

IRCC announced the following changes to the International Student Program:

1. Financial Requirements:

- The cost-of-living requirement for study permit applicants has been raised as of January 1st, 2024.
- This is the first time since the early 2000s that the cost-of-living requirement has changed.
- The requirement for a single applicant has changed from \$10,000 to \$20,535. Students must demonstrate to IRCC that they have this amount in addition to their first year of tuition and travel costs.

2. Cap and Provincial Attestation Letters:

- IRCC set an intake cap on international student permit applications.
- The cap is a temporary measure that will last for two years.
- The cap will result in 360,000 approved study permits (a 35% reduction from 2023, across Canada).
- New Brunswick's allocation is 14,651, which could result in 5,567 study permits approved based on a 38% approval rate (provincial average).
- The province is responsible for distributing the provincial allocation to Designated Learning Institutes (DLIs).
- Provinces are now required to issue a Provincial Attestation Letter (PAL) to international students. This letter will be included in the student's application for a study permit.
- Master's and PhD students are not part of the cap.

3. Post-graduation Work Permit (PGWP) Eligibility:

- A 3-year PGWP will be available for those who are graduating from a master's degree program that is less than 2 years.
- Students enrolling in public-private partnership programs will no longer be eligible for the PGWP - Ontario is the only province in Canada that is affected by these partnerships.

4. Open Work Permit (OWP) Eligibility for Spouses:

- Spouses and common-law partners of students in graduate (master's and doctorate) and professional degree-granting programs will be the only ones eligible for an OWP. *
- Spouses of international students in other levels of study (college and undergraduate programs) are no longer eligible for an OWP. *

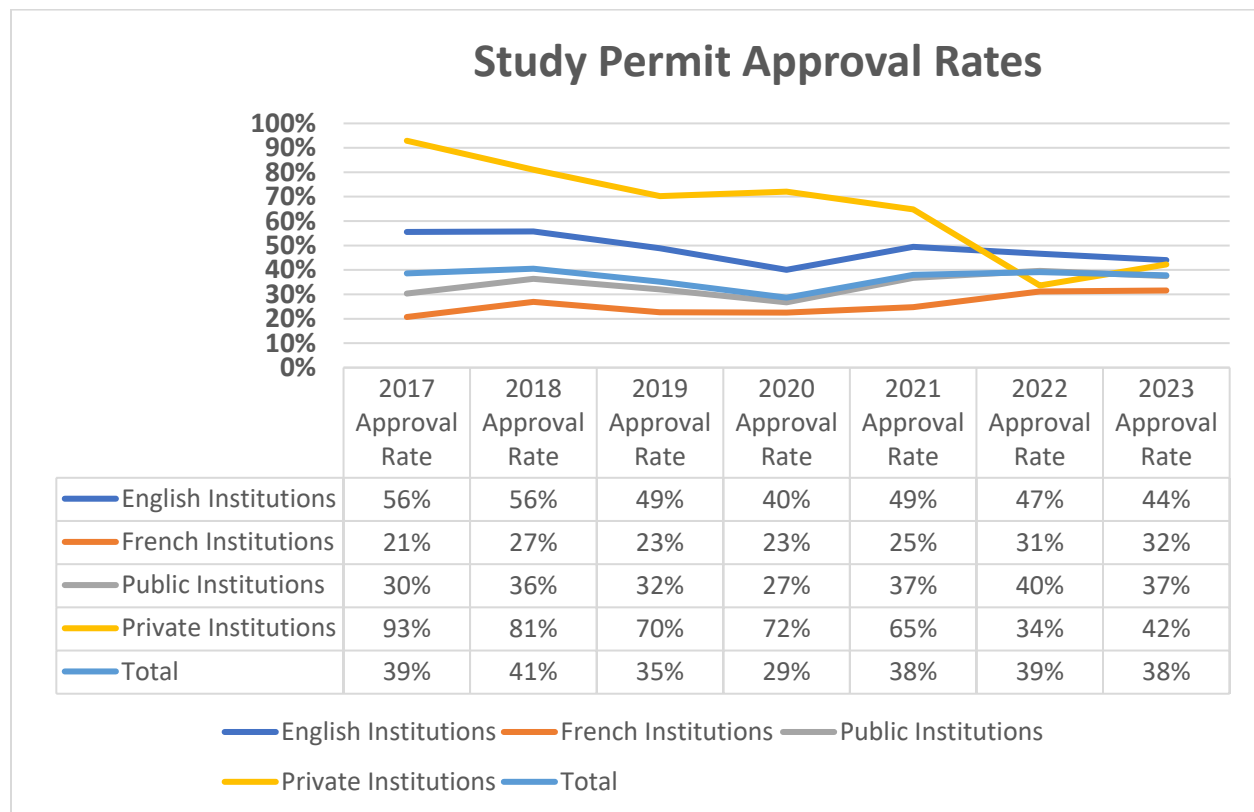
* Spouses of international students who are currently enrolled in Canadian institutions will not be affected by this change.

New Brunswick's Reality:

- New Brunswick enrolment in public post-secondary institutions have been declining for the last 20 years, and international students are vital to a sustainable post-secondary education sector in the province.
- New Brunswick has recently released a revised International Student Policy that enhances the policy framework to further support international students. There is evidence that IRCC leaders were impressed with the high standards that New Brunswick is currently in the process of implementing.
- IRCC changes were partly implemented to correct the Canadian housing issue, but New Brunswick has not had the same issues facing larger jurisdictions.

Impact on Study Permits:

- IRCC data shows that application approval rates for potential New Brunswick international students is lower than the Canadian average. New Brunswick's current approval rate is 38%.
- Due to source country factors; Francophone institutions have lower acceptance rates than Anglophone institutions (32% for Francophone institutions and 44% for Anglophone).
- Study permit applications are currently on hold until provinces and territories establish a system for the Provincial Attestation Letters.
- These changes add steps to the study permit application process.



Impact on Brand and Education Sector:

- The announcement has impacted not only New Brunswick's brand but also the Canadian brand, - in the international post-secondary education sector.
- Evidence suggests that other countries are already gaining from this announcement.
- Canada may no longer be the lead destination for international students.

Current Trends and Perceptions:

- While the true impact won't be felt until after recruitment cycles, there is anecdotal evidence that international students are already looking elsewhere to study abroad.
- There is a preconception that Canada has closed its doors for international students due to the January 22 announcement.
- Many New Brunswick's post-secondary students are coming to the province with their spouses, and this will negatively impact their decision to come to Canada.
- This will also limit the integration of spouses into the community and to the labour force.

Importance of International Students for Francophone Immigration:

- The potential absence of international students could potentially have a disproportionate effect on francophone immigration.
- New Brunswick is a key contributor of francophone immigration outside Quebec, with two French-speaking institutions: the Université de Moncton and Collège Communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (CCNB), spread across the province.
- Decreasing the number of international students will impact the overall francophone immigration results of New Brunswick.

Economic Concerns:

- The measures announced by IRCC raise concerns about threatening the New Brunswick economy.
- It is projected that New Brunswick will experience 130,000 job openings in the next 10 years; international student graduates will be essential to maintaining the province's labour market. This could impact the provincial economic growth strategy in responding to labour market demands.
- The public colleges will likely experience a significant impact because the international students that they recruit are generally older and would usually come with their spouses.

Financial implications:

- All post-secondary institutions may experience a significant loss in revenue.
- It is expected that Quebec will have a notable advantage, primarily because international students may be more inclined to select Quebec for their studies, given that they've had an established attestation letter process prior to the IRCC changes.
- The Department incurred additional expenses to design and implement an IT system as well as human resources to administer the new attestation letter process.

Implemented Measures Following the January 22 IRCC Meeting:

- Weekly stakeholder engagement meetings have been held between provincial and federal authorities, departments, ministries, and Designated Learning Institutes (DLIs) since the announcement.
- Main priority focused on determining the allocation of attestation letters to institutions.
- Allocation formula based on factors such as the number of programs with labour market demand and consideration of Francophone institutions due to their minority status.
- The Department signed Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs) with all DLIs to support the new process.
- Implementation of a process and IT system for distributing letters.
- Government developed an efficient application for processing attestation letter requests for students through DLIs.