



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

U15 Canada concerned by cap to graduate study permits

September 18, 2024 (OTTAWA, ON) – U15 Canada has responded with concern to a further tightening to the cap on study permits which now includes a separate cap on previously exempted graduate students. Canada’s immigration consensus is built on a system which attracts top talent and U15 universities will continue to openly welcome international students to supportive and vibrant campuses. While we welcome efforts to carve out allocations for graduate students to protect this crucial talent pipeline, today’s decision to restrict masters and doctoral entries sends the wrong signal. It risks further damaging Canada’s international reputation and harming our ability to attract and retain talented researchers we need to grow the economy and drive innovation.

Canada’s leading research universities have experienced modest growth in international student numbers in comparison to others in the sector. U15 universities offer a high-quality academic experience for international students that helped establish Canada’s world-leading reputation. Given the research focus of our members, U15 universities together account for 60% of all graduate students in Canada. International graduates play a crucial role helping to staff labs and libraries, supporting industry collaborations and facilitating significant research projects here in Canada. The potential consequences from today’s decision risk Canada losing out on top talent and seriously undermining the capacity of the Canadian research ecosystem.

“Canadians are rightly concerned about the unrestricted increases in international students and the impact this was having on housing and healthcare, but reforms must not come at the expense of our ability to welcome top talent who have so much to offer Canada,” said Dr. Chad Gaffield, CEO of U15 Canada. “This government has repeatedly insisted that it is seeking to return to a system that is more-quality oriented. However, by now also capping graduate students and researchers, today’s changes fail to recognize responsible institutions and add additional burdens for the top students who want to contribute to Canada.”

“The uncertainty caused by immigration reforms has created significant disruption. Now the decision to cap graduate students means that Canada may lose out on some of the very best minds from around the world. These are top researchers who want to come to Canada to study and help create innovative new technologies, help develop new health treatments or help solve pressing social challenges. We are concerned that today’s announcement signals again to the best and brightest that they should consider looking elsewhere to further their careers and advance their ideas,” added Dr. Gaffield.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

MCGILL UNIVERSITY

MCMASTER UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

WESTERN UNIVERSITY



About U15 Canada

U15 Canada is an association of fifteen leading research universities across Canada. U15 Canada works to optimize research and innovation policies and programs that advance knowledge, develop highly qualified leaders for all sectors, and mobilize knowledge for the benefit of all Canadians. In this way, U15 Canada seeks to help Canadian universities make a prosperous, sustainable and just future for all.

For further information, please contact:

James Hammond, Director of Public Affairs

james.hammond@u15.ca

613-715-4764