

January 30, 2024

Honourable Marc Miller
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
229 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Subject: Concerns Regarding January 22nd, 2024, Announcement on International Student Program

Dear Minister,

On behalf of Universities Canada and Colleges and Institutes Canada, representing 234 post-secondary institutions, we wish to convey significant concern regarding the recent announcement introducing caps to the International Student Program. While we acknowledge the efforts made to address challenges associated with unscrupulous actors, the implementation of the cap has the potential to bring about widespread and long-lasting consequences for both Canadian and international students.

Our foremost concern is the moratorium on processing new international student study permits, especially for college and undergraduate students. This sudden halt while provinces establish attestation systems is already impacting enrollments. The absence of a pre-existing process in most provinces compounds the issue, hindering eligible students from obtaining study permits. Faced with uncertainty, these students are likely to choose alternative destinations, posing a significant risk to Canada's post-secondary sector and hindering our efforts to attract global talent for years to come.

The potential consequences are difficult to overstate. The cap will have far-reaching effects on Canadian communities, given that international students play a pivotal role in bolstering the economy by contributing over \$22 billion a year to our country. Their contributions are vital in sustaining local labour markets, increasing diversity and meeting the demands of high-growth sectors. The policy's impact extends far beyond institutions, affecting businesses and communities.

We urge your department not to impose the letter of attestation requirement for college and undergraduate study permit applications until at least March 31st or until the provinces establish an effective process. Additionally, we request urgent consultations with the sector to modify the cap policy, clarify the many outstanding questions and mitigate the negative impacts. As the national voices of not-for-profit higher education institutions, we emphasize our willingness to collaborate on program integrity and student well-being.

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The global reputation of Canada as a top education destination is at stake, and careful consideration is crucial to prevent lasting consequences.

Sincerely,

Pari Johnston
President and CEO
Colleges and Institutes Canada

Philip Landon
Interim President and CEO
Universities Canada