

**SECONDARY TO POST-SECONDARY
EDUCATION PATHWAYS FOR
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA:
SUMMARY REPORT**

British Columbia Ministry of Education

IMPRINT

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On behalf of ICG,

Daniel J. Guhr, Ph.D.
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ABBREVIATIONS

AVED	BC Ministry of Advanced Education
BC	British Columbia
BCCAT	British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer
BCCIE	British Columbia Council for International Education
CDW	BC Post-secondary Central Data Warehouse
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EDUC	BC Ministry of Education
ESL	English as a Second Language
EQA	Education Quality Assurance
FIC	Fraser International College
IB	International Baccalaureate
ICG	Illuminate Consulting Group
K-12	Kindergarten to Grade 12
PSE	Post-secondary Education
PSI	Post-secondary Institutions
RUCBC	Research Universities' Council of British Columbia
SFU	Simon Fraser University
STP	Student Transitions Project
TRU	Thompson Rivers University
UBC	University of British Columbia
UK	United Kingdom
UVic	University of Victoria
USA	United States of America

RELEASE NOTE

Please note that this report constitutes a summary of data and analysis that ICG submitted in July 2014 to the BC Ministry of Education. All data and information contained in this report reflect research concluded in the spring of 2014.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Importance of Pathways for BC

In recent years, pathways have become a key element of student recruiting operations for BC international education providers across all sectors. One underlying reason why pathways in general have risen so much in importance is that the growth objectives of quality education providers have started to outstrip the supply of directly admissible students. More and more prospective students typically require English language training and, increasingly often, academic skills augmentation.

Another driver for the development of pathways is their competitive and economic potential. As for the former, pathways can serve as recruiting and at times retention drivers. Highly integrated, cross-sectoral pathways models can also assist with keeping students in a given jurisdiction which aids overall competitiveness. From an economic viewpoint, pathways can offer additional and potentially multi-year revenue opportunities. By now, the lack of competitive pathways can outright close access to sizeable pools of potential students.

Not surprisingly, pathways have become a “hot topic” in BC – though not an area considered by many stakeholders as mature or well-coordinated to date. Understanding the forms and functions of pathways in great detail thus is critical with regard to setting a proper policy support framework, facilitating timely intelligence (especially student transition data but also best practices), and enabling BC international education providers to compete with competitors across Canada and worldwide.

This report aims to lay out salient issues, report key findings from dozens of stakeholder interviews and a Province-wide pathways survey, and share recommendations on how to enhance pathways in BC.

Key Findings and Recommendations: Infrastructure

Analyzing pathways at a cross-sectoral jurisdictional level invariably starts with collecting and analyzing data. BC has built the most in-depth student data landscape amongst Canadian provinces, yet research evidenced a number of important areas for improvement. For one, data definitions between key data sets (e.g., EDUC, AVED, and CIC) are not fully aligned and in the case of provincial versus national data, notable discrepancies have been found. It is

recommended to create common definitions and measures across BC stakeholders which is considered a multi-year, multi-stakeholder project.

A critical first step will be to standardize data definitions for BC institutions at all levels of study to be able to systematically and comparably report on their international student populations. This will be particularly important at the K-12 level, where clearer central reporting requirements on international students at public school districts and independent schools could provide much-needed intelligence for the Province.

Reporting requirements should also be augmented with an eye towards enabling the STP to provide targeted analysis of international student segments (e.g., by country of origin/education) which exhibit a greater likelihood to transition from secondary to post-secondary education in BC. Concerted efforts by BC education providers to collect additional data in support of the Province's International Education Strategy can also assist providers themselves to improve their international student recruitment and retention efforts.

In addition to the availability of comparable and expanded information, exit surveys of graduating international students conducted by secondary schools could provide valuable insight into the objectives of these students in BC. Similarly, entrant surveys by post-secondary institutions can provide evidence of pathways already in considerable use by students. Based on this knowledge, pathways can be developed to appeal to students with high transition potential, desire, and success rates.

Key Findings and Recommendations: Stakeholder Cooperation

Research for this study indicated that BC institutions have developed many formal and informal pathway approaches in line with their mission and international recruitment goals. Many of these pathways activities have occurred without broader coordination or collective goal-setting.

Initiatives that may result in increased cooperation in pathways include:

- A more active role by the Province in highlighting pathways as a priority and convening appropriate forums to facilitate communication between key institutional parties involved in pathways development.
- Greater communication between sectors, particularly between secondary and post-secondary institutions, to identify common goals (e.g., international student diversity) and approaches to incentivizing pathways development.

- Gaining a better understanding of transitions from private institutions (namely, language schools) to public post-secondary institutions, with the goal of demonstrating successes or opportunities for improvement.

Key Findings and Recommendations: Student Perceptions

Many stakeholders at the secondary level indicated that the most significant factor inhibiting international students from pursuing post-secondary transitions in BC is the brand and reputation of BC colleges and universities. This reflects a focus on international rankings identified among many international student groups, particularly among Asian students. Since these rankings focus on research universities, BC's teaching universities as well as colleges and institutes find themselves at a competitive disadvantage.

Given that university study is a target destination for many international secondary students, marketing to these students and their families can include messaging that highlights BC's high quality post-secondary institutions and educational pathways to the institutions. This is particularly salient for international parents unfamiliar with the concept of colleges as a transfer pathway to university study, as well as for students who may not be academically prepared for direct entry into university.

Individual institutions are working hard to communicate the role of colleges and the transfer landscape in BC. There is an opportunity for the Province and/or BCCIE to develop collaborative marketing approaches and materials that highlight the existing transfer pathway structure in BC.

Additionally, one area that is overlooked in driving international students to BC institutions is alumni relations. Across all sectors, it was noted that alumni are not systematically – and sometimes at all – involved in promoting their alma maters. This can be especially valuable for BC's teaching universities, which are recognized by their international students for their dedication to positive student experiences. Alumni are often best positioned to relate their experience at BC institutions to their local peers (in-market).

Key Findings and Recommendations: Academic and Language Preparedness

It is recognized that a barrier to international student secondary to post-secondary transitions in BC is simply that some students do not meet post-

secondary admission requirements upon graduation. Efforts can be made to better serve motivated international students graduating from Dogwood Diploma programs who would qualify for post-secondary entry with additional academic or language skills augmentation.

College to university transition is well developed in BC through the BC Transfer System, which includes a wide range of formal articulation agreements between BC, colleges, and universities. Articulation agreements also exist between BC language schools, colleges and universities. For segments of students who show promise of success in university with some foundational academic or language preparation, universities can opt to issue joint/conditional admission offers.

The joint admission offer would stipulate that a student will eventually enroll at the university and finish a degree upon successful completion of requisite courses and preparation at a partner institution. This approach builds on the existing transfer framework in BC, but provides international students with more explicit assurance that the pathway leads to a university degree.

Key Findings and Recommendations: Competition for Qualified Students

Stakeholders reported that there are qualified international students graduating from BC secondary schools who are genuinely interested in studying in BC. However, these students are recruited by institutions outside the province. These students reflect a missed opportunity: they likely have an affinity for BC and the capability to succeed in PSE, but are drawn away by a competitor.

BC university recruiters can better collaborate with secondary school counsellors to identify these potential students and strategically target recruitment efforts. At the individual level, this may involve providing application support, scholarship offers, or more dedicated efforts to communicate student outcomes and program/institutional fit.

In some cases, high-performing international students are recruited from BC secondary schools by institutions outside of BC simply on the basis of being able to admit these students more quickly. On a more systematic basis, BC universities may need to evaluate their admissions processes and timelines with respect to competitors in other jurisdictions.

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Overview

In May 2012, the Government of British Columbia launched its International Education Strategy which includes a goal to increase international student enrollment in the Province by 50 per cent over four years (approximately 47,000 additional students), and to increase opportunities for British Columbia students to study abroad.

The Strategy includes three overarching goal statements with a number of associated actions to be undertaken from 2012 to 2015 and beyond. Under the second goal, “Ensuring Quality Learning and Life Experiences for Students”, the Province seeks to improve options for international students by, among other actions, “improving transitions from K-12 education and private language schools into post-secondary education”.

To that end, this project was commissioned by BC’s Ministry of Education to develop a data- and stakeholder-oriented baseline understanding of international student transitions in BC, with a focus on secondary to post-secondary pathways. Based on this research, the project aims to identify opportunities for the Province and its educational institutions to facilitate and improve pathways options for international students.

Objectives

In order to develop a comprehensive overview of international student pathways in BC and highlight the potential for growth, the objectives of this project are threefold:

The first objective is to gather all relevant, existing data on international student pathways in BC and augment said data with information from interviews and surveys with BC stakeholders as applicable. This data will contribute to creating a comprehensive K-12 to post-secondary “student flow” perspective which reaches beyond the Province.

The second objective is to compile information on existing BC pathways for international K-12 students and juxtapose these with best practice research from Australia, New Zealand, and the UK. This will allow defining potential gaps in BC practices.

The final goal of this project is to draw up recommendations for both K-12 providers as well as post-secondary institutions in BC to define or re-define pathways options to address this “lost opportunity” better.

Rationale for Participation

The ability of this project to deliver valid information and practical recommendations was contingent on the participation of stakeholders forming each stage of international student pathways. For the purposes of this project, the first step of these pathways is secondary education in BC, whether at a public school, independent school, or BC Global Education Program Offshore School.

From the secondary level, the project addresses the ability and opportunities for international students to transition to and through BC’s post-secondary education (PSE) sector. This spans a wide range of post-secondary institutions (PSI), both private and public, from language schools and dedicated pathway program providers, to colleges and institutes, to teaching and research universities.

Research for this project sought to capture perspectives from all of the aforementioned institutions engaged in international education. This required extensive efforts to communicate the necessity of stakeholder participation and information provision.

It was emphasized that the goal of the project is to gather data that has not been previously captured, aggregated, or analyzed. The completeness and depth of this data collection is an essential foundation for any subsequent analysis. The Methodology chapter will highlight the limitations of this data gathering approach and the challenges encountered in obtaining relevant information.

Pathways are inherently multi-participant, often complex, and always dynamic constructs. Ultimately, stakeholders in the secondary and post-secondary international education sectors were encouraged to participate in the interest of mutual benefit. The strength of the pathways approach is the ability to reinforce the individual international student recruitment efforts of both secondary schools and PSE providers.

At the secondary level, schools are able to highlight their role in developing qualified and well-prepared students who can easily access a quality PSE in BC. By collaborating with other sectors of education in BC, the Province’s colleges, institutes, and universities open themselves to a prospective pool of capable international students already familiar with the language, culture, and educational standards.

Stakeholders participating in the project offered valuable insights on many of the efforts already underway to maximize the efforts of BC education providers to recruit and support international students. At the same time, it is evident that there are obstacles to effective collaboration and opportunities to foster stronger partnerships. This report will highlight both and provide recommendations to “close the gaps” in BC’s international student pathways landscape.

Methodology

A review of existing data on international students in BC highlighted various deficiencies in the Province’s ability to concretely monitor international student transitions. The most substantial efforts to understand international student pathways come from research undertaken through the BC Student Transitions Project (STP). However, international student transitions out of the Province and pathway choice dynamics among different international student groups are not within the purview of STP.

This project based its methodology for collecting international student transition data on a bottom-up approach: Gathering detailed data from individual education providers on the previous or further education of their international students in order to generate a broad flow model. The following approaches were used to gather data and stakeholder perspectives on international student pathways:

- Data collection from five primary sources: The BC Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED), Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), the BC Ministry of Education (EDUC), the Research Universities’ Council of British Columbia (RUCBC), and the STP.
- Online surveys of BC public school districts, independent schools, BC Global Education Program offshore schools, language schools and pathways program providers, colleges and institutes, and universities.
- Interviews with representatives of BC institutions across each of the sub-sectors identified above.

As described in the project rationale, it became apparent in the initial stages of the project that the capacity to provide detailed analysis of BC international student pathways would be highly dependent on stakeholder cooperation and data availability/provision. Accordingly, the survey-based research methodology is subject to the unavoidable limitation of incomplete coverage.

Recognizing the challenge of promoting complete stakeholder participation, the project endeavored to include a range of representative perspectives and

information from the largest/most active international student recruiters and participants in pathways. The support of EDUC, AVED, and the British Columbia Council for International Education (BCCIE) proved invaluable in motivating institutional participation in the study.

The inception of the project underlined the importance of granular international student data as a lynchpin for understanding and better facilitating international student pathways. Throughout the research process, the data that materialized from individual institutions, where available, did not prove sufficient for building the complex pathway data flow model originally envisioned.

In part, the issue stemmed from education providers not collecting this data in the past – the impetus to do is largely emergent due to the recent significant growth, interest, and investment in international education in BC (and in Canada, more broadly). Moreover, salient data collection that currently takes place is not consistently done between institutions. This represents an open window for the initiative to implement and standardize international student data collection among BC institutions at all levels of study.

DATA ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Overview

This section reviews available data on international student enrollment in BC as a baseline for understanding the market opportunity for international student pathways. Data from AVED, CIC, EDUC, and the STP are reflected on alongside a discussion of their respective data definitions for counting international students. Note that this overview of the relevant BC data landscape is largely limited to reporting on BC's public education institutions.

It is important to recognize that the data sources identified for the purposes of this report differ from those used by the Province to establish an international student enrollment baseline for its International Education Strategy. This is a critical distinction with respect to measuring the progress of the Strategy.

As will be elaborated below, CIC data on long-term international students in BC indicate recent decreases in some sectors, whereas these changes do not appear in institutional data being tracked by the province. Given these discrepancies, it will be important for the province and its education providers to continue to work together to ensure a well-aligned data set.

BC's International Education Strategy includes a baseline of 94,000 international students in 2009/10. The international student headcount figure is updated on an annual basis to reflect growth in the sector. The data sources for the figure include STP, CIC (select categories), EDUC, and Languages Canada (private language schools only).

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

CIC defines a "foreign student" as "A temporary resident who is legally authorized to study in Canada on a temporary basis. With a few exceptions, foreign students must get a study permit if they are taking a course of studies that will last for more than six months."¹

¹ CIC Glossary: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/glossary.asp>. Note that CIC uses the term "foreign student" interchangeably with "international student" based on the information provided in the Glossary.

Accordingly, data published by CIC on foreign students in Canada includes only those students in Canada for six months or more. In this sense, figures provided by CIC undercount the international student population since many students in short-term language courses in Canada do not require study permits.

Note that under the regulations of the revised International Student Program, which came into effect as of 1 June 2014, foreign students are now required to enroll and continue to pursue studies in Canada in order to obtain and hold a study permit. Previous regulations did not require the verification of enrollment of individuals who held study permits in Canada. As such, the number of study permits issued prior to the new regulations (as reported by CIC) may not directly equate the number of international students enrolled at education institutions in Canada at the time.

It is notable that CIC data published in 2012 indicates a decrease in the total number of annual foreign student entries to BC of nearly 3,000 from 2011 to 2012. This decline appears inconsistent with the experience of most BC PSI reporting growing international student enrollment.

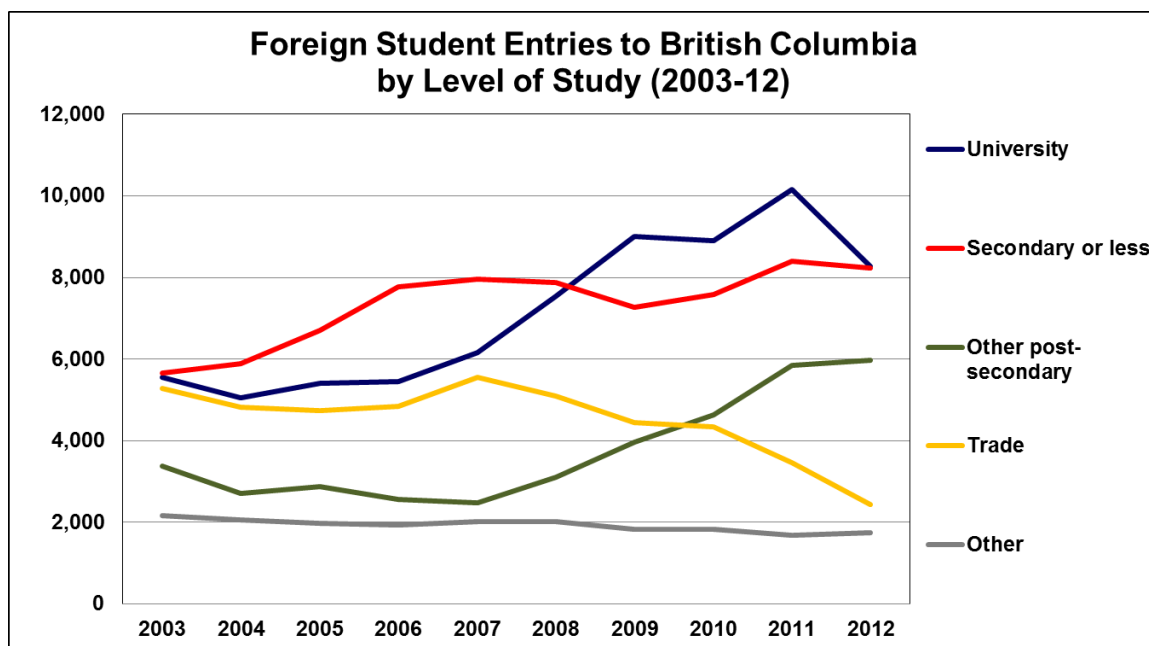
Over the same period, CIC data on foreign students in BC by region/metropolitan area shows a decrease in foreign student entries to Vancouver of nearly 10,000, coupled with an increase of approximately 7,000 students in the undefined “Other British Columbia” category.

Contact with CIC regarding BC foreign student data did not result in a concrete explanation of the decrease in foreign student entries to BC. However, preliminary CIC data for 2013 indicate that 23,903 foreign students entered BC in the first three quarters of the year. This figure appears consistent with CIC data that show 22,912 foreign students entered BC in the first three quarters of 2012 – a year-over-year increase of 4.3 percent.

The following graph displays the number of foreign students entering BC from 2003 to 2012 by level of study (per CIC definitions). The described decrease in entries from 2011 to 2012 is particularly pronounced at the university level (18.6 percent fewer entries). The data indicate the number of foreign student entries to BC universities was almost identical to entries at the K-12 level, a change from the higher level over the previous three years.

The K-12 and other post-secondary (i.e., college) sectors showed stagnation in growth from 2011 to 2012 after several continuous years of increasing entries. Meanwhile, foreign student entries into the trade sector from 2011 to 2012 followed the downward trend beginning in 2007.

Foreign Student Entries to British Columbia by Level of Study (2003-12)

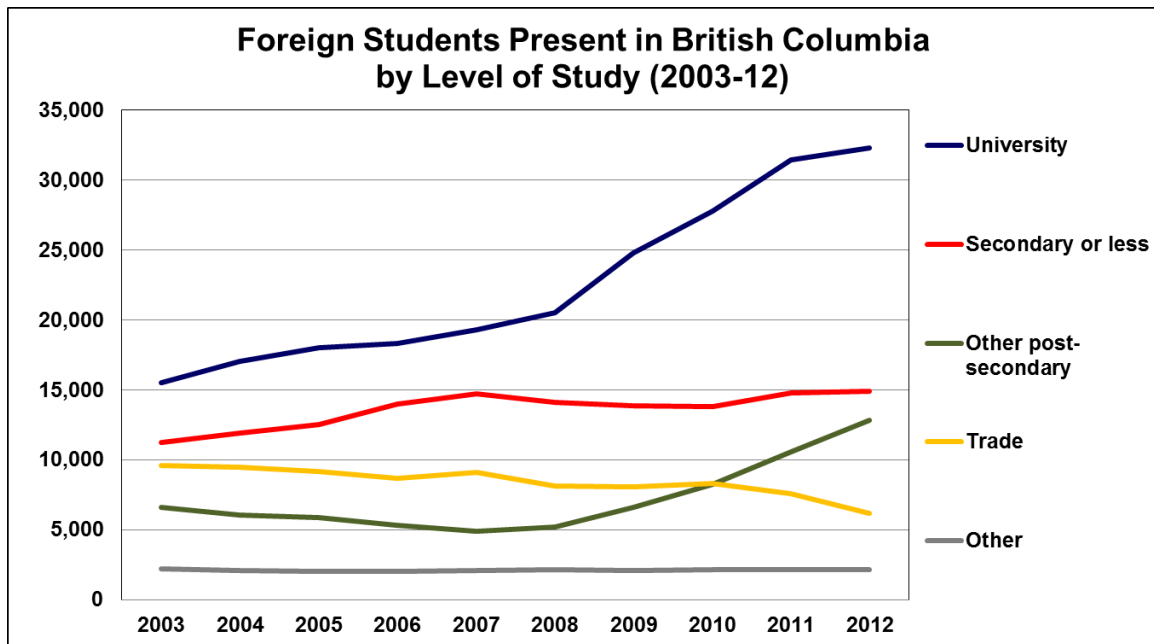


Source: CIC.

The graph overleaf displays the number of foreign students present in BC by level of study from 2003 to 2012. Despite similar intake levels in 2012, BC hosted more than twice as many foreign students at the university level than at the K-12 level. This difference is the product of sharp growth in the number of foreign university students in BC, which grew by 57.4 percent between 2008 and 2012 alone according to CIC data. Only the “Other post-secondary” sector (i.e., non-university/trade studies in colleges, private training, and language institutions) experienced stronger growth during the same period (an increase of 146.1 percent).

Given that the number of students present is a trailing indicator of new student entries in previous years, a decline in foreign students entering in BC PSI may signal that the number of students present will slightly decrease in future years. The gap between a decrease in the two indicators will also be softened by retention of students already present in BC – if these students are staying in the Province longer, the total enrollment number can be less affected by decreasing intake.

Foreign Students Present in British Columbia by Level of Study (2003-12)



Source: CIC.

Overall, CIC data on long-term international students in BC exhibit the following trends:

- Strong overall growth in international student enrollment in BC over the last ten years.
- A levelling off at the K-12 level due to significant declines from key source countries such as South Korea and Japan (owing largely to demographics).
- A decline in foreign student entries to BC PSI from 2011 to 2012.

It is important to reiterate that the figures used by the Province in tracking international student enrollment for its International Education Strategy aim to supplement CIC data with segments not adequately covered (e.g., short-term language students). The observation that the downturn indicated by CIC data does not align with institutional data highlights the need for greater certainty through improved data collection.

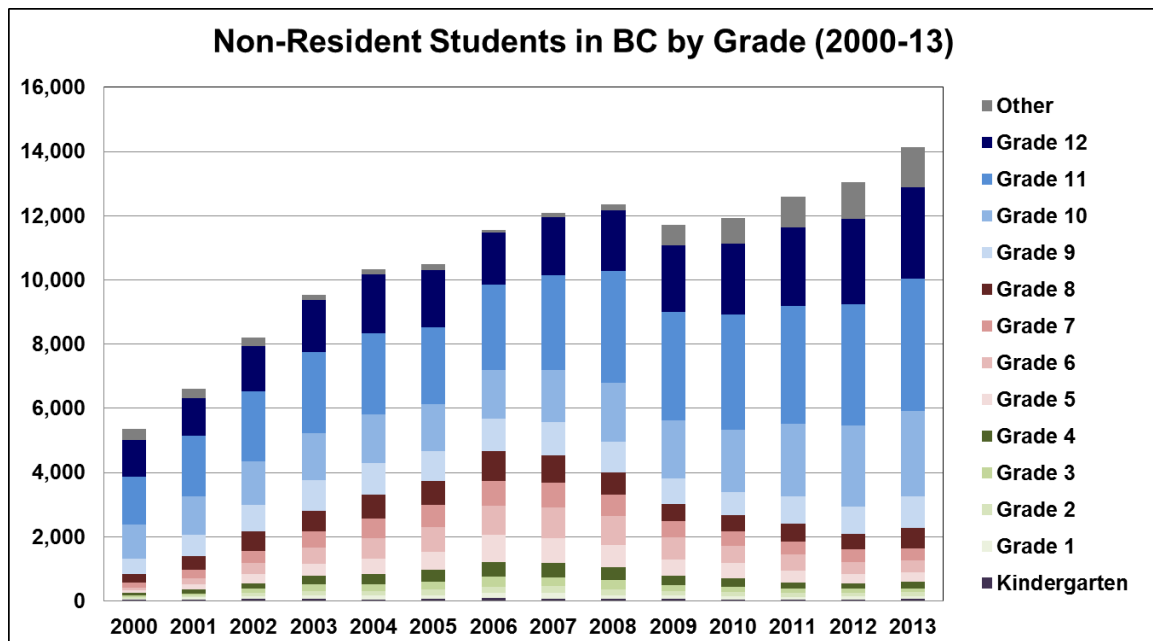
BC Ministry of Education

The BC Ministry of Education is responsible for reporting on student enrollment data collected and submitted by BC school boards and independent schools. In its reporting, the Ministry does not currently identify international students in the K-12 BC system. The closest measure of international student numbers in Ministry student statistics is the count of “Non-Residents”.

The definition of “Non-Resident” is context specific: Students are categorized based on whether they and their parents are deemed “ordinarily resident in British Columbia”. For this purpose, residency considers factors such as continuity of stay in the Province and purpose of stay/settlement. In practice, Non-Resident students generally consist of international students and those from other Canadian provinces/territories.

On a grade-by-grade basis, as displayed below, the bulk of Non-Resident students in BC enroll at the secondary level. In 2013-14, students in Grades 10 through 12 accounted for 68.1 percent of all Non-Resident students in BC. This points to high numbers of international/out-of-province students entering BC schools starting in Grade 10 with the objective of obtaining a Dogwood Diploma and potentially pursuing post-secondary study in BC.

Non-Resident Students in BC by Grade (2000-13)



Notes: Kindergarten includes full-day and half-day students. Other includes elementary ungraded students, secondary ungraded students, and graduated adults.

Source: EDUC.

More granular data on international students at the K-12 level will be required to better understand their secondary to post-secondary transitions within BC. In the immediate term, the Ministry's data framework should specify the reporting of specific international student numbers. This necessitates specific definitions for identifying international students within BC's K-12 system, such as visa status (study permit holders) and fee-paying or exchange student status.

The Ministry would also benefit from the capability to report on international students at the K-12 level by country of origin. By integrating this information into a data flow model, for example under the STP, it can be possible to identify markets from where students enter BC with a greater propensity to transition from secondary to post-secondary education.

The Ministry anticipates having the ability to collect more granular K-12 data on international students through a new student information system that is currently being implemented.

BC Ministry of Advanced Education

Public data on international student enrollment in BC at the post-secondary level are divided over a number of sources. The primary repository of this data is the BC Ministry of Advanced Education's Post-secondary Central Data Warehouse (CDW).

According to AVED, "The Post-secondary Central Data Warehouse contains standardized data relating to student demographics, programs, credentials, courses, session registration and campuses for 21 public PSI in B.C., including colleges, institutes and teaching-intensive universities. The data are updated in May and October"². The CDW does not contain data on Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, the University of Northern British Columbia, and the University of Victoria.

For the purpose of reporting on student headcounts, the CDW defines international students as "those students who pay an international fee for at least

² Post-secondary Central Data Warehouse: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/datawarehouse/welcome.htm.

one course in the period [e.g., academic year or fiscal year]³. The CDW Data Definitions and Standards also specify the collection of student citizenship data, but this information is not summarized in the CDW Standard Reports⁴.

Research Universities' Council of British Columbia (RUCBC)

As noted above, the CDW does not reflect data from BC's public research-intensive universities: Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, the University of Northern British Columbia, and the University of Victoria. Within BC, these four universities (plus Royal Roads University and Thompson Rivers University) are represented by the Research Universities' Council of British Columbia (RUCBC).

RUCBC is funded by its member universities and acts as a unified voice on public policy issues and coordination with the Province. Data on RUCBC members is separately collected in the British Columbia Higher Education Accountability Dataset (BC HEADset). This dataset was created to “demonstrate accountability on the part of British Columbia's higher education institutions, and contains data on key measures of public interest”⁵.

The BC HEADset includes data on the number of international students registered at RUCBC member universities. This dataset currently encompasses data from 1997 to 2013 and divides international student numbers by country for each university. The dataset is updated on 1 December every year based on data as of the Fall term (1 November for most universities).

For the purposes of this dataset, international students are defined as “students [who] are not Canadian citizens, permanent residents, landed immigrants, or refugees (who are all considered domestic), and typically they will have obtained a visa of some kind (student visa, work permit, diplomatic visa, or minister's permit) which allows them to pursue their higher education in Canada”.

One notable discrepancy between the BC HEADset and CDW data is the inclusion of online students in BC HEADset data. As a result, BC HEADset data

³ Post-Secondary Central Data Warehouse Standard Reports, October 2013 Data Submission: Headcount Totals: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/datawarehouse/documents/headcount.pdf.

⁴ Data Definitions and Standards: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/datawarehouse/documents/ddef_student_standards.pdf.

⁵ British Columbia Higher Education Accountability Dataset: www.bcheadset.ca.

may not be directly suitable for comparison to CDW data with respect to the public BC universities not represented in the CDW.

Student Transitions Project

The BC Student Transitions Project was established in 2003 under a collaborative data-sharing agreement between EDUC, AVED, BC public PSI and BCCAT. The objective of the STP is to gather data and report on student transitions to PSE, transitions between PSI, and retention/completion rates. This is accomplished by linking secondary and post-secondary student records using the associated BC Personal Education Number (PEN).

Data collected by the STP come from the EDUC repository, the Post-secondary Central Data Warehouse (CDW), and data provided directly by public PSI (particularly the public research universities). These data are therefore subject to the previously described limitations of each dataset.

For example, the STP is unable to report directly on the proportion of international students at the secondary level who transition to PSE in BC. This is because EDUC does not collect specific data on international student enrollment, as reported previously. Instead, the STP uses a proxy measure for international students at the secondary level: Non-Residents of BC whose primary language spoken at home is not English⁶.

Nevertheless, the STP is able to provide reports in detail on the number of international students enrolled at BC public PSI who previously studied in BC. In its most recently published international student analysis, the STP indicated that 11 percent of all 2009-10 international post-secondary registrants graduated from Grade 12 in the BC K-12 system⁷.

Note that within the STP data collection, two different definitions of international student are used. Student enrollment data for public colleges, institutes, and teaching-intensive universities from the CDW use the aforementioned 'international fee-paying' definition of international students. Alternatively, non-

⁶ The STP recognizes the potential inaccuracies resulting from the use of this estimate, i.e., categorizing international students who primarily speak English at home as domestic students, and categorizing students from other provinces/territories who speak other languages at home (e.g., French) as international students.

⁷ Student Transitions Project, International Students in BC's Education Systems: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/documents/stp_international_highlights_2011-11-01.pdf.

CDW institutions (i.e., research universities) report international students to the STP based on visa status – a definition more consistent with CIC data.

Summary Perspectives

The development of the STP demonstrates the Province of British Columbia's interest in integrated data management and analysis for strategic policy-making. If international student transitions are to be a priority area under the BC International Education Strategy, the Province would benefit from updating its data collection and reporting approach to ensure relevant evidence is available.

A critical first step will be to standardize data definitions for BC institutions at all levels of study to be able to systematically and comparably report on their international student populations. This is particularly salient for EDUC, which currently only collects top-level "Non-Resident" student data from public school districts and independent schools.

Augmented reporting requirements should also specify the inclusion of country of citizenship and/or previous residence in student records for integration into the STP enrollment file. Combined with standard data definitions, this will enable the STP to provide targeted analysis of international student segments exhibiting a greater likelihood to transition from secondary to post-secondary education in BC.

While the above recommendations focus on enhancing the ability of the STP to track international student transitions within BC, information on movement out of the Province remains scarce. Data collection to this extent will require a concerted effort on the part of individual schools and institutions to survey or maintain records on the outcomes of their students/graduates.

The International Education Pathways Surveys discussed in the following chapter represent an attempt to establish a baseline understanding of the extent of institutional data collection on these international student transitions. The survey's findings offer an initial insight into the current state of transition information gathered by stakeholders.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PATHWAYS SURVEYS

Overview

Online surveys were used to collect institutional data and perspectives on international student pathways. These surveys were designed as a means of gathering detailed, structured quantitative data on international student transitions to/from BC institutions as well as institutional views on pathway opportunities, challenges, and supports necessary.

The multiple survey approach allowed for the capture of information on salient dynamics at different stages of international student pathways in BC. Individual surveys targeted each of the following sub-sectors:

- Public School Districts (22 respondents)
- Independent Schools (42 respondents)
- BC Global Education Program Offshore Schools (9 respondents)
- Language Schools and Pathways Program Providers (10 respondents)
- Colleges and Institutes (22 respondents)
- Universities (13 respondents)

Of particular note is the finding that many survey participants either did not collect or were unable to provide the granular international student transition data requested in the survey. This significantly hinders the ability to build the desired comprehensive international student flow model. However, it also points to the opportunity for BC to augment its international student recruitment and retention efforts with initiatives to develop a more standardized and integrated data collection framework.

It is also critical to note that any of the qualitative perspectives shared through the survey were those of representatives of BC education institutions. In order to obtain more direct views on international student experiences with secondary to post-secondary transitions in BC, conducting systematic student exit surveys (at the secondary level) and/or entrant surveys (at the post-secondary level) would be advisable.

International Student Transition Data

Each of the international education pathways surveys included data fields requesting information on student transitions to/from responding institutions by transition type (i.e., previous study or destination) and student country of origin. As noted throughout the survey analysis, participating BC education institutions did not uniformly provide data requested in the surveys. In addition, given participation gaps in each sub-sector, any data collection is incomplete as a reflection of the whole BC landscape. It is therefore not possible to conclusively comment on the scale of international student transitions in BC based on data provided in the surveys.

Nevertheless, data collected in the surveys were aggregated and select data are summarized in the following tables. These tables reflect student enrollments and transitions in 2012-13 as reported by responding institutions. The tables present student counts in the categories specified as well as the number of respondents that provided said data (i.e., did not leave data fields blank). An Excel file comprising all data collected is separately provided to EDUC.

Survey Results: Total International Student Enrollment by Sub-Sector (2012-13)

Sub-Sector	International Students	Institutions Represented
Public School District	8,020	20
Independent School	1,229	41
Offshore School	1,697	9
Language School/Pathway	9,498	9
Private College	2,758	8
Public College	8,022	10
Private University	922	4
Public University	17,009	8
Total	49,155	109

Notes: All offshore school enrollments are included as international enrollments. University enrollments include only undergraduate students.
Source: International Education Pathways Surveys.

Survey Results: Grade 12 International Student Enrollment by K-12 Sub-Sector (2012-13)

Sub-Sector	International Students	Institutions Represented
Public School District	1,769	22
Independent School	304	41
Offshore School	354	9
Total	2,427	72

Notes: All offshore school enrollments are included as international enrollments.
Source: International Education Pathways Surveys.

Survey Results: New International Student Enrollment by Post-Secondary Sub-Sector (2012-13)

Sub-Sector	International Students	Institutions Represented
Private College	746	7
Public College	2,915	10
Private University	241	3
Public University	5,445	8
Total	9,347	28

Notes: University enrollments include only undergraduate students. New students refer to first-time students having entered each institution in the 2012-13 academic year.
Source: International Education Pathways Surveys.

Survey Results: International Student Transitions to BC Post-Secondary Institutions by Previous Sub-Sector in BC (2012-13)

Previous Sub-Sector	International Students	Institutions Represented
Public School District	238	12
Independent School	68	10
Offshore School	322	9
Language School/Pathway	886	5
Total	1,514	36

Notes: Data are the number of 2012-13 students/graduates transitioning to post-secondary institutions in BC as reported by respondents in each sub-sector. Source: International Education Pathways Surveys.

International Student Transitions to BC Universities by Previous Sub-Sector in BC (2012-13)

Previous Sub-Sector	International Students	Institutions Represented
Public School District	137	10
Independent School	43	10
Offshore School	226	9
Private College	-	-
Public College	347	4
Total	753	33

Notes: Data are the number of 2012-13 students/graduates transitioning to universities in BC as reported by respondents in each sub-sector.

Source: International Education Pathways Surveys.

International Student Transitions from BC K-12 Sub-Sectors by Post-Secondary Institution Destination (2012-13)

Sub-Sector	International Students	Institutions Represented
Transition to Alberta PSI	322	18
Transition to Manitoba PSI	23	15
Transition to New Brunswick PSI	1	12
Transition to Newfoundland PSI	1	12
Transition to Nova Scotia PSI	48	13
Transition to Ontario PSI	583	21
Transition to Prince Edward Island PSI	1	12
Transition to Quebec PSI	35	16
Transition to Saskatchewan PSI	40	13
Transition to Territories PSI	0	12
Transition to PSI outside of Canada	638	28
Total	1,692	-

Notes: All offshore school enrollments are included as international enrollments. Data are the number of 2012-13 students/graduates transitioning to post-secondary institutions in each destination as reported by respondents in K-12 sub-sectors. Source: International Education Pathways Surveys.

New International Students from BC Secondary Schools by Sub-Sector (2012-13)

Sub-Sector	International Students	Institutions Represented
Language School/Pathway Provider	50	1
Private College	9	2
Public College	327	4
Private University	8	2
Public University	470	5
Total	864	14

Notes: University enrollments include only undergraduate students. Data are the number of first-time students having entered each sub-sector from a BC secondary school (public and independent) in the 2012-13 academic year.

Source: International Education Pathways Surveys.

New International Students from BC Global Education Program Offshore Schools by Sub-Sector (2012-13)

Sub-Sector	International Students	Institutions Represented
Language School/Pathway Provider	20	1
Private College	0	2
Public College	84	4
Private University	3	1
Public University	85	4
Total	192	12

Notes: University enrollments include only undergraduate students. Data are the number of first-time students having entered each sub-sector from a BC Global Education Program Offshore School in the 2012-13 academic year.

Source: International Education Pathways Surveys.

**New International Students from BC Colleges by Sub-Sector
(2012-13)**

Sub-Sector	International Students	Institutions Represented
Private College	12	1
Public College	55	3
Private University	10	2
Public University	644	4
Total	721	10

Notes: University enrollments include only undergraduate students. Data are the number of first-time students having entered each sub-sector from a BC college in the 2012-13 academic year.

Source: International Education Pathways Surveys.

Summary Perspectives

Overall, the International Education Pathways Surveys evidenced varying levels and types of experience with international student transitions – these dissimilarities presented themselves both between sub-sectors and within individual sub-sectors.

Survey responses generally supported the need for more systematic data collection on international student transitions into, within, and out of BC. Respondents expressed interest in more Province-wide benchmarking efforts, including an emphasis on student exit surveys as a means of capturing the outcomes of their international students.

Responses also suggested the need to more comprehensively understand differing levels of awareness of interest in pathways opportunities among international student segments. It is apparent that a transition from secondary to post-secondary education is not the interest of all international students entering BC. However, there is an opportunity to better identify, inform, and support the students who are seeking to follow pathways through study within the Province.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PATHWAYS PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Challenges to International Student Pathways in British Columbia

Survey responses and interviews with stakeholders representing secondary schools/districts and post-secondary institutions across BC offered valuable insights about the challenges of developing and sustaining international student pathways. The following themes recurred frequently as notable obstacles to collaboration on international student transitions from secondary to post-secondary education:

- Regional recruitment dynamics
- Diversity of recruitment pool
- Ability to demonstrate student outcomes/success
- Competition from other provinces
- Brand and reputation (ranking) issues
- Public-private institutional cooperation

These challenges are described further in this section. Note that the discussion of challenges focuses on those that inhibit true potential international student transitions, especially from secondary to post-secondary education.

There are many international students whose sole motivation is to obtain a foreign secondary leaving qualification or international experience and then return to their home country for post-secondary education. This is particularly true of students from countries where PSE is provided at no cost or with high subsidies, such as in Germany. In these instances, extended efforts to promote or facilitate transitions within BC are likely to prove fruitless.

Regional Recruitment Dynamics

Given the geographic expanse and population distribution of BC, the Province's schools and PSI can serve vastly different communities. Schools and institutions in the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island serve larger populations than those in Northern and remote communities. Accordingly, there are significant differences in the capacities of BC schools/institutions, as well as in the international familiarity with the Province's many regions.

Several BC stakeholders pointed to the impact of these regional dynamics on their ability to foster international student transitions. In particular, schools

and institution's in Vancouver recognized the effect of the city's international reputation on attracting international students initially studying in other parts of the Province. International students may enter secondary schools or colleges in smaller BC communities with the goal of pursuing post-secondary/university education in Vancouver/the Lower Mainland.

Conversely, for PSI in smaller or more remote locales, it is challenging to recruit international students out of the Lower Mainland. Onshore recruitment efforts for these institutions are often limited to the international students studying in local school districts/independent schools/colleges.

Several of these institutions described their success at recruiting international students already studying locally who developed an affinity for the area based on their experience. However, the local populations of international students are often small in themselves, resulting in a narrow overall recruitment pool for transition opportunities.

Diversity of Recruitment Pool

Diversification of the international student population is an increasingly important objective for BC schools and PSI. According to CIC data, nearly 60 percent of international students at the K-12 level in BC in 2012 came from China and South Korea. At the university level, China alone accounted for more than two-fifths of international students, with an almost as high proportion at the "other post-secondary" level.

Interviewees (and survey responses) from many BC secondary schools/districts noted a heightened interest among Chinese students in pursuing post-secondary (specifically university) education in the Province. Representatives of PSI consistently commented on the influx of students from China and other Southeast Asian countries experienced in recent years. This influx largely stemmed from direct entries due to their own in-market recruitment efforts rather than being driven by students already in BC.

As such, BC PSI noted the obstacle that the existing international student pool within the province does not provide opportunities for diversification. The onshore market reflects the same market segment already targeted and developed by BC PSI in their international recruiting efforts.

These institutions therefore see inadequate additional value in enhancing their BC pathways efforts. Accordingly, secondary schools find that the PSI does not actively engage in activities to recruit their international students

(e.g., dedicated recruiter visits, international-specific campus tours, etc.) to the extent that these activities could be undertaken.

Ability to Demonstrate Student Outcomes/Success

International students with previous BC education experience are often thought to be more likely to succeed in BC PSI than those entering directly from abroad. In principle, those having already studied in BC should be more academically and culturally prepared for the expectations of post-secondary study in the Province. BC PSI operating with competitive admissions processes noted that this remains to be categorically demonstrated in practice.

In particular, interviews suggested that not all BC PSI accept *prima facie* that international students from BC secondary schools will be a better fit than those students they recruit internationally. The objective of these institutions is ultimately to recruit the most qualified international students from wherever they may be, whether in BC, at BC offshore schools, or from other schools abroad.

Thus, selective BC PSI seek evidence from BC schools of the value of recruiting international students onshore. This presents a challenge for those schools that do not possess the capacity/resources to comprehensively track the outcomes of their international students in order to demonstrate a high-potential recruiting opportunity to BC PSI.

As highlighted in the survey, some schools are able to monitor the progression of their international students extensively with dedicated staff and tools. These schools are then able to better position their international students for dedicated recruitment efforts by BC PSI.

Competition from Other Provinces

At the K-12 level, stakeholders frequently observed that some of their highest performing students do not continue to PSE in BC because they are recruited by institutions in other provinces. Representatives of schools/districts both onshore and offshore observed that several universities from other parts of Canada recruit their students more actively and provide more attractive offers than BC institutions. BC PSI also recognized increasing efforts by Canadian universities to draw international students from the Province.

Universities frequently singled out as popular recruiters included: the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, McGill University, the University of Regina, the University of Toronto, and the University of Waterloo. Several competitive elements of these universities were identified as compelling to BC international students, including:

- The availability of a wide range of academic programs with capacity not available in BC;
- Cost – both lower international student tuition fees and cheaper cost of living relative to parts of BC;
- International university rankings (see discussion on “Brand and Reputation (Ranking) Issues” below);
- The presence of recruiters sent specifically to appeal to and inform international students;
- Higher ease of application processes (e.g., the ability to apply to multiple Ontario universities simultaneously through the Ontario Universities’ Application Centre);
- More flexible or lenient admissions requirements compared to BC universities;
- Issuance of earlier offers of admission; and
- Discounting through generous scholarships or availability of student housing.

The challenge stands for BC universities to better assess whether they can more effectively compete to retain international students being enticed to other Canadian provinces. For individual universities, these students may represent either a missed opportunity or a segment distinct from their target recruitment pool (with respect to academic capability, ability to pay, program choice, or other decision-making factors).

Brand and Reputation (Ranking) Issues

The objective of many international students (and their families), particularly in Southeast Asian markets, is to pursue a degree at a university that performs highly in international university rankings. The Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU, also known as the Shanghai Ranking), the QS World University Rankings, and the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings are often looked to as guides on the reputation or desirability of a given university by international students.

Only three BC universities appear in the aforementioned international rankings as of 2013-14. These three universities are sought-after destinations for most high-performing international students in BC who wish

to remain in the province. Lack of awareness of the quality and value proposition of BC PSI other than the ranked universities was flagged as a powerful inhibitor to international student transitions.

BC stakeholders often expressed that students who do not qualify for admission to the ranked universities are more likely to seek admission to ranked universities outside of BC than to pursue studies at other BC universities where they may qualify for entry. Similarly, BC colleges and institutes are not initially seen as a study option for those international students set on pursuing university-level study.

Given the extensive coverage of the BC Transfer System, colleges and institutes are a readily accessible pathway for international students to transition from secondary education through to study at a BC university.

This pathway option can be attractive for those students who may be just shy of meeting university direct-entry admission requirements. However, in markets where the college transfer option is not well communicated or understood, students and their families reportedly disregard the opportunity even though it leads to a university degree.

Public-Private Institutional Cooperation

The BC Transfer System facilitates transitions between the Province's public colleges, institutes, and universities, and select private institutions evaluated through a provincial degree quality assessment process⁸.

With this transfer infrastructure in place, BC PSI do not generally need to turn to additional formal agreements to support international student transitions within the post-secondary sector. Some institutions maintain partnerships that are promoted to prospective students, but these tend to also operate on the basis of the Transfer System.

However, the BC Transfer System does not include many of the Province's private institutions, among these the private language training providers. Stakeholders indicated that many international students enrolled at these institutions aim to augment their English language or other academic skills in order to pursue further study at a public BC institution. Private institutions

⁸ BC Transfer System: <http://bccat.ca/system/psec/>.

therefore independently seek to develop articulation agreements with public institutions in order to support their students' transitions.

BC public institutions diverge considerably with respect to their perception of private institutions outside of the BC Transfer System. Many public universities question the quality of instruction at private institutions and hold them at arm's length. Other public institutions have been more willing to partner with private institutions – language training providers in particular – to develop agreements to accept international students who successfully complete certain programs.

Without an evidence-based understanding of the performance of international students going through BC private institutions, public institutions will continue to encounter mixed experiences in their engagement. For some public institutions, this may be a potent missed opportunity.

International Student Pathways Practices in British Columbia

This section offers examples of various approaches to facilitating international student transitions within BC. Since Dogwood Diploma program graduates qualify for entry to BC PSI subject to meeting program admission requirements, additional formal agreements are not often implemented for international student secondary to post-secondary transitions. Similarly, the BC Transfer Guide largely negates the need for additional agreements to facilitate international student transitions.

Instead, many of the approaches highlighted in this section focus on examples of student support, relationship building, and cooperation within BC to more effectively recruit students interested in pathway routes or to better promote these pathways.

Case studies are also provided of programs designed specifically to prepare international students for transition into BC PSI. These include internally developed pathways and pathways established in partnership with private providers.

Note that the examples provided herein are not intended to be an exhaustive picture of all pathway practices, programs, and partnerships active within BC. Instead, they represent a sample of approaches, some of which may be commonly employed among institutions other than those named, and others that are specific to an institution.

Examples of specific pathway approaches used by BC institutions are highlighted with the permission of said institutions. These institutions were afforded the opportunity to verify the accuracy of information presented in this report. However, this verification was limited to factual details and did not allow for institutions to edit the language used.

Bodwell High School: Fostering Post-Secondary Opportunities for International Students

Introduction

Bodwell High School is a private BC secondary school (Grades 8 to 12) offering the Dogwood Diploma and university preparation to a global pool of students. Bodwell caters particularly to international students, with 85 to 90 percent of its student body holding a study permit.

University and Career Guidance services are at the core of Bodwell's offering to its international students. The school provides support for post-secondary decision-making through individual student guidance, application workshops, relationships with post-secondary institution representatives and presentations at the school, and the organization of campus tours. Bodwell identifies the post-secondary placement of its graduates as an important criteria for measuring its success.

Key Figures

More than one-third of Bodwell's international graduates (53 out of 139) went on to pursue PSE in BC in 2013. Many of Bodwell's other graduates remained in Canada for post-secondary opportunities (44 out of 139). Among the Bodwell graduates continuing to study in BC, 25 transitioned to BC universities, 21 to pathways programs (ESL, EAP, foundation, etc.), and seven to BC colleges.

Pathway Drivers and Opportunities

Bodwell's main objective is to help graduating students identify and access post-secondary opportunities that best fit their academic and career goals. Bodwell thus works towards cooperating with post-secondary institutions not only in BC, but also across Canada and outside of the country, to allow students a range of options. Rather than pursue formal agreements, Bodwell focuses on building a relationship base with post-secondary institutions to allow these institutions to familiarize themselves with the school's international students.

Following these relationships, BC and other Canadian universities and colleges frequently visit Bodwell to meet with and recruit international students. Students with high admission averages receive competitive offers from institutions across Canada. The school aims to work with destination universities to learn more about the outcomes of their students and be able to demonstrate first-year success.

School District No. 43 (Coquitlam): Developing Markets with Agent Relationships

Introduction

School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) is BC's third largest school district and host to one of the largest international student populations at the K-12 level. The district's International Education Program began in 1999 and currently enrolls 1,100 international students across its schools. In addition, Coquitlam's short-term summer and winter ESL and cultural programs draw more than 800 international students per year.

Key Figures

In 2012-13, Coquitlam's eight secondary schools collectively enrolled 290 international students at the Grade 12 level. While 90 of the international students stayed on for an additional semester, 200 graduated and transitioned to PSE in 2013. Three-quarters of these students (150 in total) went on to pursue PSE within BC: 100 at universities and 50 at colleges.

Pathway Drivers and Opportunities

The Coquitlam School District was one of the first in BC to act on the pathways opportunity for students from mature markets such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. As competition for these students to enter BC universities increased, the school district offered the possibility for these students to better prepare themselves by beginning to study in BC at the secondary level.

The district's International Education Program also recognizes the role of agents in the experience of young international students. Many of these students receive significant guidance from their agents, more so than career counsellors in their schools. The Coquitlam School District works closely with some agents and acknowledges that they may define a pathway in BC with its schools as a starting point. Agents have proven especially important for the district's efforts to enter new markets, such as Brazil.

Douglas College: Partnerships with Language Training Providers

Introduction

Over the last five years, Douglas College experienced increases in international student enrollment of approximately 20 percent each year. One of the major initiatives contributing to this growth was the introduction of its ESL partnerships pathway program six years ago.

Douglas partners with some of BC's largest private language training providers, including Education First, ELS Language Centers, ILAC, ILSC, Inlingua, and Kaplan PLI. These partnerships allow international students who meet entrance requirements to enter Douglas College without an entrance exam or additional language testing.

According to the College, these partnerships not only supported increasing international student enrollment, but also fostered diversity. Through this pathway, some of Douglas' newer markets grew to become leading source countries, including Russia, Ukraine, and Venezuela.

Key Figures

In 2012-13, 106 of the 760 new international students entering Douglas (13.9 percent) transitioned from ESL, EAP, and/or foundational language programs. Many of these students came from the College's ESL partnership institutions.

Pathway Drivers and Opportunities

In addition to working with English language program providers, Douglas also cooperates with local school districts to transition international students. For example, the College signed an agreement with School District 43 Coquitlam and offers scholarships to its international students. However, Douglas recognizes that these students prioritize direct university entry compared to students from language programs.

Under the College's Strategic Plan, "Pathways to Success 2010-2014", Douglas prioritized facilitating seamless university transfer opportunities for all of its students. For example, all of Douglas' programs articulate to degrees at Simon Fraser University.

The College is focused on operating its university transfer programs at a high standard. This includes ensuring that international students entering from pathway partner institutions continue to meet academic requirements for both Douglas' programs and university pathway opportunities.

Langara College: Positioning as a University Transfer Institution

Introduction

With more than 1,200 international students enrolled in 2012-13, Langara College is one of BC's largest college-level international student recruiters. Applications to Langara more than doubled in recent years, especially from students graduating from BC offshore schools.

Within BC, Langara is a leader in transferring students to universities. Compared to other BC colleges it accounts for the largest number of students transferring to UBC and the second largest number to SFU. Its University Quality Alliance (UQA) is a cornerstone of its international recruitment efforts.

The UQA partnership enables Langara students to transfer to select Canadian universities after one to two years of study. UQA partners include Saint Mary's University, UBC, the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Victoria, York University, and SFU.

Key Figures

In 2012-13, 560 international students entered Langara for the first time. Of these students, 100 (17.9 percent) came from BC secondary schools and 45 (8.0 percent) came from BC offshore schools. Nearly 130 international students transitioned from Langara to BC universities in 2012-13 academic.

Pathway Drivers and Opportunities

Langara operates with an open enrollment model for admitting Dogwood Diploma holders. As such, international graduates of BC secondary schools and offshore schools can access the same university transfer pathway opportunities as domestic students by default.

One of Langara's main goals has been to demonstrate and communicate its role as a university studies institution to prospective international students and their families. This includes highlighting the impact of Langara's smaller classes and personalized services on preparing students for university success. The College also emphasizes examples of student outcomes to students and their families, including outreach from successful transfer alumni.

The College's focus is also directed at understanding the learning environment needs of international students from BC high schools/offshore schools compared to domestic students. This includes looking to work with BC universities to better recognize and respond to any challenges faced by Langara's transfer students.

Royal Roads University: New Pathway for Undergraduate Recruitment

Introduction

Royal Roads University primarily delivers applied, professional degree programs through a blended learning model. The Royal Roads model incorporates online learning with short on-campus residency periods. In particular, the University's undergraduate completion programs are targeted at offering the final years of a bachelor's degree to students who have already completed two years of post-secondary study.

In 2011, the University launched a partnership with Study Group, an international private education provider, to develop an on-campus International Study Centre. The International Study Centre (ISC) provides academic and language preparation programs, as well as offering the first two years of select Royal Roads undergraduate program. Through the ISC, international students are able to complete a full undergraduate degree program at Royal Roads.

Key Figures

In 2012-13, approximately 150 international students entered Royal Roads' first-year undergraduate programs. About 100 of these students came from BC offshore schools in China.

Pathway Drivers and Opportunities

Upon its launch, a key student segment for the ISC was graduates from BC offshore schools. In particular, Royal Roads credits its relationships with the Maple Leaf Education Systems schools and Concord College of Sino-Canada schools as kickstarters for its first-year undergraduate program. Royal Roads' efforts to facilitate transitions from these schools include the organization of student campus visits in Victoria and the provision of scholarships for select graduates.

With experience in providing first-year undergraduate programs, the University is turning its recruitment efforts to also attract international students from secondary schools in BC. Activities include relationship building with secondary school counsellors, participation in BC university recruitment fairs (focusing specifically on international students), and providing students with support during the application process.

Camosun College and the University of Victoria: Local Collaboration in International Student Recruitment

Introduction

The University of Victoria (UVic) and Camosun College are the largest public post-secondary institutions on Vancouver Island. Located in Victoria, they collaborate closely with local public school districts (e.g., Victoria, Sooke and Saanich school districts) and independent schools to recruit international students and generate awareness of transition opportunities.

Key Figures

In 2012-13, 188 of Camosun's 427 new international students (44.0 percent) came from BC secondary schools. Most of these students previously attend schools in Victoria, Saanich, or Sooke school districts. During the same academic year, 100 students transitioned from Camosun to BC universities.

Of the 589 international undergraduate students entering UVic in 2012-13, 53 came from BC secondary schools (9.0 percent) and 141 from BC colleges (23.9 percent). Leading sending school districts included Greater Victoria, Vancouver, and Surrey; students previously attending colleges mostly came from Camosun College, College of New Caledonia, and North Island College.

Pathway Drivers and Opportunities

As the transfer opportunity between Camosun and UVic is already codified through the BC Transfer System, the institutions have not needed to establish additional formal pathway agreements. They cooperate and work with local schools on a number of fronts to facilitate international student pathways.

Recently, the two post-secondary institutions and local school districts recruited jointly in markets such as Vietnam and Thailand under the theme "Destination Victoria". These efforts aim to emphasize the pathway opportunities to prospective international students and their parents.

Within BC, post-secondary institutions reach out to local schools and facilitate campus visits and opportunities to meet current international students. Mobility is encouraged for international students between Camosun and UVic.

Some students who transfer from Camosun to UVic choose to return to the College for additional university preparation or based on a preference for the college experience. UVic students may acquire letters of permission to complete courses and credits from Camosun to meet their degree requirements.

ELS Language Centers: Articulated Pathway Partnerships with BC Post-Secondary Institutions

Introduction

ELS Language Centers is a private provider of English language training programs at locations around the world, including in Australia, Canada, India, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and the United States. In Canada, ELS operates schools based in Toronto and Vancouver.

ELS schools offer a range of programs, including English test preparation, general English programs, and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs. ELS maintains academic pathway partnerships with post-secondary institutions that accept international students who successfully complete EAP programs without further testing. BC-based partners include Capilano University, Douglas College, Fairleigh Dickinson University, North Island College, and the University of Victoria Continuing Studies.

Key Figures

In 2013, 1,096 international students studied at ELS Language Centers in Vancouver. These students were nearly evenly divided between ESL programs and EAP programs. ELS transitioned 18 international students to BC colleges and universities through its articulated pathway programs. Many more students also entered BC post-secondary institutions (partners and non-partners) through regular admissions channels, although these are not tracked directly.

Pathway Drivers and Opportunities

ELS and its peer language institutions can act as a valuable feeder of international students to BC post-secondary institutions. Even in the absence of formal partnerships, a sizable number of these students seek to augment their English-language skills for the purpose of competing for admission to BC institutions.

A more complete picture of international student transitions from ELS to BC post-secondary institutions would highlight opportunities for further collaboration. As a precursor to consideration of a formal conditional admissions agreement, language schools such as ELS can work with prominent receiver post-secondary institutions for identify means of further aligning EAP programs with the academic needs of said institutions.

Simon Fraser University – Fraser International College: Pathway Opportunity through a Private Affiliated Provider

Introduction

Fraser International College (FIC) was launched in 2006 as a pathway program offering transition programs to prepare international students to enter Simon Fraser University (SFU). FIC is located on the SFU campus in Burnaby, but is operated by Navitas, an Australia-based provider of university preparation programs.

FIC delivers programs at the pre-university level (Stage I) and university level courses (Stage II). International students not qualified for direct entry into SFU programs can be issued joint admission to FIC and SFU. Successful completion of the requisite university level courses enables international students to enter directly into the second year of select undergraduate programs at SFU. FIC programs are developed by Navitas in collaboration with SFU faculty for curricular integration.

Key Figures

FIC enrolled 2,100 students in the 2012-13, approximately 1,000 of whom entered the College for this first time in that academic year. In 2013, 800 FIC students transitioned to colleges and universities in BC. According to FIC, more than 95 percent of students transfer to SFU upon completion of their program, while the remainder chooses other institutions based on program selection or academic needs.

Pathway Drivers and Opportunities

FIC constitutes a distinct pathways program in the BC context given three features. First, it can draw on the worldwide recruiting operations of Navitas, including an extensive agent network. Second, FIC is tightly integrated with SFU through its on campus delivery model that also includes a high level of curricular integration. Third, FIC has grown, by some margin, into the largest university pathways provider in BC.

At its inception, FIC's public-private partnership model caused some debate not just at SFU but also across Canada. This debate arguably has subsided given FIC's operational performance that has seen thousands of FIC graduates successfully transfer into SFU. FIC's trajectory, at least in some part, informed UBC's more recent pathways effort that is described overleaf.

UBC Vantage College: Internally-Developed International Student Pathway Model

Introduction

The University of British Columbia introduced UBC Vantage College as a pathway into undergraduate degree programs for international students who are academically qualified but do not meet English language requirements. The College began accepting applications in 2013 and will host its first class in its International Program beginning in August 2014.

Vantage's International Program lasts one year and offers international students first-year UBC courses following the University's curriculum and taught by University faculty. The program will allow international students to complete the requirements of the first year of a UBC Arts or Science degree program and enter the second year of the degree directly. While completing their first-year courses, students will receive additional English language, academic, and cultural transition support from Vantage.

Key Figures

A total of 300 seats are available for international students in Vantage's first intake for August 2014. The College aims to grow to accommodate 1,000 students by 2016.

Pathway Drivers and Opportunities

Vantage constitutes a unique and ambitious pathways program – no other top 40 university has created a wholly owned and operated pathways program on its campus to date. A key reason for this historical lack of pathways programs at this level is the combination of highly elevated academic requirements and competitive admissions selection level at these universities. In fact, a large number – but importantly not all – of these institutions continues to be heavily oversubscribed by qualified applicants.

Vantage is a response to an underlying shift in the global applicant pool that has seen even universities such as UBC experience a lack of qualified applicants relative to its sustained, strong enrollment growth trajectory. Its future development will be keenly watched across Canada and amongst global peer institutions.

OPTIMIZING INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PATHWAYS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Overview

This section identifies opportunities for BC institutions to optimize their pathways across a number of dimensions, such as upfront marketing, assured/preferred/conditional admissions, K-12 to post-secondary “packaging”, etc. Based on the international education pathways surveys, stakeholder interviews, and best practice research, the discussion in this section focuses on areas for practical and structural improvement in BC. Where appropriate, the role of government and other stakeholders in supporting international student pathways in the BC landscape is also considered.

The critical overarching theme for any efforts to optimize international student pathways in BC will be the maintenance of education quality and reputation. Pathways should not be used simply to progress and retain higher numbers of international students in BC. Instead, the opportunities described in this section hold at their core the objective of enabling transitions for genuine, qualified international students to achieve their educational goals in BC.

Data Integration

It is important to recognize that inevitably some international students in BC will not consider transitions from secondary to post-secondary education. Stakeholders at the secondary level reported that often students will return to their home country if high quality and/or lower cost education opportunities are available. BC institutions will benefit from initiatives that identify international students interested in and capable of continuing their education within the Province.

BC education providers largely use market-based international student recruitment approaches. If international student transitions are a priority, BC schools and PSI are advised to target select recruitment efforts towards markets and segments of students more interested in extended study in the Province. However, the existing data landscape in BC does not allow for this level of segmentation.

Reporting Requirements and Data Definitions

As a first step, EDUC is advised to revise its reporting requirements to capture specific information on international students beyond the current Non-Resident designation. Records for international students enrolled in BC schools, each associated with an individual PEN, should include a marker of international status (i.e., holds a study permit), country of citizenship, and previous residence, at minimum.

This information can be aggregated to allow analysis of key markets for K-12 recruitment and segmentation of students based on entry grade, length of study, and objective (e.g., students entering in secondary school “staging” themselves for post-secondary transition).

At the public post-secondary level, reporting of international student enrollment in BC remains not fully consistent. Data definitions should be harmonized for colleges and institutes, teaching-intensive universities, and research-intensive universities. Information collection can be standardized to report international students based on immigration status, tuition fees status, or both.

Enhancements to the Student Transitions Project

If STP and EDUC data reporting standards for international student enrollment are revised, additional variables can be subsequently added to the STP data collection to allow for more specific and strategic analysis of international student transitions. For instance, the dataset could be used to develop predictive modelling of students more likely to transition from secondary to post-secondary in BC based on country and time spent in BC.

Enhanced data standardization could enable further analysis on the retention and graduation outcomes for international students with Dogwood Diplomas compared to those directly from abroad, such as the STP’s 2014 report: *International Students In BC’s Education Systems*⁹. As collection continues, an extended longitudinal dataset would allow for evaluation of any future changes to policies regarding provincial exam requirements or prior learning assessment for entering students.

⁹ www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/documents/STP-International-Research-Results_2014-10-10.pdf

Note that this type of analysis would be based entirely on aggregated student segments and would conform to policies governing individual student privacy.

Data on Transitions Out of British Columbia

Subject to the expansion of data reporting and integration described above, the remaining gap will be international student transitions to destinations outside of BC. As previously discussed, BC secondary school approaches to collecting information on the destinations of their international students are fragmented.

Some schools and districts possess the resources to collect detailed information on the outcomes of each of their graduates, while other schools maintain no data at all. Between schools that collect data, information available is disparate and provides an incomplete picture of student transitions outside BC.

Given the size of graduating classes from some BC secondary schools, an online exit survey offers an effective and sustainable approach for capturing information systematically on student destinations. The data collected using an exit survey would offer individual schools and school districts the ability to demonstrate the outcomes of their graduating students. Furthermore, over several years of data collection, the Province would gain the ability to systematically evaluate trends in student transitions.

Marketing the BC Pathway Landscape

The intended long-term outcome for many prospective international students and their families, particularly in select markets is the acquisition of a university degree. Furthermore, certain students seek to obtain a university degree at an internationally ranked university.

This objective drives decision-making even at the point of selecting a secondary school to attend. While students in BC are limited in their choice of internationally ranked universities, the Province's education system offers a number of options for accessing high-quality, internationally-recognized university degree programs as well as many quality higher education institutions.

Some international students may complete a Dogwood Diploma but require additional academic or language skills augmentation for entry to BC universities. These students can access the necessary preparation for university through BC

language schools of pathways through colleges via BC's well-articulated Transfer System.

Marketing to international students and their families can include messaging that highlights BC's high quality post-secondary institutions and educational pathways to these institutions. This is particularly salient for international parents unfamiliar with the concept of colleges as a transfer pathway to university study.

Individual institutions such as Langara College have worked hard to communicate the role of colleges and the transfer landscape in BC. The Province and BCCIE should continue to highlight the existing transfer pathway structure in BC as it relates to prospective international students, which will reinforce the efforts of BC schools and institutions. This can be particularly valuable for international student segments who demonstrate interest in BC university study but consistently evidence need for additional preparation.

Recruitment and Admissions

Stakeholders often observed that high-performing, academically qualified students graduating from the Province's secondary schools (and offshore schools) with a desire to pursue PSE in BC are readily able to transition to target institutions. Minimal additional support is required to facilitate transitions for these students beyond those already taking place.

The segments (based on academic performance and educational objectives) that pose more viable opportunities for improving secondary to post-secondary transition rates in BC include:

- International students who apply to and qualify for entry to BC universities but are recruited by universities in other provinces (or other destination countries such as the United States); and
- International students who want to stay in BC and meet most academic requirements for entry to BC universities but require additional skills development or language preparation.

Targeted Recruitment and Admissions

The former group of students can be further divided into qualified students who are genuinely interested in studying in BC who are attracted elsewhere, and those who intend to study elsewhere but apply in BC as an alternative ("back-up"). The students interested in BC reflect a missed opportunity:

These students possess an affinity for BC and the capability to succeed in PSE, but are drawn away on a competitive basis.

BC university recruiters can better collaborate with secondary school counsellors to identify these potential students and strategically target recruitment efforts. At the individual level, this may involve providing application support, scholarship offers, or more dedicated efforts to communicate student outcomes and program/institutional fit. This can be especially critical for teaching-intensive universities in regions where close connections can be fostered with students in local schools.

Competitive Admissions Practices

On a more systematic basis, BC universities may need to evaluate their admissions processes and timelines with respect to competitors in other jurisdictions (e.g., if students are recruited to competitors because they receive an offer of admission more quickly). An assessment of admissions at BC universities should focus on maximizing recruitment for retention and on streamlining processes based on institutional experience and relevant admissions patterns.

Academic Preparation

International students who require additional preparation for entry into BC universities are a recognized target segment for recruitment. Fraser International College and UBC Vantage College are examples of tailored university solutions to approach recruiting from this segment. B.C. post-secondary institutions have an opportunity to recruit an increased number of international students graduating from Dogwood Diploma programs who need academic or language skills augmentation through the provision of specific supports required by these students.

College-university transition is well developed in BC through the BC T Transfer System, which includes a wide range of formal articulation agreements between BC colleges, and universities. Articulation agreements also exist between language schools, colleges and universities in BC. While many of these options are currently promoted to international students in BC secondary schools, there may be an opportunity to more concretely position these pathways with respect to the students' goals.

For example, Thompson Rivers University offers dual admission to students in university transfer programs at partner colleges. Under the dual admission agreements, students can apply for admission to TRU before or during their first year studying at a partner college and transition any time after completing 30 credits at the college to complete a degree program.

This type of approach may be appropriate for international Dogwood Diploma graduates who apply to BC universities but do not quite meet direct entrance requirements. A university can opt to issue an automatic joint/conditional admission offer to these students.

The joint admission offer would stipulate that a student will enter the university and finish a degree upon successful completion of requisite courses and preparation at a partner college. It builds on the existing transfer framework in BC, but provides international students with more explicit assurance that the pathway leads to a university degree.

Stakeholder Coordination and Cooperation

Research for this study indicated that BC institutions have developed many formal and informal pathway approaches in line with their mission and international recruitment goals. These pathway activities largely occur without broader coordination or collective goal setting. If international student transitions are a priority under the BC International Education Strategy, the Province should take a more proactive role in facilitating pathways cooperation.

K-12 – Post-secondary Cooperation

Several stakeholders indicated that communication and co-operation between BC secondary and post-secondary institutions often occurs based on connections between individual staff members. A need was expressed for greater mutual understanding between school districts and BC PSI with respect to goals for international student pathways and impediments to their transitions. For example, questions of international student diversity and academic performance are of interest at both the secondary and post-secondary level.

Stakeholders would benefit from the opportunity to confer on transition issues with the goal of elaborating sector-oriented solutions or joint approaches. It is important to ensure that these transitions are in line with the mission and strengths of all institutions along the pathway.

Public-Private Cooperation

As noted previously, further collaboration between public and private institutions, particularly private language training providers would create expanded international student recruitment opportunities for both sectors. AVED is currently absorbing responsibility for regulating private career training institutions. The Province is also responsible for determining which PSI and language schools are eligible to accept international students on study permits under the CIC International Student Program. The Province now requires institutions to be EQA designated in order to accept students on study permits.

The regulatory oversight role places the Province in a position to highlight opportunities for public-private cooperation. Following the discussion on enhancing data integration in BC, the Province may consider piloting an initiative to demonstrate the outcomes of international students transitioning from private providers to public PSI. Such an initiative would offer evidence as a basis for future cooperation between public and private institutions.