



## International Student Program Update

Languages Canada

February 2017



Immigration, Refugees  
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés  
et Citoyenneté Canada

Canada

# Purpose

To provide an update on Canada's International Student Program:

- I. Context
- II. International Student Trends
- III. Operational Context
- IV. Policy and Program Updates

# I. Overview

## Context

- Canada is the 7th most popular destination for international students (at 5%), behind the US (20%), UK (13%), France (8%), Germany (7%), China (7%) and Australia (7%).
- Canada is an attractive destination for students, but fierce international competition exist for continued enrollment growth.
- A collaborative and coordinated approach amongst the various levels of governments and stakeholders to this global talent pool is vital to our competitiveness on the international stage, and will further position Canada as a global magnet for international students.
- For Canada, a successful International Student Program requires balancing measures to attract and retain international students with program integrity checks to prevent program abuse and protect the Canadian labour market.

# Canada's International Student Program

## **IRCC is responsible for study authorizations and offers one of the most generous work schemes :**

- Study permit issuance limited to foreign nationals enrolled at Designated Learning Institutions;
- Automatic authorization to work on and off campus during studies for most students;
- Work permits facilitated for co-op students (fee exempt) and spouses of students;
- Post graduation work permit program allows international student graduates to access an open work permit with duration of up to three years.

## **Canadian Border Services Agency**

- Screens travellers for admissibility, issues study and work permits at border, provides immigration enforcement, removes inadmissible persons.

## **Provinces/territories: key partners in maintaining the integrity of the Program:**

- Ministries of education designate those institutions that may receive international students, based on pan-Canadian standards;
- All K-12 level institutions are considered designated for the purpose of hosting international students.

## II. International Student Trends

## Increasing Numbers of International Students

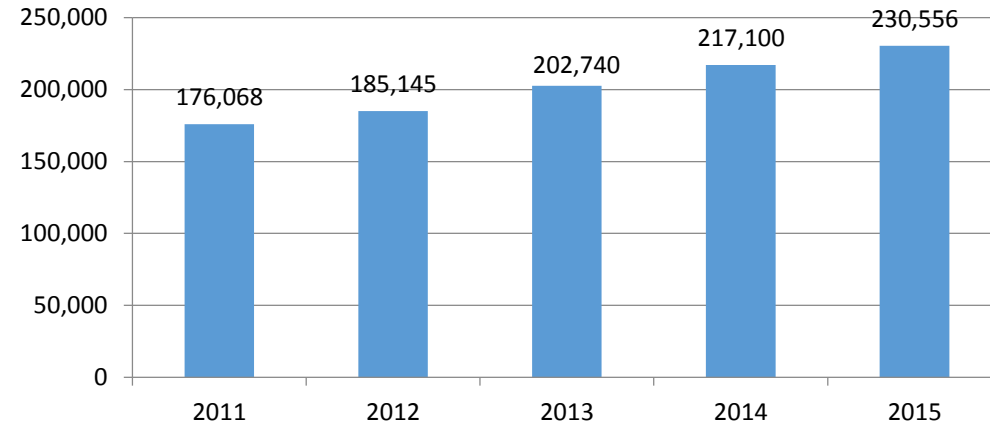
Growth in the demand for Canada's education system continues:

- Average growth rate of new study permit holders by year in which they entered Canada was 7% from 2011-2015
- A total of 230,556 study permits issued in 2015, a 6% increase from 2014

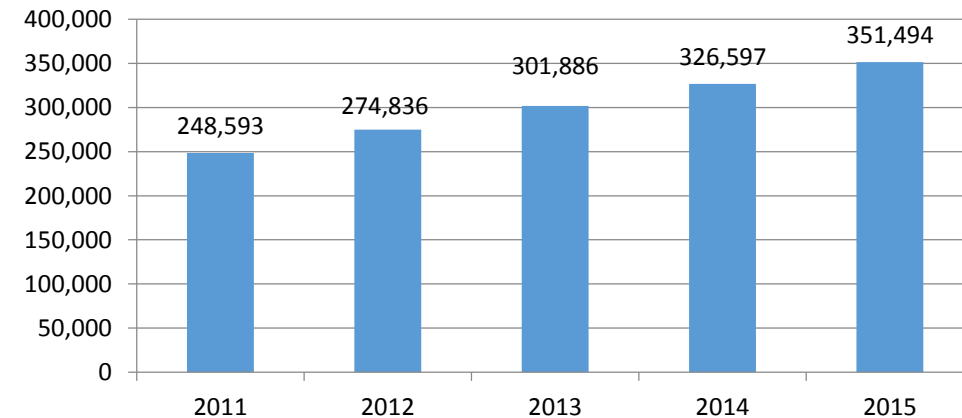
Total number of students residing in Canada also increasing:

- Average growth rate of all study permit holders in Canada on Dec. 31 was 9% from 2011-2015
- 351,494 international students with a valid permit on December 31, 2015, a 7% increase from 2014

**Study Permits and Extensions Issued  
2011-2015**



**International Students with a Valid Permit on  
December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011-2015**



# International Students by Top 10 Source Countries

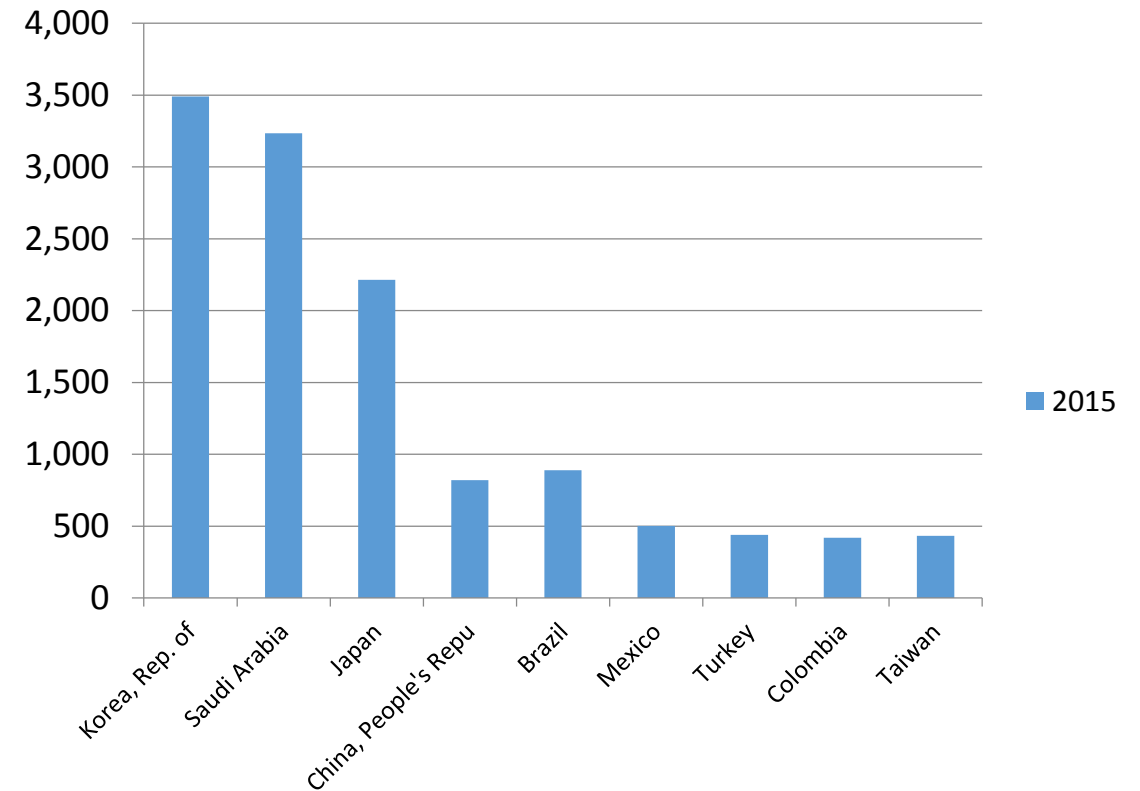
Canada has the second least diversified pool of students amongst competitor countries:

- Students from China (68,019) and India (32,420) represented 45% of total study permits signed in 2015
- Top 10 source countries represented 75% of signed study permits in 2015

For ESL/FSL Students:

- Students from Rep. Korea (3,490) represented over 24% of total study permits issued for ESL/FSL in 2015, followed by Saudi Arabia (22%) and Japan (15%)
- Top 10 source countries represented over 86% of study issued for ESL/FSL in 2016\*

ESL/FSL Study Permits Issued by Top 10 Source Countries in 2015



Source: IRCC, Permanent and Temporary Resident \* Dec 2016 data



### III. Operational Context

# Study Permit Processing

- Efforts to significantly increase the number of international students in Canada are having an ongoing direct operational impact on IRCC.
- Changing immigration levels and the implementation of Express Entry have created additional pressure on the network's capacity to process all applications.

## **Overseas:**

- In 2015, 92% of cases are processed abroad within 60 days. Processing times abroad have not grown despite increased volumes of applications.

## **Inland:**

- In-Canada processing times for both study permit applications and extensions are currently, 28 days (online) to 115 days (paper applications) for study permits\*

## **Modernization:**

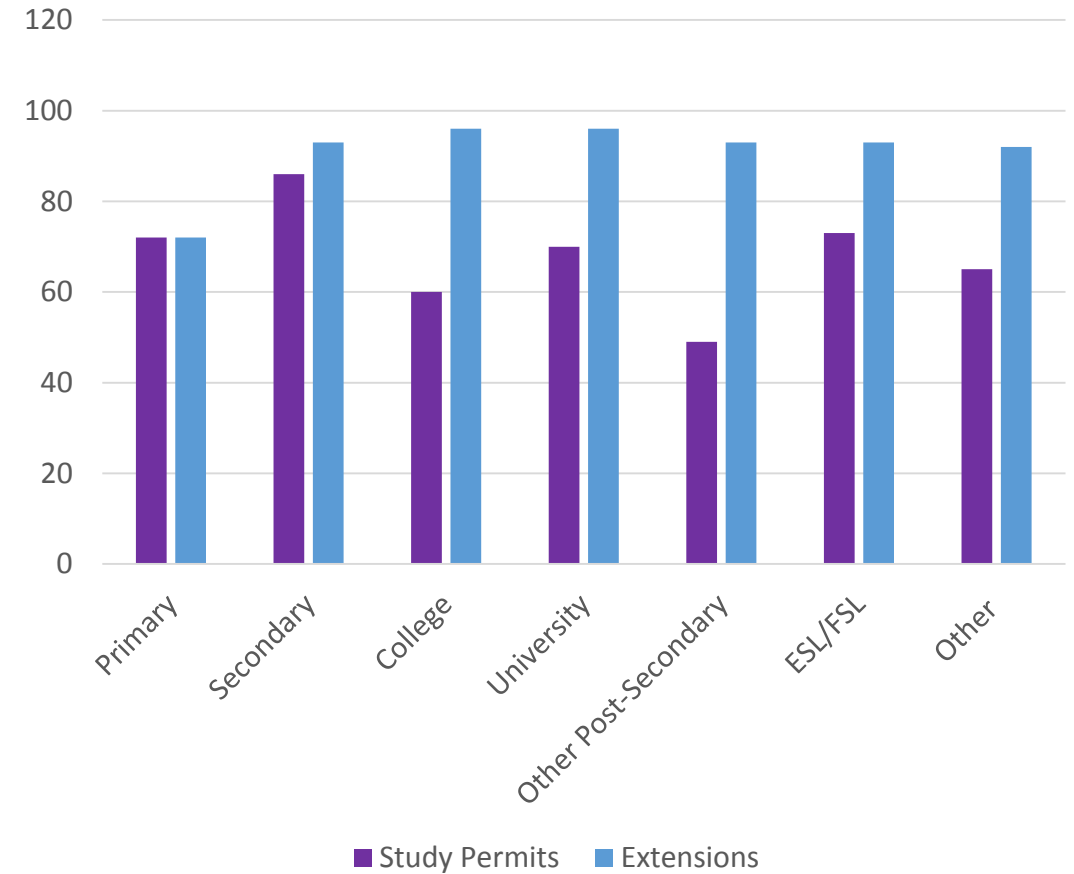
- IRCC's modernization initiatives (e.g., increasing client support through Visa Application Centres and electronic applications) have helped to manage growing volume pressures over the last several years.

\* As of January 2017.

# Study Permit Approval Rates

- Overall study permit approval rates overseas have been stable since 2014
- Study permit approval rates for the ESL/FSL have improved since 2014:
  - 63% in 2014
  - 64% in 2015
  - 73% in 2016\*
- Top reasons for refusal for ESL/FSL:
  - Insufficient financial resources
  - Failure to comply with requests for additional information
  - Purpose of visit

Approval Rates for Study Permit and Extensions by Level of Study



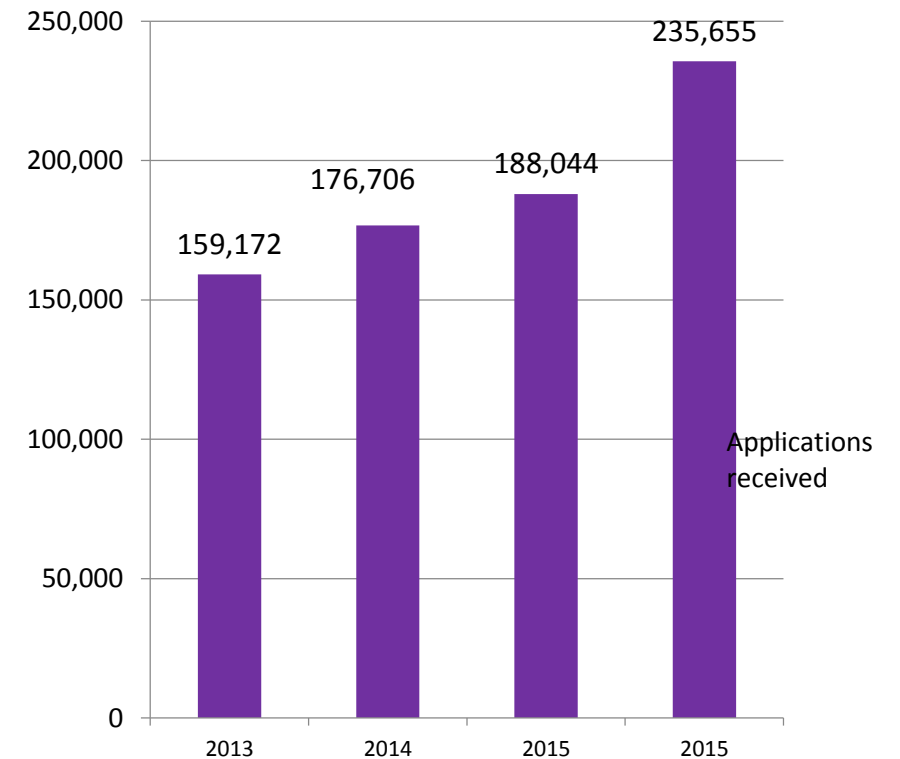
\*as of November 2016

## IV. Policy and Program Updates

# International Student Program Integrity Measures Have Not Hindered Growth

- In June 2014, reforms to the International Student Program were implemented to strengthen program integrity and bolster Canada's reputation as a top study destination.
- Data for 2016 indicates continued growth:
  - Growth rate from 2015 to 2016 in terms of study permit issuance has more than doubled.
  - Growth rate from 2015 to 2016 in terms of study permit holders present in Canada on Dec. 31 has almost tripled.
  - Record high of study permit applications received from Sept-Dec 2016, including for ESL/FSL students.
  - Visa issuance for short-term studies as of Nov 2016 exceeds all of visas issued for short-term studies in 2015.

**Study Permit applications received  
2013-2016**



# Improvements to the International Student Program continues

## 1. Updates to our Program Delivery Instructions:

- Distance education
- Prerequisite programs
- Off-campus work
- Assessing study permit conditions, including the active pursuit of studies
- Post-Graduation Work Permit Program

## 2. Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

- Development of an approach to stakeholder engagement on policy and program matters pertaining to students

## 3. Modernization efforts to increase efficiency in the processing for study permit extensions resulting in:

- Faster and streamlined correspondence between IRCC and clients
- Enhanced case status and contact information for clients.

QUESTIONS?

# Points of Contact

- **IRCC website on international students:**  
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/index.asp>
- **Application processing times:**  
[http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/times/index.asp?utm\\_source=website&utm\\_medium=website&utm\\_content=contact8&utm\\_campaign=contactus](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/times/index.asp?utm_source=website&utm_medium=website&utm_content=contact8&utm_campaign=contactus)
- **Case Specific Enquiry form:**  
<https://secure.cic.gc.ca/enquiries-renseignements/canada-case-cas-eng.aspx>
- **Help Centre:**  
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/index-featured-can.asp>
- **Designated Learning Institution (DLI) Inbox:**  
[DLI-list-liste-EED@cic.gc.ca](mailto:DLI-list-liste-EED@cic.gc.ca)
- **Immigration Representatives Inbox:**  
[ImmigrationRepresentatives@cic.gc.ca](mailto:ImmigrationRepresentatives@cic.gc.ca)
- **Statistics:**
  - Facts and Figures: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/menu-fact.asp>
  - Open data <http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/052642bb-3fd9-4828-b608-c81dff7e539c>