

French-speaking international students in Canada

Throughout the spring of 2015, 35 post-secondary member institutions of the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) surveyed their international student population. Over 4,000 students provided extensive insights about their experience in Canada, including their decision-making process, preparation to come to Canada, their degree of social and academic success as international students, and plans following graduation.

This report, as part of a series of CBIE briefs, details the experience and perspectives of the 454 French-speaking international students who responded to the *2015 International Student Survey*, with an aim of supporting member institutions and the broader international education sector to better understand international education markets and, ultimately, to enhance the experience of all international students in Canada.

Subsequent reports in this series will delve into the various themes of immigration, study destination decision-making, social bonds between international students and Canadians, campus-wide inclusion of international students, and more. This dataset will also form an integral part of the 2015 CBIE *World of Learning* report, highlighting key trends in our sector over the year. This report will be launched at the annual CBIE Conference in Niagara Falls this November.

CBIE and its partner World University Service of Canada administer the [Canadian Francophonie Scholarship Program](#) on behalf of Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada.

The following was prepared by Lisa Deacon, Manager of Research and Special Projects for CBIE. Questions relating to this report and the CBIE International Student Survey can be directed to research-recherche@cbie.ca

1. FRENCH-SPEAKING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

According to data obtained from Statistics Canada, in 2013 post-secondary institutions across Canada hosted 19,735 international students from countries with French as an official language. The sample of students who responded to the International Student Survey numbered 454 from 11 colleges, polytechnic institutes and universities in five provinces across Canada (see figure 1).

Figure 1: French-Speaking Respondents by Province of Study

Québec	409
Manitoba	31
Ontario	11
Nova Scotia	2
British Columbia	1
Total	454

This French-speaking student sample was fairly diverse in region of origin, with 68% from Western Europe, 14% from Subsaharan Africa, 9% from the Middle-East and Northern Africa, 6% from the Americas and 3% from other regions (see figure 2).

Figure 3 depicts the type of degree or diploma sought by respondents. At the time of survey, slightly less than half (43%) were pursuing a bachelor's degree, followed by doctoral degrees (22%) and master's degrees (20%).

Figure 2: French-Speaking Respondents by Region of Origin

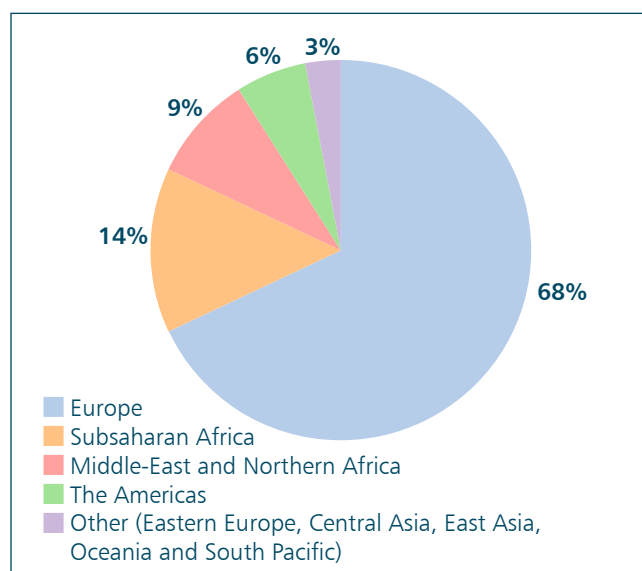


Figure 3: Degree, diploma or certificate

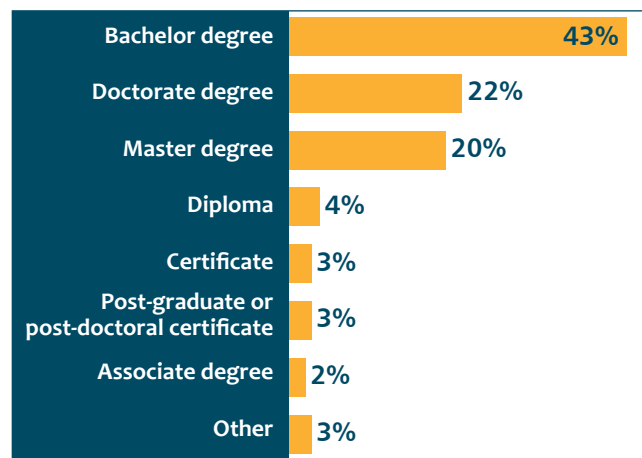
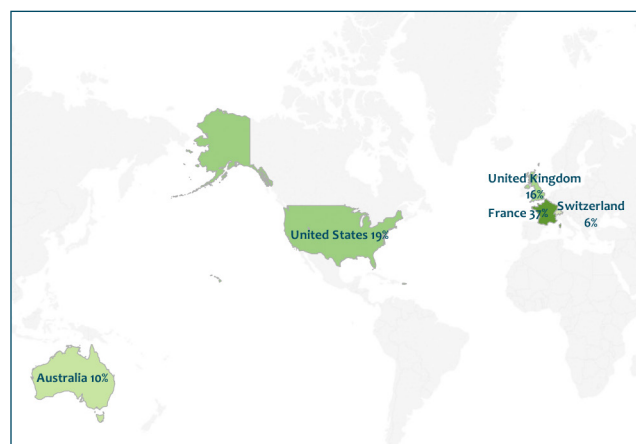


Figure 4: To which other countries did you apply for study?



2. CHOOSING CANADA

In the 2015 *International Student Survey*, 16% of students who responded in English indicated they had pursued education in Canada prior to their current institution. In contrast, only 7% of French-speaking students had a prior educational experience in Canada.

Before choosing Canada as their study destination, 27% of French-speaking respondents indicated that they also applied to institutions in other countries. As shown in **figure 4**, the top five alternate destinations considered by French-speaking respondents are a mix of French-speaking and non-French-speaking destinations: France (37%), United States (19%), United Kingdom (16%), Australia (10%) and Switzerland (6%).

The top reason for choosing to study in Canada for respondents was the strong reputation of Canada's education system. Beyond Canada's strong education system, the remaining reasons for choosing Canada varied considerably by region. Students from Western Europe also prioritized Canada's reputation as a tolerant and non-discriminatory society as well as the reasonable cost to study in Canada when compared with other destinations. Students from Subsaharan Africa were influenced by the opportunities for work and permanent residence status in Canada following studies, while students from the Middle-East and Northern Africa cited Canada's safe environment and opportunities for full-time work following studies as either essential or very important factors in their decision (see figure 5).

Figure 5 : Top reasons for choosing Canada

	Subsaharan Africa	Europe	Middle-East and Northern Africa	Global Responses
The reputation of the education system in Canada	90%	74%	93%	79%
Canada offers a society that is tolerant and not discriminatory	62%	67%	80%	69%
Opportunities for full-time work in Canada following my studies	80%	57%	80%	63%
Canada's reputation as a safe country	74%	50%	88%	61%
The cost of studying in in Canada in comparison to other countries	44%	58%	29%	52%
Possibility of obtaining permanent resident status in Canada	77%	45%	70%	52%

3. EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

When asked to rate their level of academic success in Canada, 96% of respondents indicated they were successful. Respondents were less likely to be successful in campus activity involvement, with just 66% reporting success in engaging in extracurricular activities such as clubs, associations and athletics.

“The most positive aspect of my studies in Canada is my relationship with professors, who are always there to help and respond to questions.”

— French student, Université de Montréal

“The most positive aspect of my studies in Canada until now is the way that teaching happens, giving students responsibility and an ideal environment for them to give the best of themselves in their studies.”

— Congolese student, Laurentian University

“The most positive aspect of my studies in Canada has been the discovery of a new way of seeing things, challenging me to succeed here outside of my comfort zone.”

— French student, École Polytechnique de Montréal

When asked to rate how beneficial their Canadian education has been, respondents were most likely to say that it has prepared them for further study (77%), helped them to discover their career interests (74%) and prepared them for employment in Canada (58%).

“The most positive aspect of my studies in Canada is the diversity of offered programs and the high level of specialisation which is not available in my home country (for example, Bachelors in neuroscience, biochemistry...)”

— French student, Université de Montréal

“The most positive aspect of my studies in Canada is the volume, accessibility and quality of extra-curricular activities on- and off-campus.”

— Belgian student, Qwest University

4. SATISFACTION AND FUTURE PLANS

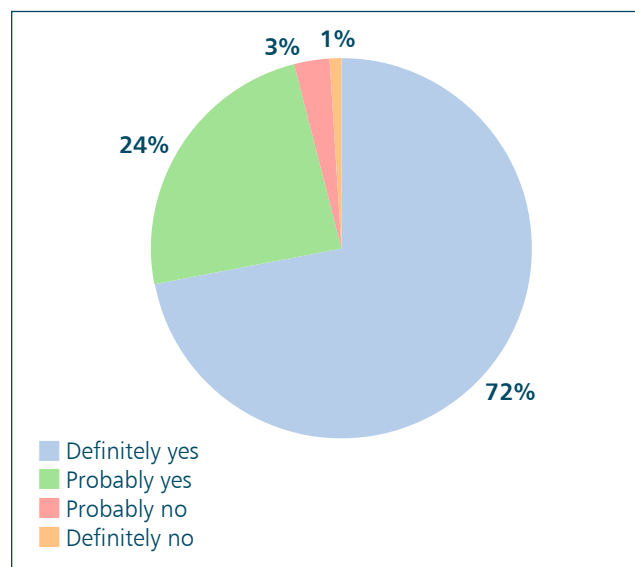
Almost half of respondents (46%) indicated their intention to become future permanent residents of Canada following their studies. This is slightly lower than the global response where 51% responded affirmatively that they plan to seek permanent residence in Canada.

Respondents were generally satisfied with their overall experience in Canada, with 91% indicating that they were either very satisfied (44%) or satisfied (47%). With regard to their particular institution, 94% of respondents said they would either probably (31%) or definitely (63%) recommend their institution to other international students. Almost all (96%) respondents said they would definitely (72%) or probably (24%) recommend Canada as a study destination to their peers in the future (see figure 6).

“Thanks to my studies in Canada I am ready to meet my potential, developing ideas that will contribute to the advancement of society.”

— Cameroonian student, Laurentian University

Figure 6 : Would you recommend Canada as a study destination to other students?



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