.), and apply for jobs. Learners indicated that such a portal could be useful to find on-campus employment or find part-time jobs with employers who are interest in hiring international learners for part-time work. The provincial Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development could be supportive of such a portal.

3. *Mental Health Portal:* A space where learners can access digital appointments with mental health professionals, find supports in their local communities, and find resources to support their mental health. Interviewed learners expressed interest in mental health professionals who are trained in the unique needs of international learners such as acculturalization, isolation, and homesickness. The Provincial Ministry of Mental Health and Addiction could be supportive of such a portal.

We recognize that each of these portal solutions would be beneficial to all students, international and domestic. These resources could be piloted for international students, as a smaller group, before being released to support domestic students. Digital wraparound supports such as these could be built in conjunction with the traditional on-campus supports and supported by various provincial ministries. An existing support like the BorderPass Centennial College online legal portal could be expanded to scale across the sector and included in both the housing and employment portals. A 2.5-year timeline is required for this project to establish partnerships with different ministries, to build the portals, and potentially integrate the portals into the EducationOntario platform.

Education Agent Portal (1 Year)

As part of our consultation with learners, we presented them with the concept of an education agent listing website, with verified reviews from other learners. All 8 interviewed learners who either used or consulted with an educational agent supported these measures. As learners expressed concerns with sharing data and information with agents, the concept of a secure portal to share these documents with their agent to prepare an application was presented. If policy moves in the right direction, eCampusOntario could support the production of an agent listing, review, and secure document upload portal in one year.

eCampusOntario Identified and Learner Validated Solutions

Digital Fluency Micro-Credential (1 Year)

A micro-credential to support learner digital fluency was funded by the third round of funding of Ontario's Virtual Learning Strategy and piloted by eCampusOntario and Contact North in late 2023. The bilingual *Digital Fluency Accelerator Micro-Credential* was built to give learners the capacity to adopt and implement the digital fluency competencies essential for effective engagement in online and hybrid learning environments. As of October 25, 2023, 6900 learners and 104 faculty from 20 publicly-assisted postsecondary institutes in Ontario participated in this pilot. Academic barriers identified by international learners including time management, communication, teamwork, collaboration, using Learning Management Systems, and technological skills are covered by the *Accelerator* micro-credential. In our survey, over 100 international learners expressed interest in participating in a micro-credential which would support their digital fluency skills. Through a continued investment in this project, a module can be developed to support the unique learning needs of international learners including navigating a Canadian learning culture and English and French language supports. All interviewed learners supported this micro-credential and 6 of 11 interviewed international learners suggested that this would be a useful pre-requisite before they commenced learning in Ontario. A one-year timeline would be required for eCampusOntario to create a new module, re-launch the micro-credential, and support the ongoing sector wide rollout.

Study in Ontario Micro-Credential (1 Year)

After hearing about the digital fluency micro-credential, international learners identified interest in another micro-credential to support social and cultural acculturation of living in Canada and studying in Ontario. Much like the *Digital Fluency Accelerator,* learners believed that a social and cultural micro-credential could be a beneficial pre-requisite before moving to Ontario to commence studying. Learners expressed interest in learning about topics ranging from the history of Canada and Indigeneity, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, relevant laws (especially employment and tenant rights), taxation, daily life (navigating public transit, grocery shopping, banking, and financial institutions), and social-cultural norms (including topics like sexual harassment, consent, and etiquette). While the subject matter could be combined into a micro-credential with digital fluency elements, two stand-alone micro-credentials could be beneficial to students. Interviewed learners expressed that they liked the idea of short-term learning offered by a micro-credential, and like the idea of completing a micro-credential on Canadian culture prior to arriving in Ontario. A one-year timeline would be required for eCampusOntario to devise, plan, and build such a micro-credential prior to launch.

Open Education Resource Uptake (1 Year)

We encourage eCampusOntario's Open Library to continue outreach which supports the uptake of open educational resources (OER). Many students in both the survey and interviews noted that the cost of education was one of the largest barriers they faced. As one interviewee said, "I didn't know textbooks were $1000." OERs are a free alternative and simple solution to improve one small financial barrier. However, continued outreach efforts, like those funded in the three rounds of the Virtual Learning Strategy, are required to ensure that faculty choose OERs for their learners.

Digital Peer Mentorship (2 Years)

In a similar vein to the Study and Stay mentorship program to foster employment support, a Digital Peer Mentorship program could support international learners during their study period. Interviewed learners expressed loneliness, homesickness, and feeling a lack of community.

While institutions have historically fostered international student mentorship programs, this is an outdated model which does not reflect the realities of hybrid and online learning. Students no longer spend big periods of time on campus; rather, they have the ability to study from home. As one interviewee who serves as a traditional on-campus peer mentor reported, "I only see 2 of my 10 mentees, because the rest never come to campus." By building the infrastructure to facilitate access to an international mentor, anywhere in the province, this would alleviate some of the isolation felt by international learners and present valuable experience for international students to list on a resume (if they serve in the mentor role). eCampusOntario could tap into existing traditional mentorship programs on campuses, by building a digital environment to expand and facilitate their programs.

Digital Credentials and Virtual Wallets (2.5 Years)

Following eCampusOntario's 2022-2023 research on digital credentials and virtual wallets, we discovered that micro-credential learners are receptive to digital credentials and virtual wallets.[49] Consulting with international learners, all interviewees are receptive of digital credentials and virtual wallets. Learners indicated how they could see these solutions being useful when applying for post-graduation work permits and permanent residency, if IRCC, other government agencies, and employers would be willing to accept digital credentials. 3 of 11 interviewees did fear that digital credentials could be meaningless in their home countries, which one learner described as "less tech advanced than Canada." eCampusOntario needs to continue to advocate for these technological advancements, ensuring proper partners are informed of their development and implementation, and builds a virtual wallet with learner's needs in-mind.

eCampusOntario Identified Solutions

Working Group on International Learners in Postsecondary Education (0.5-1 Year)

This working group, convened by eCampusOntario, would bring together all parties working towards solutions for international learners in Ontario's postsecondary sector. By meeting quarterly, this council could convene on issues and collaborate on solutions to ensure that work is not being completed in siloed environments. Potential parties to include in this council range from eCampusOntario Members (particularly Student Affairs, International Learner Support divisions), representatives from Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada, Global Affairs Canada, Council of Ontario Universities, Colleges Ontario, Indigenous Institutes Consortium, Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, Canadian Federation of Students, College Student Alliance,

Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities, and other interested provincial and federal ministries. This council can be established relatively quickly and operate within current budget arrangements. Other solutions presented in this report could be accomplished through partnerships forged at the council.

Blockchain Acceptance Letters (1 Year)

Interviewed learners, particularly those from India who used educational agents, expressed concern about widespread fraud in their country. Countless reports in Canadian news media present stories of international learners facing deportation for illegally entering the country using fraudulent documents, notably letters of acceptance. In late October 2023, the Government of Canada announced changes

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49   Hughes, Alexander Travis, Graeme Cannon, Laura Viselli, Elisa Arnold, and Rocío Chávez Tellería. "Wallets, Passports, Portfolios, Credentials: What Learners Want in a Virtual Education Wallet." eCampusOntario, March 2023.

to the International Student Program, most notably requiring designated learning institutions to confirm each applicant's letter of acceptance with IRCC to ensure that study permits are only issued to those with genuine acceptance letters.[50] By building a website where Ontario's Indigenous Institutes, colleges, and universities can send out blockchain-held letters of invitation, acceptance, and other important documentation, institutions, learners, and immigration authorities can ensure the security of these practices. A website where the sender (the institution), the receiver (the learner), and the document can be automatically verified as legitimate is a simple solution to a large problem. eCampusOntario would require one year to build, test, and pilot this initiative with member institutions. When successfully built, this portal could become the Canadian standard, and sold or licensed to other provinces and territories. This would ensure security during visa application and arrival in Canada and alleviate a major cause of stress for many international learners. A blockchain acceptance letter portal would require eCampusOntario membership to participate in the testing, piloting, and use of such a portal, and the participation of government agencies like IRCC and CBSA to recognize the legitimacy of these documents.

Supporting the Re-Calibration of the Post-Graduation Work Permit (1 Year)

As part of the announcements made by the Government of Canada in late October, 2023, IRCC will "complete an assessment of Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) criteria and begin introducing reforms to better calibrate it to meet the needs of the Canadian labour market, as well as regional and Francophone immigration goals."[51] As part of eCampusOntario's efforts on the Micro-Credential Portal and collecting occupation-based data, eCampusOntario can provide IRCC with data about the Ontario labour market and the educational pathways required to support regional and Francophone immigration, and labour gaps. eCampusOntario can thus support the IRCC in the re-calibration of the PGWP by ensuring that relevant data about Ontario's educational pathways and labour market demands are offered to IRCC for consideration.

eCampusOntario Policy Work (2 Years)

eCampusOntario needs to invest in a policy unit, supported by policy analysts, tasked to create briefings and respond to federal and provincial policies which impact the postsecondary ecosystem. This would include an emphasis on international learners, technology, employment, funding, economics, budgets, and other integrated policies. Recognizing that international students face systemic issues, the consolidation of policy specialists from across fields could support an integrated policy solution. This team could work in conjunction with the Governance team or Research and Foresight teams. The policy unit could also work closely with policy analysts at other postsecondary organizations and support the integrated work of the recommended Working Group on International Learners in Postsecondary Education. With an operational policy team, the work of multiple teams across eCampusOntario could be grounded in upcoming advancements in policy.

We also recommend that the Research and Foresight team employ foresight research methodologies to understand the future of educational policy in Ontario. More specifically, the Foresight team should gather policy analysts from various federal and provincial ministries, political parties, member institutions (specifically International Learner Support Divisions), international student organizations, and postsecondary organizations to workshop the future of international student policy in Canada. This work has the capacity to shape informed decision making at all governmental levels.

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50 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. "Changes to International Student Program aim to protect students." October 27, 2023. https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2023/10/changes-to-international-student-program-aim-to-protect-students.html

51 Ibid.

Labour Market Connectivity and a Study and Stay Program (2 Years)

One of the top concerns learners indicated was employment. Of the interviewees we spoke to, 5 of 11 were concerned for their post-graduate job prospects because they lacked Canadian work experience. 3 of 11interviewed learners who participated in co-op or work integrated learning programs during their Canadian study felt that those experiences had prepared them for future employment opportunities. We recommend the creation of a study and stay program, similar to what has been created by EduNova, a co-operative industry association of education and training providers in Nova Scotia. Their Study and Stay program provides participants with enhanced one-on-one and group support throughout their final year of study, a managed mentorship component, career supports, networking, employer connection development, community integration, immigration support, and entrepreneurship opportunities.[52] The establishment of a similar program in Ontario by eCampusOntario could present international learners with the tools to find employment, post-graduation immigration support, and acculturation supports. eCampusOntario could leverage past work on labour market connectivity (such as Ontario Exchange and Ontario Collaborative Innovation Platform) to create a Study and Stay program. This program would require a 2 year initial investment for eCampusOntario: 1 year to design, build, and market, and an additional year to pilot with learners and industry.

Mandatory Licensing of Agents (2+ Years)

Educational agents emerged in our research as one of the riskiest actors in the international learner's postsecondary journey. The educational agent industry is unregulated, non-transparent, and have committed fraudulent acts. eCampusOntario encourages that Ontario postsecondary institutions and federal and provincial governments consider mandatory licensing of educational agents and provide transparent rules and regulations governing their work that are made accessible and easy to understand for learners. This could take multiple years to be established and could be supported by the agent portal suggested and validated by international learners.

Co-Curricular Micro-Credential Framework (3 Years)

One interviewee indicated, "I didn't know it was part of Canadian student culture to do things other than study and work. When I joined a club, it was amazing." Two other interviewed learners expressed that they did not know Canadian student culture was about more than just studying, and thus missed out on co-curricular activities early on in their studies. Co-curriculars provide learners with socialization and tangible skills, which can benefit their path to post-graduate employment. Programs like Wilfrid Laurier University's Laurier Experience Record and Georgian College's Co-Curricular Record allow learners to track their involvement in co-curriculars and identify competencies and skills gained from their participation. By creating a co-curricular micro-credential framework, a province-wide system of digital credentialing could be created for co-curricular participation. A shared set of skills, competencies, and assessment could be established. This would present international learners with incentive to participate in these activities and support the transition to employment. This would build off of the work eCampusOntario has led on micro-credentialing, but would require several years to build a framework, create a provincial digital credentialing system, and pilot the program.

Synchronizing Immigration and Education Policy

It has become evident through our conversations with learners that Canadian and Ontario immigration and education policy have become conflated. International learners revealed to the research team that they chose the path of pursing higher education in Ontario as a pathway to employment and a life in Canada. Learners indicated

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52   EduNova, "Study and Stay Nova Scotia." (Accessed October 20, 2023) https://studynovascotia.ca/studyandstay-2-2/

that they lied on the Study Plan section of their study permit applications, and indicated they did not plan to stay in Canada after graduation. Many learners had graduate degrees from their country of origin and selected one-year college programs in Ontario because they were a cheap and presumed easy alternative to traditional immigration pathways into Canada. International students have conflated postsecondary education with immigration. However, on the flip side, international students' exorbitant tuition fees are a valuable source of income for postsecondary institutions in lieu of appropriate levels of governmental postsecondary education spending. The lines between education and immigration have been blurred at the educational, economic, immigration, and labour policy level. Federal and provincial governments need to stop conflating these policy areas and understand international learner policy as all-encompassing subject matter requiring synchronized solutions.

Conclusion

In December, 2023 the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced regulatory changes for international students studying in Canada. First, starting January 1, 2024, the cost-of-living financial requirement for study permit applicants will be raised from $10,000, to $20,635 in addition to tuition and travel fees.[53] The increased financial requirement was created to reflect the higher cost of living in Canada and to ensure that international learners are more financially self-sustained in Canada. Further, the Minister announced that the waiver allowing for 40 hours of work per week instead of the previous 20 hours per week will remain in place until April 2024, at which time the government may consider 30 hours per week while class is in session.[54] Finally, restrictions will be imposed to ensure that international learners are domestically in Canada for their programs of study instead of participating in distance education.[55] These announcements were made to "prevent student vulnerability and exploitation," but also demonstrate how additional supports are required to support international learners along their postsecondary journeys.

This project is the result of a survey of and interviews with international learners who have studied at or are studying an undergraduate, degree, or certificate program at a publicly-assisted Ontario college or university. Learners revealed the variety of barriers they face along their learner journey, from researching and applying to institutions, to their visa application, through studying in Ontario, and post-graduate plans. The results of this research have informed a series of solutions, which could be implemented by the sector in partnership with other institutions, provincial and federal governments, and other valued stakeholders.

The research team recognizes the need for further research related to this project. While research on undergraduate-level degree, diploma, and certificate revealed a series of barriers that are unique to this group of learners, common themes such as housing, employment and loneliness may also impact other learners. Further research with international graduate students, lifelong learners, re-skilling learners, and equivalency-learners is required to understand the entire scope of the international learner journey in Ontario. For example, mature international learners may encounter different problems related to the immigration of family members, the supports needed for family members, the need for a flexible classroom to support school-life balance, or re-skilling to enhance prior education. Further research on these learners may present new opportunities for digital solutions or ways to enhance the solutions presented in this report.

The international learner faces many barriers through their postsecondary journey in Ontario. This report has presented a series of digital-by-design solutions to reduce some barriers and improve their journey. Including international learner voices was paramount to the design of these solutions and is imperative to continue this dialogue through the design, implementation, and piloting of all solutions.

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

1. Are you currently enrolled as an international student in an undergraduate program at a public Ontario college, university, or Indigenous Institute?

    - Yes
    - No
    - Unsure

2. Did you **attend or graduate** from a public Ontario college, university, or Indigenous Institute as an international student in an undergraduate **between 2019 and 2023**?

    - Yes
    - No
    - Unsure

3. Which postsecondary **institution** do you attend (or graduated from)?

    - List of eCampusOntario Members

4. At which **level of study** did you attend that institution?

    - Bachelor's Degree
    - Certificate
    - Diploma
    - Other (please state):
    - I choose not to answer

5. In what year did you **graduate,** or do you **expect to graduate**?

6. Which **country are you a citizen of**? Please select only one if you have citizenship in multiple countries.

7. In what year did you **arrive** in Canada?

8. What is your **current status in Canada**? *Please note, your answer to this question will be kept separate from your personal information. Your response to this question has no impact on your status or any future statuses you may have in Canada.*

    - Study Permit
    - Post-Graduation Work Permit
    - Other Work Visa (please state):
    - Refugee
    - Permanent Resident (PR Card Holder)
    - Canadian Citizen
    - Other (please explain):
    - I choose not to answer

9. What **attracted you to study** in Ontario? Please select all that apply:

    - Cost of tuition
    - Experience of living abroad
    - Familial reasons (to be closer to family, family relocation, etc.)

- Interest in the program of study
- Opportunity to live in Canada
- Opportunity to live in Ontario
- Opportunity to study at a certain institution (prestige of an institution)
- Planning to immigrate to Canada
- Refugee
- To be exposed to Canadian culture
- To gain Canadian work experience
- Unique educational experiences (for example: co-op, work integrated learning, Residence Communities, etc.)
- Unique program offered in Ontario
- Other (please explain):

10. Optional: Please explain why you chose the answers above.

11. Using a 5-point scale where 5 represents very easy to access or find information, 3 is neither easy or hard to access or find information (neutral), and 1 represents very hard to access or find information, **please rate the experience of locating information and resources to support your application to study in Ontario.**

12. What websites did you use to **find information**? Select all that apply.

- Apply Board
- Canada.ca (Government of Canada's website)
- CanadaVisa.com
- EduCanada.ca
- Institution Website
- Moving2Canada.ca
- Online forums (please name which):
- Ontario.ca (Government of Ontario's website)
- OntarioColleges.ca
- OntarioLearn.com
- OntarioUniversitiesInfo.ca
- Reddit
- Yocket
- Other (please describe):

13. What other resources did you use to **find information**?

- Educational agent or broker in your home country
- Family member, friend, or acquaintance studying in Canada
- Recruiter from an Ontario college/university
- Pamphlets from an Ontario college/university
- Magazines (such as Macleans Rankings)
- Books
- Other (please state):

14. Please describe your experiences researching Ontario colleges or universities in as much detail as you would like to provide.

15. Please describe your experiences **applying** to an Ontario college or university:

16. Please identify any **additional supports** which may have helped you through the application stage?

17. After receiving your acceptance, please rate the level of support that **your institution provided** in helping you obtain a student visa.

   - A lot of support
   - Some support
   - Minimal support
   - No support
   - I don't know

18. From the list below, please select **any barriers** you experienced during when applying for your student visa.

   - Costs associated with the process
   - Difficulty navigating government websites
   - Lack of information available (or difficult to find)
   - Locating documents from various sources (such as medical offices, transcripts etc.)
   - Not understanding the requirements
   - Notarizing documents
   - Scams and/or fraud
   - Translating documents
   - The volumes of paperwork required
   - Other (please state):
   - None of the above
   - I don't know
   - I choose not to answer

19. Thinking about the information available to you when you first arrived in Ontario, please use a five point scale where 5 means a lot of information was available and 1 means no information was available to **rate the availability of information on the provided topics**.

   - Your School
   - Your Program
   - City/Town/Community
   - Banking/Financial Services
   - Healthcare
   - Housing
   - Taxes/Legal Responsibilities
   - Transportation

20. Optional: Please explain the ratings you provided above.

21. Thinking about when you first arrived in Ontario, which of the following areas did you find it **difficult to obtain information about**? Select all that apply.

   - Academics (registering for classes, where to go on campus, finding academic supports)
   - Athletics/recreation
   - Banking

- Employment (finding a part-time job)
- Groceries/shopping
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Making friends/finding community
- Navigating a new town/city
- Personal care service (such as haircuts, etc.)
- Preventing fraud and scams
- Religious supports (such as locating places of worship, etc.)
- Taxes/legal responsibilities
- Tourism/culture (things to see and do)
- Transit (such as the usage of, procuring passes for, and locating schedules of buses, trains, subways)
- Other (please explain):
- I don't know
- I choose not to answer

22. Did your institution host a welcome or orientation week (sometimes called O-Week or Frosh Week) for international learners when you **arrived**?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- Does not apply
- I choose not to answer

23. If yes, You indicated, that your school hosted a welcome/orientation week for international learners. Do you think that week/program assisted with your acclimatization to living and studying in Ontario?

24. Please rate the **level of support** your institution provided to ease your transition to studying in Ontario (such as an International Student Centre, a mentorship program, a peer-group, international student activities, etc.)

- A lot of support
- Some support
- Minimal support
- No support
- I don't know
- I choose not to answer

25. Optional: Please explain why you selected the answer above.

26. In what **format** were the majority of your classes?

- In-person (classes primarily delivered in-person on a campus)
- Online (classes primarily delivered via the Internet, including video lectures, tutorials, etc.)
- Hybrid (classes designed to combine both online and face-to-face teaching in any combination)
- Other (please state):
- I don't know
- I choose not to answer

27. You indicated that the majority of your classes were online or hybrid. Using a 5 point scale where 5 is very prepared and 1 is not at all prepared, please rate **how prepared you felt for this format of learning.**

28. What were the largest **academic challenges** you faced when studying in Ontario? Select all that apply:

- Approaching professors, instructors, and/or teaching assistants for support
- Balancing employment and schooling
- Becoming part of a learning community
- Cost of tuition
- Finding a job/employment
- Finding academic support services (such as learning centre, writing centre, etc.)
- How to use a learning management system (such as Moodle, Blackboard, etc.)
- Language (English or French)
- Navigating the learning culture (contradicting others in a constructive manner, asking questions in lectures, etc.)
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Technological skills (using Microsoft Office, Dropbox, etc.)
- Time management
- Understanding academic expectations (what makes an "A" paper?)
- Other (please state):
- None of the above
- I don't know
- I choose not to answer

29. When you face struggles in your studies, where do you **seek help/assistance**? Select all that apply

- Clubs/associations
- Forums/websites (please state which):
- Friends/roommates
- Instructors/professors
- International student centres
- Librarians
- Other international learners (from other countries)
- Other international learners (from same country)
- Other students in your classes
- Private tutors
- Residence life/dormitory staff (such as residence assistants, dons, tutors, etc.)
- Student's union/association
- Teaching Assistants
- Writing centres
- Other (please state):
- I don't know
- None of the above
- I choose not to answer

30. Are there any **supports or resources** which you would have **appreciated or used** to help ease your transition to studying in Ontario?

31. After completing your program **do you/did you plan to stay in Canada**?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- I choose not to answer

32. Displays based on response to previous question:

- You indicated that you planned to stay in Canada. What **motivated** you to make this choice?
- You indicated you do not plan to stay in Canada. What **motivated** you to make this choice?
- You indicated that you are unsure about staying in Canada? **Why** are you unsure?

33. Did your **institution** provide you with any resources or supports to find a work permit or pathways towards permanent residency after your study?

- Yes, I have looked at them/used them
- Yes, but I found better answers elsewhere
- No, I had to look elsewhere. Please indicate where you looked
- I don't know (I haven't looked for any)
- I choose not to answer

34. Are you interested in **participating in an hour-long interview** with our research team in **September 2023** to further discuss your experiences as an international learner? Participants will be compensated $100 for successful completion of a research interview. We thank all who apply, but only have a limited number of spaces for participants.

35. For completing this survey, you have the opportunity to be entered in a draw for 1 of 10 prizes of a $50 Mastercard gift card. **Would you like to enter this draw?**

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Demographics/Baseline

1. Country of origin/institution/which visa?

2. Why that institution/program?

3. Let's talk about applying to that institution - can you tell me what that process was like?

4. How about the visa application process?

5. Tell me about your first week in Ontario

6. Tell me about studying at your institution - what supports did you use, what could you have used?

Problems

7. If learner mentions barriers: You mentioned some problems that you faced in the application/visa/arrival processes - can you think of any solutions to these issues?

Validating Tech Solutions

8. Pitch the concept of an all-in-one information website that supports pre-arrival, visa application, studying, and post-study permit. What features would you like to see? What information would you like to see? How would you access this website? App?

9. AI Chatbot or a Human-powered chat service to answer student questions

10. Public registry with reviews for education agents. Know that the person you're dealing with is legitimate, and all files they need to see can be securely uploaded to this repository

11. Portal for jobs for international students - particularly on campus

12. Portal to find housing/with housing information

13. Digital credentials - explain the concept, would this have helped? This would include a verified application letter - to know it isn't fraudulent. Could be carried in a virtual wallet (explain this concept and how that may help them after graduation)

14. Micro-credentials on how to learn in a digital environment, or maybe one specifically for international students- learning in Ontario/expectations. One size fits all or specific for your institution/city?

15. Digital peer mentorship, forums; formal places to ask informal questions to other students.

16. Mental health support portal - access to virtual sessions with professionals.

Is there anything we didn't ask that you'd like to add?

Appendix C: Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Country of Origin	Institution of Study	Immigration Status
Jack	Philippines	Humber College	Study Permit
Wolverine	India	Conestoga College	Study Permit
Hope	India	Seneca College	Study Permit
Sky	Hong Kong	Seneca College	Permanent Resident (Former Study Permit)
NG	Philippines	Seneca College	Study Permit
Max Power	India	Toronto Metropolitan University	Study Permit
Sam	India	Nipissing University	Study Permit
Alex	Russia	Seneca College	Post-Graduation Work Permit
Jane	India	Seneca College, Humber College	Post-Graduation Work Permit
Polaris	India	Conestoga College	Study Permit
Billie	India	Humber College	Study Permit

Authors, Citation, Contact

Authors

Alexander Hughes, PhD, is a Research and Foresight Associate at eCampusOntario and is the Principal Researcher and Author of this report. He holds a PhD in History from York University, a Master of Arts in History from Wilfrid Laurier University, and a Bachelor of Arts from Wilfrid Laurier University. As a mixed methodology researcher, he has written articles, reports, and summaries in the postsecondary, non-profit, policy, popular press, and historical fields.

Graeme Cannon, MA, is a Research and Foresight Coordinator at eCampusOntario and is the Secondary Researcher and Author of this report. He received his Master of Arts from Western University in Political Science, his Bachelor of Arts from Trent University in Political Science and Philosophy, and a postgraduate certificate in Research Analysis from Georgian College. His background includes evaluating programs and solutions to help domestic and international learners in Ontario postsecondary institutions.

Laura Viselli, M.I., is the Senior Manager of Research and Foresight at eCampusOntario. She completed her Master of Information, specializing in Library and Information Science, at the University of Toronto and completed her Bachelor of Arts at Wilfrid Laurier University. Laura has built her career as a mixed methods researcher with experience leading and contributing to various research activities at postsecondary institutions, cultural heritage institutions, and charitable organizations.

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Contact

Please visit www.ecampusontario.ca or email research@ecampusontario.ca to contact the Research and Foresight Team.