



The labour market within Francophone minority communities: Comparative experiences of the international student population and the Canadian-born student population

Research and Knowledge Mobilization Division

July 2025



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

Canada

Analysis and reporting: Mariève Forest, Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault

Sociopol is a consulting firm specializing in applied social research, consulting and training. The firm guides organizations and communities toward decisions and actions that are supported by co-constructed knowledge applied in ways that benefit target groups. The analyses in this publication are the responsibility of Goss Gilroy Inc. and Sociopol and do not represent the views of the Government of Canada.

This project was funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

For information about other Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) publications, visit: www.canada.ca/ircc-publications.

Également disponible en français sous le titre : Le marché du travail au sein des communautés francophones en situation minoritaire : expériences comparées de la population étudiante internationale et de la population étudiante née au Canada

Visit us online

[Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada website](http://www.canada.ca/ircc-publications)

Facebook at www.facebook.com/CitCanada

YouTube at www.youtube.com/CitImmCanada

X at <https://x.com/citimmcanada>

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, 2025.

Ci4-269/2025E-PDF
978-0-660-75445-1

Project reference number: R1-2024

Table of contents

Acronyms	5
Summary	6
Literature review	6
Analysis of results	7
Recommendations	9
Introduction	10
Overview	10
General objectives	10
Specific objectives	11
Methodology	12
Selection of establishments	12
Principles that guided the literature review	12
Survey	12
Interviews with the graduate population	13
Interviews with stakeholders and employers	13
Ethical considerations	13
Literature review	14
International student population: a way to stimulate the economy and increase immigration	14
International student population: a shared priority to support Francophone immigration	15
International student population in a Francophone minority setting	15
International student population: economic integration	16
Francophone immigrant population: economic integration	17
Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic	20
Gaps between needs and services offered for the school-to-work transition	20
Profile of student graduate populations who participated in the survey	22
Place(s) of study	22
Sociodemographic overview	23
Characteristics of programs of study	23
Job search during and after studies	25
Use of the Internet	26
Canadian cultural codes	26
Opening up employers to ethnocultural diversity	27
English proficiency	28
Networking	30
Canadian experience and recognition of prior learning	33
Specific aspects of searching for internships	33
Temporary resident status	34
Distance and accessibility	34
Range of services offered by postsecondary institutions	35
Employment assistance services provided by the community	37
Labour shortage	37
Portrait of economic integration	38
During studies	38
After studies	40

Reception at a new job	42
Formal workplace learning	42
Informal workplace learning	42
Support from managers and immigrant colleagues	43
Working conditions.....	44
During studies.....	44
After studies.....	46
Treatment in the workplace.....	50
During studies.....	50
After studies.....	51
Factors associated with differential treatment.....	51
Impact of the pandemic on the professional situation	54
Transition to permanent residency.....	55
Economic and social integration within a Francophone community	57
Reasons for choosing studies in French	57
Dynamics that reduce retention in a Francophone community	58
Analysis and conclusion	60
Recommendations.....	63
Bibliography	65
Appendix I – Supplementary table.....	69
Appendix II – Research participation consent form	70
Appendix II – Interview guides.....	74

Acronyms

CBSP	Canadian-born student population
CCNB	Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick
CLC	Collège La Cité
CSJ	Campus Saint-Jean
Francophone communities	Francophone minority communities
ISP	International student population
UM	Université de Moncton
UO	University of Ottawa
USA	Université Sainte-Anne
USB	Université de Saint-Boniface

Summary

Like elsewhere in Canada (Usher, 2021), an increasing proportion of the student population in Francophone minority postsecondary institutions are international students. Francophone minority communities are interested in this international student population (ISP), particularly because it appears that it can actively contribute to their demographic, economic, social, and cultural vitality. However, the literature notes that this population is disadvantaged when it comes to their economic integration, which could reduce their retention within Francophone communities.

The main objective of this study is therefore to describe, analyze, and compare the school-to-work transition conditions of members of the ISP and the Canadian-born student population (CBSP) who have studied in French between 2015 and 2021 at seven specific Francophone minority postsecondary institutions. More specifically, it aims to identify the success factors for the school-to-work transition of international students during and after their studies, as well as the obstacles that hinder this transition and how the international student population can have more positive experiences in terms of employment integration.

The methodology used for this study includes a literature review, an online survey and interviews with members of the student population, stakeholders, and employers. The student populations targeted by the survey and interviews studied in French and obtained a degree between 2015 and 2022. The postsecondary institutions included in the study are as follows: Université Sainte-Anne, Université de Moncton, Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick, University of Ottawa, Collège La Cité, Université de Saint-Boniface, and Campus Saint-Jean (University of Alberta).

Literature review

The literature on the retention of the ISP highlights the fact that a majority of these individuals show an interest in staying in Canada for a longer term after obtaining a degree. For example, 91% of Francophone ISP members who participated in the DPMR (Díaz Pinsent Mercier Research) study (2020) said that they intended to look for a job in Canada after their studies. The literature also shows that, compared with immigrants trained abroad, members of the ISP have various advantages for successful school-to-work transitions. These advantages include receiving a Canadian degree, acquiring work experience in the country and attaining degrees in higher education at a greater rate. In addition, these individuals face less significant challenges related to the recognition of their diplomas (Lu and Hou, 2017; Traisnel et al., 2016; Skuterud and Chen, 2018).

Obtaining employment that meets the person's expectations—especially in terms of qualifications, work experience and working conditions—has a significant impact on ISP retention after graduation (Chira, 2011; Traisnel et al., 2020; DPMR, 2020). The crucial importance of access to employment justifies the necessity to examine the factors that limit the ISP's ability to integrate the labour market within Francophone communities.

The six limiting factors most commonly cited in the literature are:

- The need to be fluent in English to integrate the labour market;
- Absence of well-established networks in communities;
- Acquisition of Canadian work experience;
- Experiences of discrimination;
- Reluctance on the part of some employers to hire individuals born outside Canada;
- Access to information and administrative issues.

Another issue is the ISP's ineligibility for federally funded settlement services, employment assistance, and language training. There seems to be a persistent gap between the governmental and community intent to promote the sustainable settlement of the ISP and the resources available to properly prepare these individuals to integrate the Canadian labour market after graduating and to face the obstacles to success that were highlighted in the literature (Chira and Belkhdja, 2013; Traisnel et al., 2019; Lowe, 2011; Chira, 2011).

Analysis of results

First, the online survey was used to gather the perspectives of 340 individuals who graduated from one of the targeted institutions. The ISP diploma holders made up just under half of this sample. We then conducted 21 interviews with CBSP graduates and 34 interviews with ISP graduates for a total of 55 interviews. Lastly, we interviewed 13 individuals who were either employers or stakeholders.

In terms of job searching, during their studies and the year following graduation, ISP members spent a longer time actively looking for work compared with CBSP. It is only for the job held during the survey that this gap narrows. Among the essential components of job search success, we noted knowledge of various Canadian cultural codes, English proficiency, good networking, and having Canadian work experience. Access to services offered by postsecondary institutions or in the community is also considered an advantage.

However, despite effective job search strategies, some employers have unfavourable biases towards certain people. Given the current labour shortage, a lack of openness or knowledge on the part of employers towards culturally diverse individuals appears not only to reduce their likelihood of being hired but also to further reduce the likelihood of being hired based on their skills. Conversely, when companies looking for highly skilled individuals develop an organizational culture that values cultural diversity in the workplace, this can be a factor that helps ISP graduates obtain employment that matches their skills.

The survey shows that members of the ISP are just as likely to hold employment during their studies as their counterparts born in Canada in the three targeted regions, i.e., Atlantic Canada, Ontario, and Western Canada. However, it is important to mention the differences that exist between these two populations in terms of their occupational status and working conditions.

In particular, the ISP:

- Hold a greater number of jobs;
- Work fewer hours per week;
- Have a lower annual income;
- Rate their working conditions more negatively.

Generally, regarding the occupational status and working conditions of ISP members, there are few significant distinctions between the first and last year of studies, except in relation to the following factors:

- A better match between employment and field of study;
- An annual income that is slightly higher, although still lower when compared with individuals born in Canada;
- The explanations put forward by the employer to justify salaries lower than those of their colleagues.

Furthermore, graduates from the ISP are just as likely to work after completing a program of study as those born in Canada. However, in the first twelve months after attaining their degree, compared with graduates from the CBSP, ISP degree holders are more likely to spend a longer period actively searching for employment, have a lower annual income, and have work schedules and benefits that are less satisfactory. These individuals also feel that they are not as well recognized for their work.

More than half of participants (51%), regardless of their status during their studies, were in different jobs at the time of the survey than they were in during the first twelve months after completing their program of study. Generally, the working conditions for the job held by ISP graduates at the time of the interview are better than those related to jobs held in the first few months after graduation and the distinctions between the two populations studied are diminishing. In fact, regarding the most recent job held, members of the CBSP and the ISP are equally likely:

- To make a similar and more positive assessment of their working conditions;
- To consider that they are treated fairly at their jobs;
- To work a comparable number of hours per week;
- To rely on local contacts to find a job;
- To go through a similar period of actively looking for employment;
- To continue to exhibit disparities in annual income.

Regarding treatment on the job, nearly one fifth of the surveyed ISP graduates believe that they have been treated worse by their employer than their colleagues in the positions held during and after their studies. People who claimed to have been treated worse than their colleagues were asked to specify why, using a list of about a dozen possible reasons. The only factor that consistently explains poorer treatment in employment at various stages of the ISP's professional careers is belonging to a visible minority. It is worth noting that this issue seems to be resolving regarding the job held during the survey, for which 93% of ISP members consider themselves to be treated the same as other employees.

According to our interviews, the Francophone community is only relatively present in the minds and daily life of those interviewed. For some, their relationship with French is presented as an individual preference. For others, the presence of a Francophone community—its members, institutions and services—greatly contributes to a feeling of security and well-being. However, despite their importance, the opportunities and places that can foster connections between the ISP and the local Francophone community seem limited.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, we recommend six initiatives to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada:

1. Support postsecondary institutions in adopting a holistic and personalized approach that promotes the economic integration of the international Francophone student population during and after their studies.
2. Allow the Francophone ISP to access all IRCC-funded settlement services, including language training and employment services.
3. Establish a program with the goal of ensuring the visibility and presence of the Francophone community at Francophone minority postsecondary institutions, particularly among the ISP .
4. Create a program with the goal of providing workplace language training to the Francophone ISP and raising employers' awareness of the specific characteristics and added value of this workforce.
5. Relax the rules regarding the study permit and work permit for the ISP, both during and after studies, so that more diverse pathways are possible.
6. Ease immigration rules to facilitate the transition of members of the Francophone ISP to permanent residency.

Introduction

Overview

In Canada, the international student population (ISP) has grown significantly since the early 2000s, and this growth has accelerated since 2009 (Usher, 2021). According to Usher, the number of international students has increased from just under 40,000 in the late 1990s to 345,000 in 2018–2019. At the same time, since the early 2000s, the federal government, in collaboration with Francophone minority communities, has been seeking to increase the number of immigrants who settle within these communities (OCOL, 2021). In this context, the ISP seems to be able to actively contribute to the vitality of these communities in terms of demographic, economic, social and cultural aspects.

In fact, this skilled population has been trained in Canada, which reduces the issues related to credential recognition, a significant barrier to successful economic integration. In general, the time spent in Canada during studies increases the opportunities to build networks, acquire Canadian work experience, and experience cultural immersion (Traisnel et al., 2016).

Despite these advantages, research shows that Francophone ISP graduates who are interested in staying in the region where they studied over the longer term are not always able to do so, particularly due to difficulties related to economic integration. While access to employment is one of the main conditions that influence a pathway's success towards permanent settlement (Díaz Pinsent Mercier Research (DPMR), 2020), research highlights the difficulties associated with finding a job that matches an individual's field of study and skill level (Sall, 2019).

Access to employment is key to promoting retention of the ISP, hence the necessity to examine what factors promote or limit this population's ability to integrate the labour market in Francophone communities and see how their experiences after graduating differ from those of students born in Canada. This study focuses on these factors and on the school-to-work transition conditions of the Francophone minority ISP. In more concrete terms, it focuses on the following objectives.

General objectives

The main objective of this study is to describe, analyze and compare the school-to-work transition conditions of members of the ISP and CBSP who completed their studies in French between 2015 and 2021 in seven Francophone minority postsecondary institutions. Specifically, it is about determining the success factors for the ISP's school-to-work transition during and after studies, as well as the obstacles to this transition, while examining how the ISP can have more positive experiences in terms of this transition.

Specific objectives

This research was guided by specific objectives:

- Describe, analyze, and compare hiring experiences and identify obstacles;
- Describe, analyze, and compare employment integration experiences and identify obstacles;
- Explain the differences in terms of economic performance;
- Present community, municipal, and government initiatives, as well as business initiatives, that facilitate the school-to-work transition, particularly for the ISP;
- Describe and analyze the role played by the postsecondary institution and the scope of the initiatives implemented by it in relation to the school-to-work transition;
- Clarify the actions taken and the challenges faced by ISP graduates in both establishing themselves in the labour market and obtaining permanent residence in Canada;
- Explain the experiences and problems faced by employers when hiring and integrating members of the ISP and CBSP who studied in French;
- Describe the perceived effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market experiences of the ISP and CBSP;
- Explore the differentiated relationships with the Francophone community.

Methodology

We adopted a mixed methodology based on various data collection methods carried out at seven predefined postsecondary institutions. This methodology includes a literature review, an online survey, and interviews with the student population, stakeholders and employers.¹

Selection of establishments

Our study aims primarily to paint a picture of the situation for all of the Francophone communities. However, the different data collection phases allowed us to gain knowledge about various postsecondary institutions and different geographical areas. The choice of specific institutions and regions for the interviews has at least allowed for a comparative perspective between institutions and between Francophone communities. Indeed, based on writings on the vitality of Francophone communities, we believe that the province's legislative and regulatory framework, the density and size of the community, as well as the institutional completeness of the community can influence the employment integration experience of populations in general and immigrant populations in particular (Langlois and Gilbert, 2006; Belkhodja, Traisnel and Wade, 2012; Esses et al., 2016).

Thus, the online questionnaire and interviews targeted postsecondary institutions that offer French-language training and the respective communities in which they are located. The following Francophone communities and institutions were selected:

- Clare and Halifax: Université Sainte-Anne – Nova Scotia;
- Moncton, Edmundston and Shippagan: Université de Moncton and Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick – New Brunswick;
- Ottawa: University of Ottawa and Collège La Cité – Ontario;
- Saint-Boniface: Université de Saint-Boniface – Manitoba;
- Edmonton: Campus Saint-Jean – Alberta.

Principles that guided the literature review

The literature review was conducted at the beginning of the research so that its findings could be used to develop data collection tools and analytical frameworks. This documentary analysis primarily drew from scientific literature and grey literature from the past 10 years, focusing on the themes of the school-to-work transition of immigrants and the ISP in Francophone communities and in Canada.

Survey

The purpose of the online survey was to understand the economic integration of graduate students aged 18 and older, whether they come from another country or born in Canada. It included 69 closed-ended questions and six open-ended questions. All of the intended participants had studied in French at one of the seven targeted institutions and had graduated

¹ An example of a consent form and interview guides are presented in appendices I and II.

between 2015 and 2022. To ensure the quality of the results, pre-tests were conducted before the survey was released. The questions covered five major dimensions:

- Postsecondary degrees obtained in Canada since 2015;
- Occupational status during the first and last year of the postsecondary program;
- Occupational status after completing postsecondary studies;
- Effects of the pandemic on occupational status;
- Demographic profile of participants.

The survey was posted online using the SurveyMonkey platform from June 2022 to October 2022. The invitation to take part in the study was distributed through the graduate associations of the participating institutions, through community partners from the Francophone immigration sector and through IRCC.

Interviews with the graduate population

The purpose of these interviews was to deepen our understanding of the employment transition experiences of ISP and CBSP graduates (see Appendix III for the interview guide). As for the survey, all the individuals invited to participate had studied in French in one of the seven targeted institutions and had graduated between 2015 and 2022. We held semi-structured interviews that took a retrospective, trajectory, and intersectional approach. We aimed for representation in terms of the institution attended, type of degree attained, gender, and field of study. The objective was achieved, as we conducted interviews with a nearly equal number of CBSP graduates (21) and ISP graduates (34), for a total of 55 interviews.

Interviews with stakeholders and employers

These interviews aimed to deepen our understanding of the employment integration experiences of the ISP and CBSP (see Appendix III for interview guides). We wanted to better understand the support available to members of these populations to facilitate their job search and integration into the labour market. We were also looking to highlight promising practices in this regard. In total, 13 individuals were interviewed, and we aimed for a geographical representation of the organizations and companies they represented. At this stage, it was more difficult to recruit employers than other stakeholders. This situation is not unique to this study; it is common in this type of survey (Traisnel and Violette, 2016).

Ethical considerations

This project first received approval from the Université de Moncton's Comité d'éthique de la recherche avec des êtres humains (Human Subject Research Ethics Board). We have also received approval from the ethics committees of the Université Sainte-Anne, the Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick, the University of Ottawa, Collège La Cité, and the Université de Saint-Boniface. At each stage of the data collection, a consent form (see Appendix II) was provided to the participants to be read and signed. The data processing was carried out with strict respect for confidentiality. The excerpts from the interviews included in this report do not allow for participants to be identified, as they have been anonymized.

Literature review

This literature review examines the specific characteristics of members of the ISP who have pursued postsecondary studies in a minority Francophone context, particularly in terms of their economic integration and the working conditions to which they are often subjected. When possible, comparisons with other populations are outlined.

International student population: a way to stimulate the economy and increase immigration

The Government of Canada's commitment to support the ISP in achieving permanent residency has been realized through the implementation of its International Education Strategy (2014). According to a study led by the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), in 2021, 60% of ISP members intended to apply for permanent residency in Canada (2022). The same study specifies that members of the ISP consider Canada a preferred destination because it is safe, offers quality training, is an inclusive and tolerant society and provides opportunities to achieve permanent residency and gain professional experience in their field of study.

The presence of an ISP in Canada has positive impacts on society as a whole in several ways (Shu et al., 2020). For example, on the social level, the study commissioned by the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne (DPMR, 2020) shows that the presence of the ISP in Canadian universities promotes the development of inclusive communities. In this regard, the study by Traisnel et al. (2019: 4) also highlights that in Francophone communities outside major urban centres, ISP members play a crucial role in the local “multicultural landscape.” In more general terms, the ISP is of interest to remote regions because it has the potential to contribute to their growth and prosperity (Esses et al., 2018).

Beyond the benefits that the ISP represents in terms of immigration, it is also beneficial to the country's economy. In the short term, the presence of the ISP contributes to the financial development of postsecondary institutions. According to Usher (2021), the main reason the ISP has grown are the high tuition fees paid by this clientele, as they contribute significantly to boosting the revenues of postsecondary institutions. For example, since the 2008 economic crisis, the share of income from governments has stagnated while the share from tuition fees has greatly increased. Furthermore, while the revenue from tuition fees from the CBSP increased by 35% between 2008 and 2009 and between 2018 and 2019, the revenue from tuition fees from the ISP increased by nearly 400% (Usher, 2021). Recently, the aging of the Canadian population has reduced the pool of student population, thereby increasing postsecondary institutions' interest in an international clientele (Firang and Mensah, 2022).

The economic benefits of this ISP are also felt across Canada. For example, the estimated contribution of the ISP to Canada's gross domestic product in 2009 was \$4.8 billion, while it was \$21.6 billion in 2019 (Firang and Mensah, 2022). The contribution of the ISP to the economy is also evident in the fact that these individuals may integrate more easily into the labour market, compared to other categories of temporary or permanent residents.

Various studies show that, compared with immigrants trained abroad, this population presents a number of assets. In particular, individuals born abroad who have completed their postsecondary education in Canada have better success in the labour market compared to those who were

educated in another country (Lu and Hou, 2017; Skuterud and Chen, 2018). Among the main factors identified in the literature as promoting the post-graduation work-to-school transition for the ISP, we noted knowledge of (or fluency in) at least one of Canada's official languages, obtaining a Canadian degree, acquiring work experience in the country, a higher graduation rate in higher education, and opportunities to create a network of local contacts; in addition, ISP graduates encounter fewer problems around recognition of their degrees (Lu and Hou, 2017; Traisnel et al., 2016; Belkhodja, 2011; Chira, 2011; Skuterud and Chen, 2018).

International student population: a shared priority to support Francophone immigration

Given the multiple advantages offered by this immigrant population, the policies and initiatives implemented by various stakeholders—federal, provincial and territorial governments, postsecondary institutions, Francophone communities—perfectly align and demonstrate a shared willingness to facilitate the arrival of the ISP and their retention once they have graduated.

In fact, postsecondary institutions have shown a strong desire for internationalization over the past decade (DPMR, 2020). A study by Statistics Canada (2020: 1) indicates that the entire increase in the number of students in Canadian public universities and colleges from 2014–2015 to 2018–2019 is due to the growth in the number of international students.

One of the 12 priority areas of the Community Strategic Plan on Francophone Immigration (2018), developed under the auspices of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) du Canada, is to ensure collaboration between communities and government partners to facilitate the transition of temporary residents to permanent residents, particularly for members of the ISP who have studied in French in a minority context. This priority aligns with the policies of the Canadian government and the provinces.

In recent years, IRCC has made several changes to its programs to facilitate the transition to permanent residence for individuals born in another country and who graduated from Canadian institutions. These measures include awarding additional points to holders of Canadian degrees through Express Entry and extending the length of post-graduation temporary work permits (Esses et al., 2018). In addition, in several provinces, streams have been established under the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) that specifically target recent graduates (Choi, Crossman and Hou, 2021a). Support for the transition to permanent residency is also one of the components of the Government of Canada's Francophone Immigration Strategy (2019).

International student population in a Francophone minority setting

A study conducted by Forest and Deschênes-Thériault in 2021 on behalf of the Department of Canadian Heritage provides an overview of minority-language postsecondary education. This study reports that members of the ISP made up a significant portion of the individuals enrolled in a French-language postsecondary training program outside Quebec in 2018–2019.

As for university studies conducted in 2018–2019, the proportion of members of the ISP in Canada outside Quebec of the total student population is 16.3%, whereas it is 15.6% when instruction is offered in French. However, significant interinstitutional disparities must be noted. For example, among the institutions included in this study, the proportion of ISP members varies from 2.2% (Campus Saint-Jean) to 30.7% (Université Sainte-Anne). Regarding college studies conducted in 2018–2019, a larger gap is observed between French-language programs and

English-language programs. Thus, the total proportion of members of the ISP in Canada outside Quebec is 20.7% in colleges, compared to 12.2% when education is offered in French. Interinstitutional disparities are also quite pronounced between institutions located in a Francophone minority setting. Within the institutions covered by this study, in terms of college education, the proportion of members of the ISP varies between 15.3% (Université Sainte-Anne) and 60.3% (Université de Saint-Boniface) (see Appendix I for more details).

International student population: economic integration

The literature on the retention of international students highlights the fact that a majority of this immigrant population expresses an interest in staying in Canada in the longer term after graduating. For example, according to the study by CBIE (2022), 72.5% of ISP members intended to submit an application for a post-graduation work permit. This finding appears even more significant for individuals who studied in French outside Quebec, considering that 91% of members of the ISP who participated in the DPMR study (2020) stated their intention to seek employment in Canada after their studies.

It is therefore important to focus on the dynamics of this economic integration and the challenges associated with it; these aspects are essential to ensure the success of this population in terms of education, employment and/or migration. First, this economic integration benefits from being aligned with geographical considerations, as most international students intend to stay in the region where they studied (CBIE, 2022). Finding a job that meets a person's expectations—especially in terms of qualifications, work experience and working conditions—significantly affects their retention (Chira, 2011; Traisnel et al., 2020; DPMR, 2020). For ISP members who studied in Francophone minority settings, language of work is included among these factors: “The ability to find a job, particularly in French, is one of the main factors that motivate the decision by students to stay not only in Canada, but in the region where they completed their studies” (DPMR, 2020: 57).

Some studies highlight the difficulties associated with finding a job that matches their field of study and skills level (Sall, 2019; Scott et al., 2015; Nunes and Arthur, 2013; Traisnel et al., 2020). Other research highlights the working conditions of individuals born abroad, which are rather unfavourable compared to those of their counterparts born in Canada, particularly in terms of discrimination, despite the fact that they hold a Canadian degree (Chira, 2011; Kamara and Gambold, 2011; Skuterud and Chen, 2018). In terms of income, the data also show a generally more negative experience for the ISP when compared with the CBSP (Skuterud and Chen, 2018).

Access to employment is key to promoting ISP retention. Accordingly, it is necessary to examine the factors that limit this population's ability to integrate in the labour market of Francophone communities. This issue also underscores the importance of explaining how the post-graduation career paths of ISP members differ from those of graduates in the CBSP.

Francophone immigrant population: economic integration

Economic integration is a central theme of multiple studies on Francophone minority immigration. This is explained by the importance of employment as a retention factor, not only for international student graduates, but also for immigrants in general (Madibbo, 2014; Hypolite, 2012; Sall, 2019). This literature helps identify factors that hinder the economic integration of all immigrants and other factors specifically related to settlement in a linguistic minority setting. Some of these factors may contrast with those that influence a person born in Canada (DPMR, 2020; Sall, 2019; Skuterud and Chen, 2018). The six most frequently cited factors in the literature are presented in the following sections.

Importance of English for joining the labour market

Members of the ISP in a Francophone minority context face an additional challenge in terms of economic integration compared to their Anglophone counterparts: the need to be fluent in English in order to be employed. Faced with this linguistic challenge, French-speaking international students who speak little or no English often find themselves facing a choice: accept a more limited range of potential employment or spend more time learning English in order to broaden their field of expertise when searching for work (Madibbo, 2014; Esses et al., 2016; Chira and Belkhodja, 2013; Sall, 2019; Forest and Lemoine, 2020; DPMR, 2020). According to these authors, limited knowledge of English negatively impacts several aspects of the integration process: job search off-campus during studies; research and internship opportunities; employment opportunities related to their academic field; employment opportunities after studies; and professional development opportunities. The study conducted by the C.D. Howe Institute in 2018 highlights that these language barriers can partly explain the income gaps observed between individuals who graduated from a Canadian institution and were born in the country and those who were born abroad.

Despite this interrelation between English proficiency and economic integration in Canada outside Quebec, as documented in the literature, the fact remains that opportunities to learn English during studies are still rather limited for those in the ISP (DPMR, 2020; Traisnel et al., 2016).

Lack of well-established networks within communities

The establishment of a professional network is considered a key factor for the economic integration of all those born outside Canada (Vultur, 2015; Traisnel et al., 2019; DPMR, 2020). However, studies highlight the fact that the mere presence of the ISP on campuses is not enough to create real connections within the Francophone student and professional communities (Dunn and Olivier, 2011; Chira and Belkhodja, 2013; Traisnel et al., 2016). Considerable efforts are needed to build more bridges between postsecondary institutions and the communities around them, especially in terms of employability (Chira and Belkhodja, 2013).

For members of the ISP, limited opportunities to network and build connections with potential employers, and therefore demonstrate their expertise, pose a challenge in obtaining employment in many fields (Chen and Skuterud, 2017; Sall, 2019; Scott et al., 2015). In addition, in Canada, a limited number of job offers are publicly posted; as a result, networking often plays an important role in recruitment (Sall, 2019).

Compared to Canadians, immigrants come up against real challenges in finding internships and jobs that match their expertise and interests. A study on the subject notes that these challenges arise from, among other things, their more limited contact networks, but also to their more limited understanding of cultural codes, which reduces professional networking opportunities (Forest, Duvivier and Hieu Truong, 2020).

Acquisition of work experience in Canada

The lack of Canadian work experience during studies was highlighted in the study by Choi, Hou and Chan (2021) as one of the main factors accounting for the differences in labour market performance between members of the ISP and those of the CBSP.

According to many employers, work experience can sometimes be even more important than a Canadian degree (Hou and Bonikowska, 2018; El Masri, Choubak, and Litchmore, 2015; Minto, 2018). The study by WES (2019) reveals that those born abroad who gained work experience during their studies enjoy a higher rate of employment than those who did not, and they are more likely to have a job that aligns with their qualifications. The research by Lu and Hou (2017) even shows that the wage gap observed between individuals born abroad and those born in Canada narrows when work experience is taken into account in the comparison.

Thus, having less work experience in Canada proves to be a significant barrier to transitioning into the labour market after graduation (Dauwer, 2018; Trilokekar et al., 2014; Sall, 2019). However, as mentioned, networking opportunities between the ISP and employers are limited during studies, making it more difficult to obtain employment off campus. Furthermore, it is difficult for the Francophone ISP to find employment in their language when studying in a linguistic minority setting (DPMR, 2020). In addition, some professional opportunities offered by the federal government are reserved for individuals with permanent residency or Canadian citizenship (DPMR, 2020).

From the perspective of ISP members who studied in a Francophone minority setting, the inability to obtain relevant work experience during their studies influences the decision to settle elsewhere once the study program is completed (Traisnel et al., 2016; Forest, Duvivier, and Hieu Truong, 2020).

Experiences with discrimination

Many studies focus on the various forms of employment discrimination that immigrants may face, including discrimination based on accent, international student status, and ethnicity (Madibbo, 2016; Trilokekar et al., 2014; Mianda, 2018; Chira, 2013; Scott et al., 2015; Arthur and Flynn, 2011; Mulatris and Skogen, 2012). Often, when identity markers combine—for example, if someone identifies as Black, female and having an accent—an intersectional approach is necessary to better understand how patterns of discrimination become more complex (Mesana and Forest, 2020).

Several of these studies encourage us to examine the additional obstacles that visible minority individuals face, particularly those who identify as Black, in relation to their access to employment (Esses et al., 2016; Forest and Lemoine, 2020). Recent data from Statistics Canada highlight this reality: “Racialized individuals are generally more likely than their non-racialized and non-Indigenous counterparts to pursue a university-level education. Despite this, their labour market outcomes are often less favourable” (Galarneau, Corak, and Brunet, 2023: 1). This

obstacle is all the more relevant because, in the context of this study, those from sub-Saharan Africa make up a significant portion of the student population in Francophone postsecondary institutions (Traisnel et al., 2016). They are more interested in staying in Canada after their studies than those from Europe (DPMR, 2020). This trend is similar to what has been observed among individuals studying in French or English (Esses et al., 2018).

In addition to the challenges associated with migratory status and belonging to a linguistic minority, visible minority individuals may also experience different forms of discrimination due to their ethnicity (Duchesne, 2018; Chira, 2011; Kamara and Gambold, 2011). The “status of being a minority within a minority is an additional obstacle, particularly for racialized minorities” with respect to integration (Fourot, 2016: 39). For example, Madibbo’s study (2016) on the marginalization experienced within the Francophone community discusses certain comments that highlight a distinction between so-called “native” Francophones and new arrivals of colour. In addition to hindering the development of a sense of belonging to the Francophone community, this differential treatment can lead to discrimination in the labour market and an underrepresentation of visible minorities in various employment sectors of the host community (Madibbo, 2010; 2016; Mulatris and Skogen, 2012; Sall et al., 2022).

Along with these forms of discrimination, there are those associated with being foreign-born. In his 2011 study, Oreopoulos demonstrates this type of discrimination by submitting similar resumes to various employers, some with “foreign-sounding” last names and others with more “Canadian-sounding” last names. The study results show that resumes from individuals with Canadian-sounding last names were significantly more likely to be selected.

Reluctance of some employers

Special attention must also be paid to employers due to the importance of their role in the transition from the ISP to the labour market. In fact, according to Firang and Mensah (2022), employers provide ISP members with jobs that allow them to reduce the often significant debt they incur during their studies (especially since it was contracted with financial institutions in their home country, where interest rates are higher). In addition, employers play an important role in several economic immigration programs in accessing permanent residence (Traisnel et al., 2020; Deschênes-Thériault and Forest, 2022).

While a majority of employers have positive attitudes towards hiring immigrants or members of visible minority groups (Fang et al., 2022), research indicates that some employers are hesitant in this regard (Oreopoulos, 2011; Fang et al., 2021; Chira and Belkhodja, 2013). Among the factors explaining this reluctance, we note the lack of familiarity with hiring individuals born abroad, language barriers, concerns related to retention, and the time investment required for a cultural transition (Fang et al., 2022; Chira and Belkhodja, 2013).

Furthermore, some employers prefer to offer internships to Canadians in order to maximize the chances of retaining them in their company after they graduate, without any administrative constraints related to their required status to work in Canada. In addition, in a linguistic minority setting, most employers and businesses are Anglophone, which can make it more difficult to hire Francophone foreign students (Traisnel et al., 2016).

Access to information and administrative issues

As we will see in the next section, the resources to support members of the ISP in their transition to employment and permanent residence are limited overall (El Masri, Choubak, and Litchmore, 2015). These individuals sometimes have difficulty obtaining information about temporary work permits and pathways to permanent residence. The information is not always easy to access and can be difficult to understand without assistance. During their journey, students may come across conflicting sources of information and make ill-informed choices that can have consequences on their ability to stay in the country after their studies (CCNB and UM, 2013; DPMR, 2020).

International students are dealing with contradictory information, numerous messages being sent without much coordination, as well as a complex and obstacle-filled immigration process, which seems to contradict the government's immigration objectives (DPMR, 2020: 89).

Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

The pandemic has affected members of the ISP who were in Canada, but it also affected those who were seeking to settle there. Esses et al. (2021) note that members of this group have experienced a loss of income, have been isolated from their families, and have had limited access to emergency social assistance. In fact, just over a quarter of this population reportedly lost their main source of income, while 34% of these individuals had difficulty paying their rent or related expenses (Atlin, 2020). For ISP members who were outside Canada, the pandemic delayed their arrival and reduced their chances of gaining experience in Canada (Sultana et al., 2021). This situation caused high levels of stress, anxiety, and uncertainty (Firang and Mensah, 2022; Firang, 2020).

Gaps between needs and services offered for the school-to-work transition

It is clear that settlement services cannot solve all the problems that immigrants face on their journey. Still, access to French employability services is one factor among others that contributes to a successful school-to-work transition (Ba, 2018).

A gap seems to persist between the government and community's willingness to promote the sustainable settlement of the ISP and the resources available to properly prepare them to integrate into the Canadian labour market after graduating and to face the challenges described in the literature (Chira and Belkhodja, 2013; Traisnel et al., 2019; Lowe, 2011; Chira, 2011).

The DPMR study (2020) adopts the theoretical life cycle approach regarding the journey from ISP to permanent residence, which helps illustrate the gaps between the actual needs of these individuals and the services available to them. According to this framework, the student's journey begins with recruitment while they are still abroad and ends with their long-term establishment within the community. This study (DPMR, 2020: 60) outlines the six main stages of a international student's journey, namely:

1. Recruitment overseas (before studies);
2. Orientation and integration (upon arrival);
3. Academic success and integration (during studies);
4. Transition to employment or other educational programs (after graduation);

5. Transition to permanent residence (after graduation);
6. Long-term settlement in the community (after obtaining permanent residence).

Postsecondary institutions provide support to their students in the early stages of their journey until they graduate. However, the services offered by postsecondary institutions are more limited than those offered in the community, particularly in terms of economic integration (DPMR, 2020). The officials of the postsecondary institution services who were consulted in the context of the DPMR study (2020: 33) “believe that they are not able to replace community organizations in providing certain services to immigrants, such as employment services or language courses.” The services offered by institutions have a more limited goal of sharing information, while those offered by community organizations have a broader scope and aim for establishment in the community.

However, quite often, members of the ISP are not eligible for settlement, employment or language training services offered in the community. In fact, settlement services, employment assistance services, and government-funded language courses are reserved for permanent residents. Thus, during their training trajectory, members of the ISP who plan to enter the Canadian labour market after graduating are not able to benefit from all the available resources to help them prepare properly. For example, access to language courses funded by IRCC during the study period would be an asset for ISP members wishing to maximize their chances of a successful school-to-work transition (Traisnel et al., 2019).

This ineligibility for federally funded services also poses a problem during the transition to employment after graduation. New graduates are generally not eligible for the services offered by community providers, as most have a post-graduation work permit that still grants them temporary resident status. Furthermore, since they no longer have student status, they usually lose the benefits they had with their postsecondary institutions. The DPMR (2020) study highlights the limited contact that graduates have with their respective educational institutions after completing their programs.

The resources available for a successful transition into post-education employment are therefore limited, unless there is provincial funding that targets the Francophone ISP and thus facilitates the support that community organizations could offer this population. New Brunswick is one such example (Sall, 2019). The latter, however, is more of an exception. Generally, service providers in the community intervene late on the paths of international students, after they have obtained their permanent residency. However, it is during the study period that the need for resources to support successful economic integration is most important (Traisnel et al., 2019).

In addition to services directly related to employment, it seems that mental health services are limited and not well known by most members of the ISP. This problem seems to have been even more significant in recent years, given the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the financial and mental health of this population (Firang and Mensah, 2022). Isolation, anxiety, and depression affect the academic and professional careers of ISP members. Indeed, while this issue affects the entire ISP, social and health services in French are generally difficult to access for Francophone minority communities (Bouchard, Colman, and Batista, 2018).

Profile of student graduate populations who participated in the survey

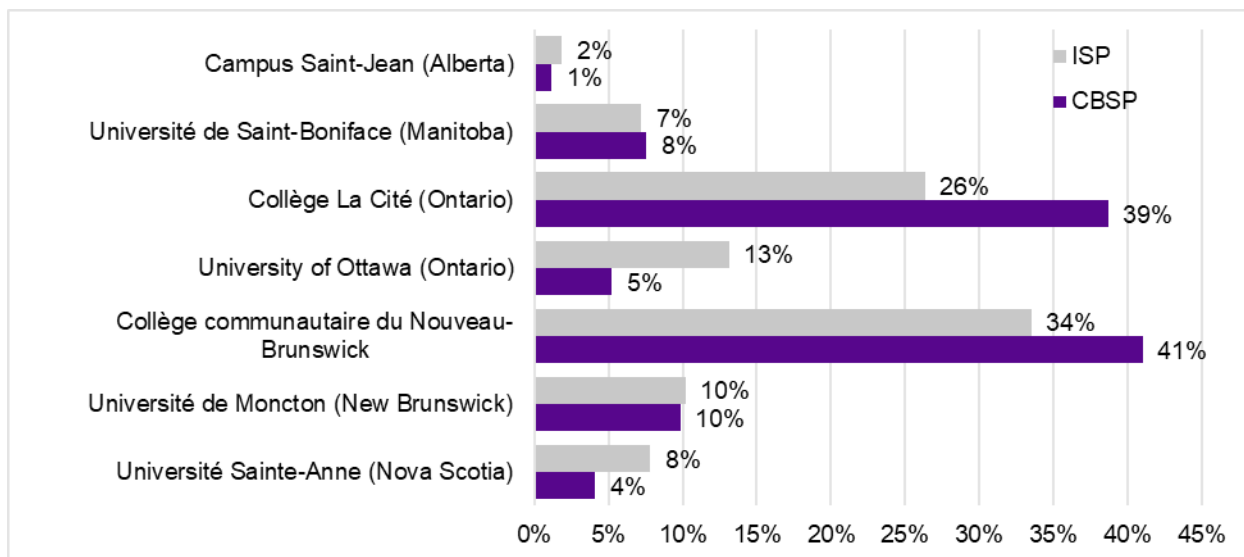
A total of 844 participants started to complete the questionnaire. After removing duplicates as well as responses from participants who were not eligible or who did not fully complete the survey, 340 questionnaires were included in the analysis. This number exceeds the initial goal of 250 participants.

Among the questionnaires analyzed, there are 173 CBSP graduates and 167 ISP graduates. Such a distribution was desired for a more accurate comparison during the analysis. Sociodemographic characteristics related to the education and employment of these populations are presented below.

Place(s) of study

Overall, 52% of the participants graduated from a postsecondary institution in Atlantic Canada, 40% from an institution in Ontario, and 9% from an institution in Western Canada.²

Figure 1: Location(s) of study



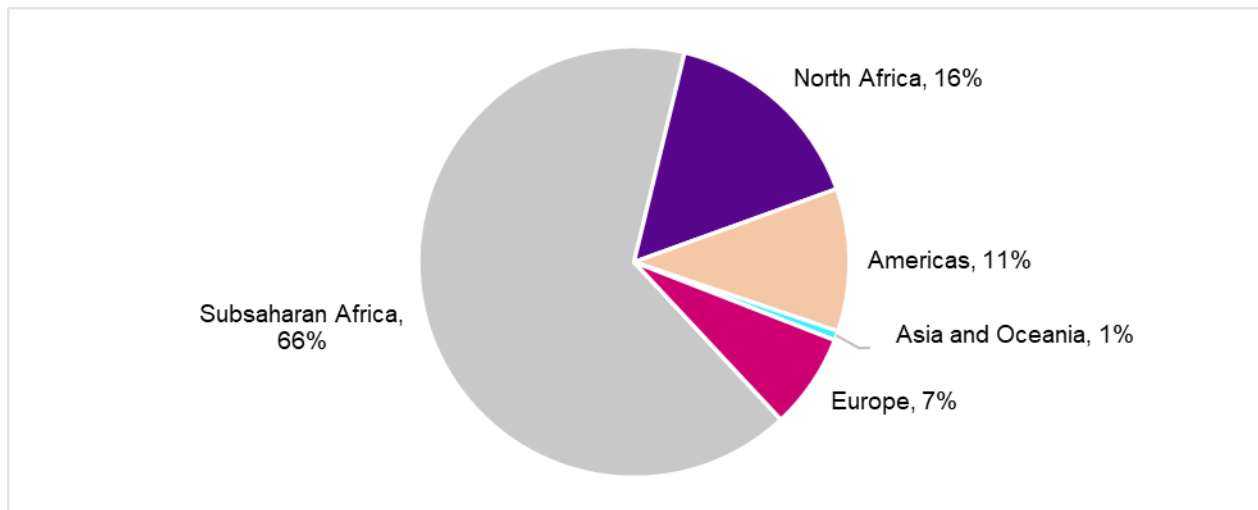
Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

² Some individuals completed a program of study at more than one institution, but only the institutions included in this study are considered. The total is over 100% because some individuals have degrees from more than one institution included in the study.

Sociodemographic overview

It should be noted that there is a difference between the two study populations regarding visible minority identification. Only 3% of CBSP members identify as visible minorities compared with 60% of ISP members. Among these, 92% identify as Black. Most ISP members were born in Africa, with 66% in sub-Saharan Africa and 16% in North Africa. At the time of responding to the questionnaire, most individuals who are part of the ISP had been in Canada for several years: 2% had been in the country for less than two years, 52% for two to five years, and 46% for more than five years.

Figure 2: Place of birth of the international graduate student population



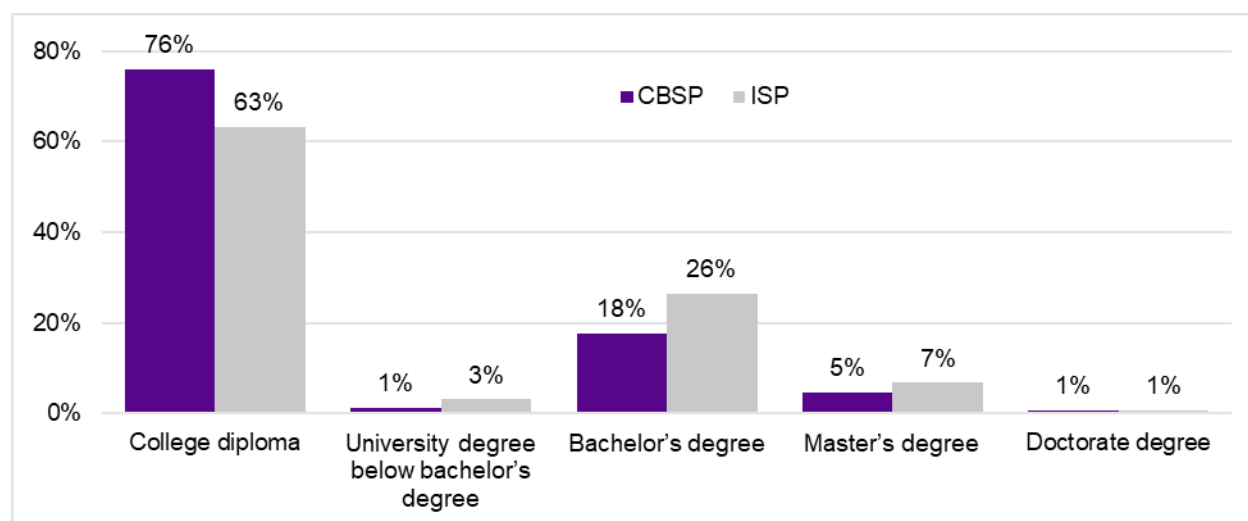
Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

Characteristics of programs of study

On average, between 2015 and 2022, ISP members had been studying in Canada over a total period of 2.7 years. This compares with 4.3 years among members of the CBSP. Most participants had completed only one study program in Canada (83% of the ISP and 73% of the CBSP). In our sample, individuals who obtained a college diploma at the end of their first study program in Canada are overrepresented compared to those who obtained a university degree for both groups under study.

Regarding the fields of study for the first degree, there are distinctions between the ISP and the CBSP. The five main fields of study for members of the ISP are as follows: 1) Business, management and public administration (37%); 2) Physical sciences, life sciences and technologies (11%); 3) Mathematics, computer science and information sciences (11%); 4) Humanities (10%); and 5) Architecture, engineering and related services (7%). By comparison, the five main fields of study for people in the CNSP are as follows: 1) Health and related fields (24%); 2) Business, management and public administration (21%); 3) Education (13%); 4) Visual and performing arts, and communication technology (8%); and 5) Social sciences, behavioural sciences and law (8%).

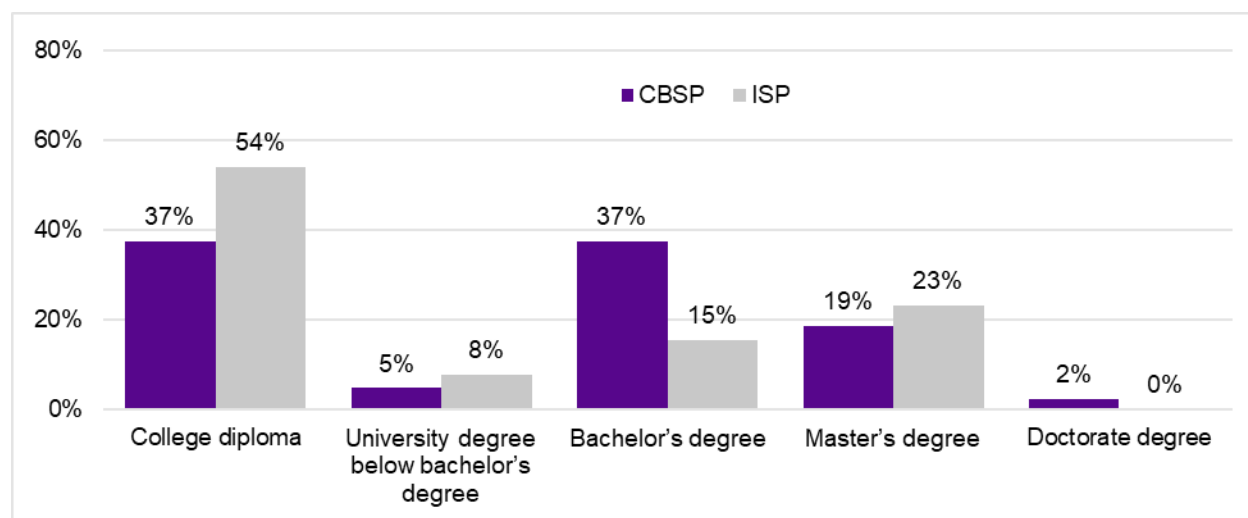
Figure 3: Type of diploma obtained at the end of the first program of study completed in Canada



Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

Those who completed a second study program (17% of the ISP and 27% of the CBSP) received more university degrees compared to those who completed a first program of study. Only a small number of participants (less than 2%) had completed a third program of study in Canada since 2015. It should be noted that two-thirds of ISP members (65%) had also obtained a postsecondary degree before coming to study in Canada. Of these individuals, two thirds graduated from an African institution (66%) and one fifth from a European institution (20%).

Figure 4: Type of diploma obtained at the end of the second program of study completed in Canada



Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

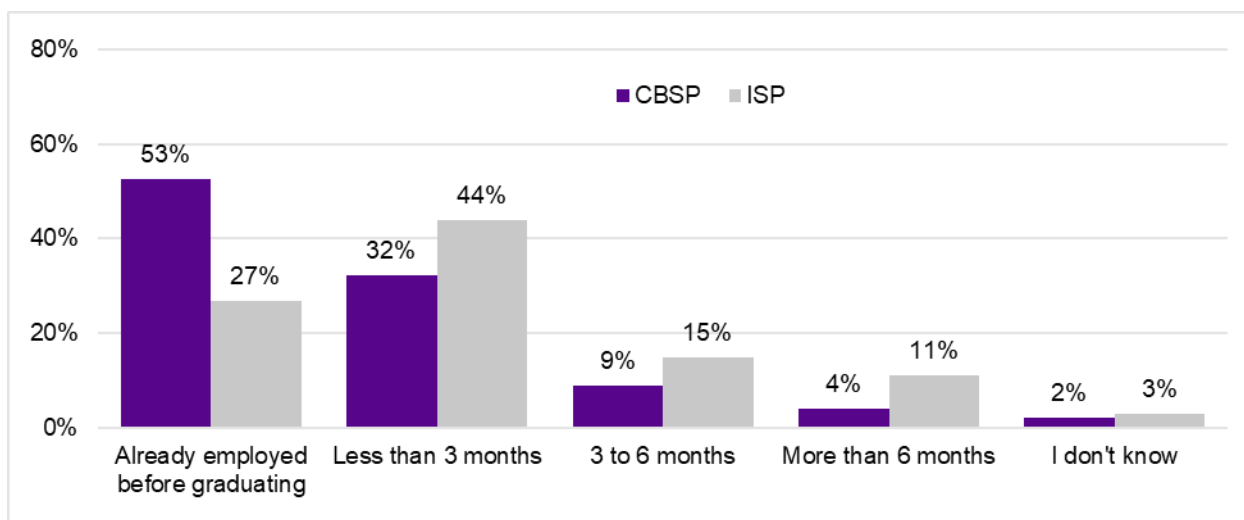
Job search during and after studies

While job searching can be a complex, unsettling, and stressful experience for some, it is a mere formality or an opportunity for others. The interviews and the survey show that ISP members with degrees have encountered more difficulties during their job search. As a result, overall, these individuals had more experience and knowledge in job searching because they searched for longer periods, changed jobs more frequently, and more often held multiple jobs.

The survey allowed us to deepen our understanding of job search experiences after graduation. The results show that those born in Canada generally worked more months in the year following the completion of their studies than members of the ISP. In fact, 80% of the CBSP worked for 9 to 12 months in the year following graduation, compared with 73% of ISP graduates. This difference may be related to the fact that ISP graduates tend to spend more time actively searching for their first job after their studies. Indeed, just over a quarter (27%) of them already had a job before graduating, compared to over half (53%) of the CBSP.

Another trend worth noting is that ISP graduates (44%) are more likely to change jobs after obtaining their first degree, compared to CBSP graduates (33%). During the interviews, it was mentioned that in many cases, a person may accept a job that does not meet their expectations in order to support themselves, while waiting to find a job in their field of expertise. “I started working at a call centre, but after a while, I continued applying for jobs in my field” (USA-ISP).

Figure 5: Duration of active job search after graduation



Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

In the interviews, participants shared their job search experiences during and after their studies. These interviews suggest that the duration of active job search is also longer for members of the ISP, particularly because they change jobs more often and more frequently hold multiple jobs. This longer job search is mainly due to the fact that ISP members face more obstacles during the process. These barriers are especially evident when comparing the number of resumes sent, the number of job interviews conducted, the types of experiences encountered in interviews or the employment opportunities they are aware of.

“ I didn’t know anyone. I just applied online in response to a job offer with the company and I was hired. It took about three weeks to do the interviews” (CCNB-ISP).

“I sent out [dozens and dozens of] resumes and people weren’t responding. Or I would call and they wouldn’t call back. It was a bit frustrating. I was thinking to myself, ‘maybe because I was an immigrant and had no experience?’ ... I was told to adapt my resume for Canada. But that didn’t work. What worked is when I went in person” (CLC-ISP).

"Before finishing, towards the end of my studies, I had started applying. I was looking for something in communications, but I couldn’t find anything. I finished my studies and continued to apply for communications positions. ... Then, I started a job as an administrative assistant. But now that I have permanent residence, I no longer have the same ambitions” (UO-ISP).

“I’d printed out resumes and I was walking around town, dropping off resumes to managers of stores and restaurants that I passed by. That wasn’t a very effective method” (CLC-ISP).

When it comes to job search strategies, what some considered effective seemed not to be the case for others. Furthermore, these obstacles and success factors were presented as being closely interconnected. For example, a lack of knowledge about certain aspects, such as how to write a resume according to the Canadian format,³ reduces the effectiveness of job searching. However, this difference is usually compounded by cultural or identity factors, such as being born outside of Canada, speaking English with a distinct accent or belonging to a visible minority. Overall, given the recurrence of similar experiences, we were able to identify the main strategies used as well as the obstacles and favourable factors related to them. These are presented below.

Use of the Internet

The survey shows that for 40% of ISP members and 35% of The CBSP, the main method used to find a first job after graduation is consulting online job advertisements. The interviews show that this method is indeed effective for finding a job, but not necessarily in the desired field. For example, like many in Atlantic Canada, one ISP graduate got his first post-graduation job in a call centre: “I did some research on the Internet in my field, but also in other places like call centres” (CCNB-ISP).

Canadian cultural codes

During the interviews, it became clear that knowledge of various Canadian cultural codes was a key factor in a successful job search, both for the ISP and the CBSP. These cultural codes are ways of being and doing things that are valued by employers in Canada. The surveyed individuals mentioned the importance of knowing how to act, such as smiling during an interview, making eye contact, writing a resume according to the Canadian format, finding companies that may offer them a job or presenting themselves to a potential employer, as a factor for success.

³ A resume written according to the Canadian format involves incorporating experiences and using specific expressions and formatting. For example, whereas in France, photos of the applicants are included in the resume, this practice is not recommended in Canada.

“If you understand the local culture well, you will have fewer barriers to finding a job. Things here are not done like in my country” (CLC-ISP).

“People didn’t call me because my resume was in French. I wasn’t aware that I had to do my resume in English” (CLC-ISP).

“It’s all about getting access to hidden job offers” (UM-ISP).

“When it isn’t your country, you don’t know too much, you don’t know the right companies” (UO-ISP).

“At first, I had trouble adapting to the job interview etiquette” (UM-ISP).

The knowledge of these codes was never referred to as problematic for the CBSP, even though many people had very little job search experience and seemed less familiar with best practices in job searching. On the other hand, the answers provided during the interviews highlight that the ISP lacked knowledge of Canadian cultural codes, especially in the first few weeks after their arrival in Canada. A majority of the members of this population mentioned attending workshops that address these cultural codes, either upon arriving or as part of their courses (in college). However, ISP graduates mention that learning these codes also comes from having lived and worked in Canada. For this reason, knowledge of the main cultural codes had become less problematic by the time their studies were finished. However, after completing their studies, ISP graduates seemed to lack a deeper understanding of the cultural codes specifically related to their field of study, particularly because they were less likely to have worked in their field before graduating.

Opening up employers to ethnocultural diversity

The interviews, including those with stakeholders, confirmed that despite effective job search strategies, some employers simply have unfavourable biases towards individuals who have international student status, who were born abroad or who belong to a visible minority. Sometimes, there is no prejudice, but the employers are just not aware of good hiring practices. These prejudices and lack of knowledge of best practices were found to hinder the hiring of ISP members in various ways, such as when:

- Selecting individuals for an interview;
- Selecting one person from those invited for an interview;
- Accepting that people have different accents in English;
- Accepting that English language skills can be improved;
- Recognizing the value of expertise and degrees acquired abroad;
- Recognizing the value of foreign student status.

“All these efforts are made to recruit us at the university. ... During our time in university, we are taught a lot of things. And then after we get our education, the province doesn’t benefit from our talents” (UM-ISP).

“What really shocked me was that I saw Canadian students working at companies where I had applied for the same position yet never even got a response” (CLC-ISP).

“For my friends who had to work, they almost all worked in call centres. That’s where international students were able to get hired” (UM-ISP).

Furthermore, in a context of labour shortage, a lack of openness or knowledge on the part of employers towards culturally diverse individuals not only seems to reduce these individuals' likelihood of being hired, but also seems to further reduce the likelihood of being hired at the level of their qualifications. As a result, some non-specialized companies, such as call centres (Moncton, Winnipeg) and delivery services (Ottawa), have developed an organizational culture and procedures that promote the hiring of foreign-born applicants. These individuals make up the majority of the workforce in these companies and are often overqualified.

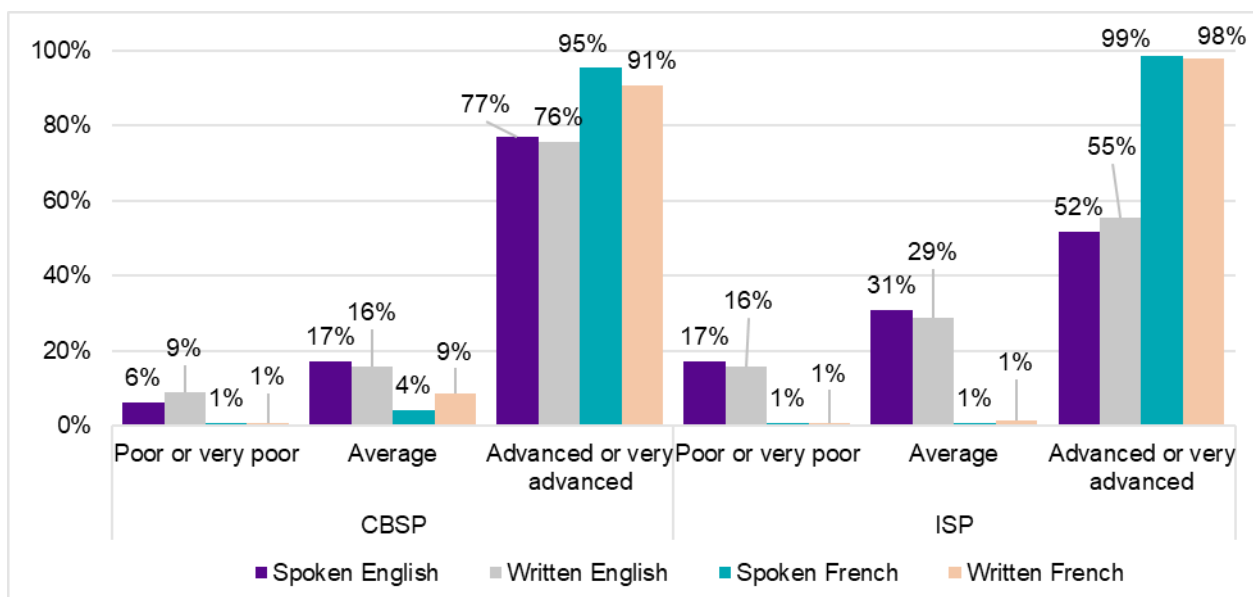
Conversely, when companies looking for highly qualified applicants develop an organizational culture that values cultural diversity in the workplace, it can be a factor that helps ISP graduates to find a job that matches their skills. Additionally, such an organizational culture, combined with targeted strategies, presents advantages, as this employer points out: "It's a win-win situation. We have made a commitment to diversity and inclusion, both in our hiring strategies and in the workplace." For example, a Moncton company conducts recruitment campaigns that highlight several of its employees who have immigration backgrounds to reach members of the ISP. In addition, guides for employers to recruit, hire, and integrate immigrants, such as the one from the Haut-Saint-Jean region, appear to contribute to knowledge-sharing that promotes cultural diversity in the workplace.

English proficiency

English proficiency is a factor that has a significant impact on the school-to-work transition in a Francophone minority context, as revealed by our literature review. The survey shows that members of the CBSP are more likely to have advanced proficiency in English, both orally (77%) and in writing (76%), compared to ISP members, of whom only 52% are able to express themselves in English and 55% to write in English. Even after completing a postsecondary program in Canada, nearly half of the members of the ISP consider themselves to have poor or average knowledge of English.

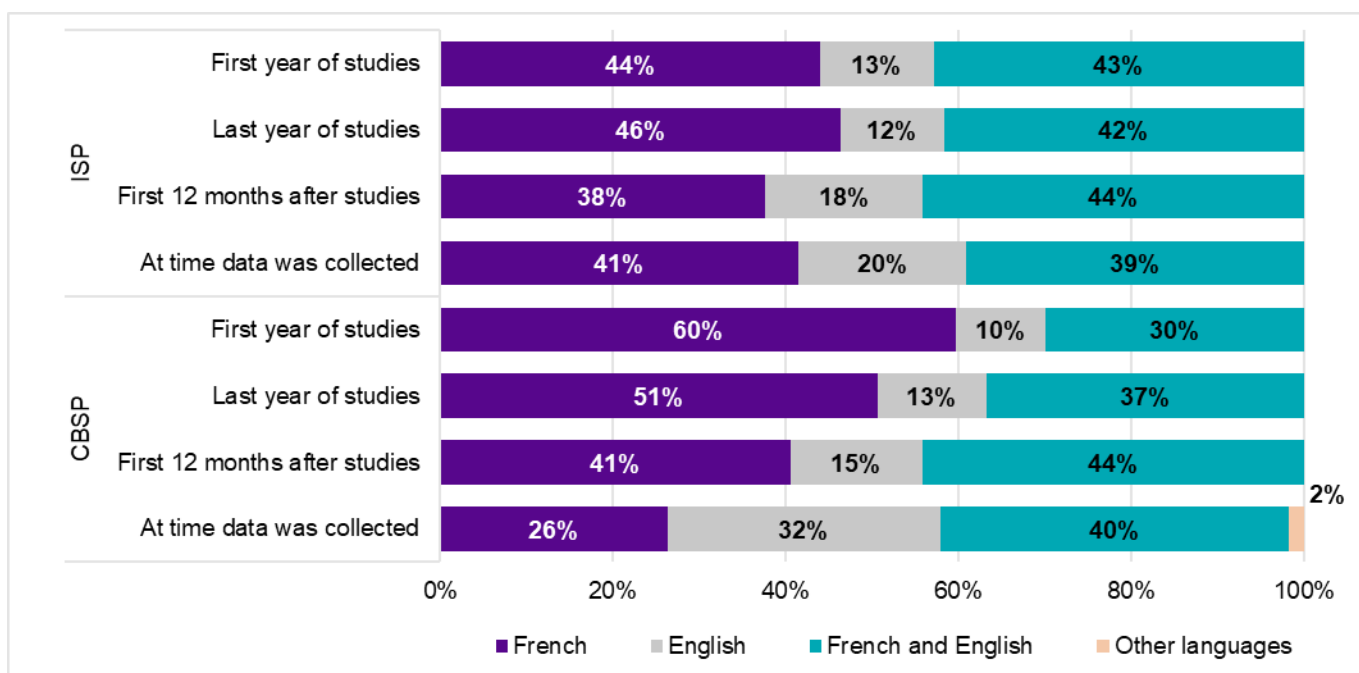
At the time of data collection, one third (32%) of CBSP members were employed in a job where the main language of work is English, compared to 20% of ISP members. The trend is the opposite for the working language during studies, since CBSP members are more likely to only use French at work during this period.

Figure 6: Official languages proficiency



Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

Figure 7: Working language



Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

The interviews revealed that almost all members of the CBSP had a good level of English language proficiency when they started their postsecondary studies. Furthermore, members of the ISP often developed their English skills during their first jobs. Even by the end of their programs, for some born outside Canada, the fact remained that low fluency in English continued to be an obstacle when searching for work. Some who studied at the University of Ottawa said they had difficulty finding a job on campus because they had to be bilingual.⁴ Others who were studying in Ottawa worked in Quebec, where there are more French-language jobs. Otherwise, only individuals who lived in New Brunswick or who worked for a Francophone community organization could work predominantly in French.

“In Ottawa, not speaking English was a big problem in my search for employment” (UO-ISP).

“Well, I didn’t even really look in Ottawa, since I’m more Francophone ... I looked for work more in Quebec” (UO-ISP).

“The English language was a big problem for me. I was told that we could speak French. But the jobs were much more Anglophone” (CLC-ISP).

“The lady told me: ‘It’s French that we want for my team’” (CLC-ISP).

“My resume speaks for itself: right away, they wanted to interview me. But language continues to be a barrier” (USA-ISP).

“I don’t speak English, so, really, I would have liked to really know the places where I could have positions that are only in French. I would have liked for those in charge of my program to give us a list of potential employers” (CCNB-CBSP).

Networking

Not surprisingly, good networking seems to be a key factor of success in job search, whether during or after studies. Similarly, whether or not they were born in Canada, individuals who are able to make use of their networks seem to have more success. Networking is essential because it allows students to connect with potential employers, find job opportunities, improve their job search strategies and learn cultural codes faster.

During studies

Newly arrived ISP members in Canada are at more of a disadvantage. Considering that a majority of this population are seeking employment in the first few weeks following their arrival in the country, if they manage to make use of a network, it is usually limited to a few foreign colleagues. Conversely, Canadians who start their postsecondary studies and are looking for employment often benefit from larger and more diverse personal and professional networks.

The more ethnically diverse networking of ISP members is notably linked to a broader issue of exclusion, with individuals born abroad often finding themselves among others from their own region of origin, while those born in Canada tend to group together: “Students from Canada create very close relationships and the internationals find their family among the [other]

⁴ A study by Wu and Veronis confirms this issue regarding the need to be bilingual at the University of Ottawa, but the authors specify that this problem seems to be more common for Anglophones, who are often even less bilingual than Francophones (2022).

internationals” (USA-ISP). Some people interviewed have denounced this situation and suggest that institutions do more to encourage cultural integration, for example, during teamwork.

“I got my first job for the federal government at the age of 16. ... I heard about this program from my mother, who works for the federal government. That’s how I applied” (UO-CBSP).

“And knowing that I was looking for a job, my friend said: ‘Hey, I gave your name to my supervisor and my manager will give you a call.’ And so I was invited to an interview” (USB-CBSP).

“We didn’t have someone working here or there who could put us in contact. I think that to quickly land a job here, it mostly depends on word of mouth” (CLC-ISP).

“Volunteering opens the door to incredible networking opportunities” (CLC-ISP).

“I was asking the former students from my community. When they had no reply, I asked a CCNB employee and on the Internet. Before coming here, I had already joined a group [on WhatsApp]. There were alumni and [foreign] students from the college in that group” (CCNB-ISP).

“ In call centres, it was practically all foreign students working there. It was pretty easy to get a job when you have a bunch of friends working there” (UM-ISP).

“We have a network of people from West Africa, so there are always people who can give you information” (CLC-ISP).

A person benefits from expanding and specializing their networks at the end of their studies, as the nature of their networks will impact their ability to find a job that matches their education and expertise. In fact, at the end of their studies, more people from the ISP had jobs not aligned with their expertise, but ones they had found thanks to their foreign colleagues—for example, in call centres (in Atlantic Canada). Individuals trained to practise a specialized profession or trade required more targeted networking: “Networking between students, towards the end of our program, was very big, because we would approach one another and ask: ‘Ah! You had experience there. How was it?’” (USB-CBSP). In this regard, job fairs organized in colleges and universities are highly appreciated by the ISP, as these fairs allow them to learn about new companies. “A manager from the company had come to a job fair. It was my first contact with [this person]” (CLC-ISP).

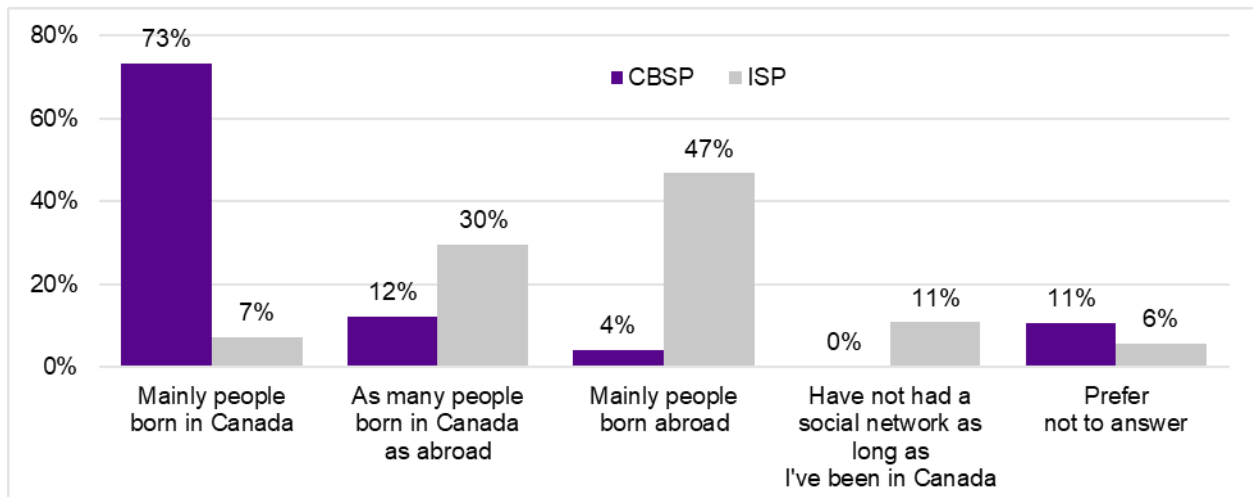
During interviews with stakeholders, one employer highlighted the positive outcomes associated with establishing close relationships with the most relevant training program managers in relation to the profiles sought for new employees: “I need employees who have graduated from computer science programs. I am in contact with the department manager for internships. When I have job openings, I circulate the offer through him. These are programs with a lot of foreign students, so I have a lot of them as my employees.” Thus, in addition to hosting interns, this employer shares job offers with ISP members through their respective educational institutions shortly before graduation.

After studies

The survey allowed us to address the state of networking among the targeted populations after graduation. CBSP individuals derive the greatest benefit from networking when it comes to job searching, since after graduation, they still have a larger network of local contacts and more relevant Canadian work experience. Approximately one third (36%) of the CBSP found their first job through personal contacts and one quarter (25%) through a former employer. These proportions are 27% and 13% respectively for ISP members. It should be noted that both groups are equally likely to find employment through contacts at their educational institution (14%).

However, there is a difference when it comes to relationships formed outside of postsecondary institutions. This can be explained partly by the fact that for nearly half of the members of the ISP, their social networks in Canada are predominantly made up of people born abroad (47%). On the other hand, three quarters (73%) of the Canadian-born student population have a network made up predominantly of people born in Canada. This problem related to the lack of local relationships seems to diminish over time. With regard to the most recent job found, both ISP graduates and CBSP graduates tend to rely on local contacts (36%). However, it is important to note that a difference persists regarding past work experience: Fifteen percent of CBSP graduates found their current job with an employer they have previously worked for, compared to only 3% of ISP graduates.

Figure 8: Composition of the social network in Canada



Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

Canadian experience and recognition of prior learning

Canadian experience is often required by employers as part of the recruitment process. It follows that the ISP appears to be at a disadvantage compared to the CBSP. Several testimonies have stressed the importance of this criterion, whether in terms of finding an unskilled job or a job after graduating. In the first year of studies, this obstacle seems to result in ISP members taking longer to find a job or ending up in jobs that do not match their qualifications.

“Maybe they will call you and ask you questions: ‘Do you have any experience in the field?’ And you’ll say: ‘No, but I’m ready and willing to learn.’ But you don’t have experience. So, they don’t want to train someone from scratch. So they’re going to say something nice to you like: ‘OK, we’ll call you back.’ But you know they never will. And that’s exactly what happens. They don’t call you back” (UO-ISP).

“Foreign students should be trusted more, even if they don’t have experience here in Canada. If we are given training, we can do the job just like anyone else” (CCNB-ISP).

“As a student in computer science, it really is preferable for us to work part time in our field. But me and the other international students, we really struggled to find opportunities in that field to gain at least some experience before graduating” (CLC-ISP).

On the other hand, after graduating, the challenge is to find work commensurate with the expertise and qualifications acquired. And when looking for a skilled job, members of the ISP felt that employers were more reluctant to recognize their acquired experiences and diplomas obtained outside of Canada. International students have said it was important to gain experience in their field during their studies. In most fields of study (computer science, nursing, administration), people can work in their specialty before graduating. Thus, once they have graduated, individuals who have already gained Canadian experience directly related to their field of study are given preference. It seems that members of the ISP are not always aware of this requirement and how to find semi-skilled jobs.

Specific aspects of searching for internships

“We don’t know anyone. No one replies to you. I was on the verge of cracking. Then someone told me about [company name]” (CLC-ISP).

“Me, I never heard back about the positions that I applied for. ... Others, Canadians, had internships before the international students” (UM-ISP).

“I never got the internship. I think that, maybe, being born here might have helped” (USB-ISP).

Several people interviewed had to complete an internship during their studies. For the CBSP, finding an internship was not a problem and often led to employment after graduation. The experience of ISP members in terms of internship search has generally been positive. Still, this search has sometimes been anxiety-inducing and laborious, as it was more difficult for these individuals to find internships or receive positive responses from recommended places. It seems that, in these cases, Canadians were given preference.

Following mostly positive integration experiences, these internship environments occasionally offered privileged employment opportunities upon graduation: “I was told to come for an interview. And then, on the same day, I signed the contract. I had already done my internship there, so they knew me a little bit” (CCNB-ISP). It is sometimes even a deliberate strategy used by employers who are looking to find promising candidates to fill positions within their company. As mentioned by an employer: “Offering an internship allows the student to prove themselves when they have no experience. And when we see that a person has potential, we can make them an offer for a permanent position. The internship is a trial period that sometimes leads to hiring.”

Temporary resident status

“Some people told me that I was not a permanent resident and that this was a problem” (USA-ISP).

“There were positions that required working a little more than twenty hours, so we couldn't apply” (CCNB-ISP).

“Personally, I could see how difficult it would be for someone with an immigration background, since first, the Canadian government only hires people who are permanent residents or Canadian citizens. Starting early and being able to get a foot in the door during your studies is a big advantage. I had the chance to prove myself even before finishing my studies.” (UO-CBSP).

Temporary resident status is associated with rules and biases that limit the number of available jobs and the effectiveness of job searches. First, when the IPS members were enrolled in a regular session,⁵ they were not allowed to work more than 20 hours per week off campus.⁶ Due to this rule, some employers were resistant to the idea of hiring from this population. Second, some positions are reserved for individuals who hold permanent residence or Canadian citizenship, especially in the Ottawa region where the federal government is a major employer. These rules reduce the number of jobs available to the ISP, both during and after studies. However, the impact of this phenomenon seemed to be more significant after studies, given that the number of jobs related to a given field of study is, in all cases, more restricted. Third, temporary resident status does not allow the ISP to access settlement services, which reduces opportunities for employment support and language training.

Distance and accessibility

“I didn't apply off campus because a vehicle was required” (USA-ISP).

“There were no public buses in Bathurst. Commuting was a barrier to working for someone without a car in Canada” (UM-ISP).

⁵ A regular session is a school term during which students take full-time courses.

⁶ Between 2022 and 2024, members of the ISP who were registered full time at a designated educational institution in Canada were not restricted in their off campus work hours. In 2024, the number of off campus hours was capped at 24 hours per week.

Only the ISP cited geographical considerations as an obstacle—and a consistent obstacle at that. In fact, several noted that they had to restrict their job search or outright refuse job offers because they did not have access to an appropriate means of transportation. This obstacle seemed more prevalent at the beginning of their studies, because over time, some manage to buy a car. Most impacted by this issue are those who attended institutions located far from major centres, such as Université Sainte-Anne or the campuses of CCNB and Université de Moncton located further away. Overall, this issue relating to the lack of transportation echoes the broader problem of the availability of public services in more peripheral regions and access to these services, which hinders retention (Traisnel et al., 2019).

Range of services offered by postsecondary institutions

All postsecondary institutions covered by this study have reception and integration services for the ISP. While support for school-to-work transition is provided by all institutions, the Université de Saint-Boniface and Campus Saint-Jean rely mainly on external Francophone organizations to provide such services. Overall, the terms of the services offered and the extent of them vary greatly from one institution to another. Without providing a comprehensive analysis here of how each institution functions, interviews with stakeholders and ISP graduates have allowed us to identify certain practices that seem exemplary. In particular, it seems that a proactive, holistic, personalized and mandatory approach is the most promising.

In recent years, the CCNB has greatly expanded its range of services for the ISP. Furthermore, members of the ISP who attend this institution appear to be quickly mobilized and connected with employers to better support their job search process. In this regard, Deschênes-Thériault and Forest (2023: 42) indicate the following:

Among this range of services, assistance is provided to the graduate population to support them in their immigration process. The College even covers the services of an immigration consultant. More than 90% of this international population (308/340) who graduated from CCNB in June 2022 have applied for a post-graduation work permit, which allows them to stay in the country to work. Among these 308 individuals, 293 also benefited from CCNB's support services to take steps towards applying for permanent residence. These data illustrate the strong potential of the international student population to increase permanent Francophone immigration in the province.

“We had courses on how to write a resume that meets the criteria of the Canadian labour market. We also had to do cover letters” (CLC-ISP).

“They should keep an eye out for the international students. The program coordinator used to do that and he would see us after classes. You need someone who is very caring” (CLC-ISP).

“Often we receive emails [from program managers] when there are job openings” (USA-ISP).

Although the University of Ottawa offers a comprehensive range of services and resources, graduates from this institution were more likely not to have used these services or were unaware of them and were not familiar with best practices in job searching. In this institution, employment assistance services and those exclusively for the ISP are separate services. Yet the ISP represents about one fifth of the institution's clientele. There are a few special projects designed to promote school-to-work transition for this population. For example, before the pandemic, a partnership between the Career Corner and the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute (OLBI) at the university allowed for a pilot project to be implemented combining intensive language courses, where the realities of the labour market were extensively addressed, and an unpaid work placement. This project was very successful, but it could not be resumed due to the pandemic.

Elsewhere, however, the ISP seemed more aware of best practices in job searching and appeared to be less isolated, like at the Université de Saint-Boniface. In fact, this institution offers three to five days of mandatory workshops that ISP newcomers must attend in person before the start of the session. These workshops cover all the topics necessary for the establishment of the ISP, including various aspects related to the labour market. At Collège La Cité, various workshops related to the labour market were offered to international students. In addition, information on job searching was regularly communicated as part of this course, which was greatly appreciated by the participants. However, this practice has the disadvantage of occurring late in the process, as many students need a job during their studies and the type of job held during studies affects the post-graduate job search.

The following are measures adopted by institutions that have had a positive impact on the school-to-work transitions of the individuals surveyed:

- In-person initial and comprehensive orientation in the first hours and first days in Canada (assistance with accommodations, groceries, banking services, getting a social insurance number, etc.);
- “Mandatory” orientation sessions offered in person before the start of classes;
- Workshops on employment in Canada;
- Job search skills development incorporated into training;
- Visibility and accessibility of social and cultural activities organized by the Francophone community;
- Highly visible and accessible mental health services;
- Free language courses that are focused on the labour market;
- Job fairs held within the postsecondary institution;
- Communication of job offers directly related to the training program;
- Specialized guidance towards professional life, during and after training;
- Services offered by a regulated immigration consultant who supports individuals until they obtain permanent residence.

Employment assistance services provided by the community

During their studies, the participants who used employment assistance services only sought help from their respective postsecondary institutions, when available. In fact, as mentioned earlier, the Université de Saint-Boniface and Campus Saint-Jean redirect their students to Francophone community services for employment assistance. In the communities studied, almost all Francophone services for the immigrant population are inaccessible to people with temporary resident status. As a result, a number of them were not able to identify what services they'd had access to. One international student reached out to a community service centre, but she felt that she did not receive good service from this organization: "They might just look at my resume or ask me to do my resume and show it to them. And that's where it stopped. It's really limited when you're a temporary resident" (CLC-ISP). Nevertheless, stakeholders from the Francophone communities in all the regions studied indicated that they provide services to the ISP. However, they often did so without receiving funds specifically intended for that clientele, which forced them to limit the services offered. For example, ISP members were able to participate in group workshops, but were not able to benefit from individual meetings tailored to their needs.

Labour shortage

"There is a lot of demand in my field [health]. I could have easily had more interviews and been more selective" (CCNB-CBSP).

"It was a bit difficult at first [in 2017]. There was no shortage of labour then like there is today" (CLC-ISP).

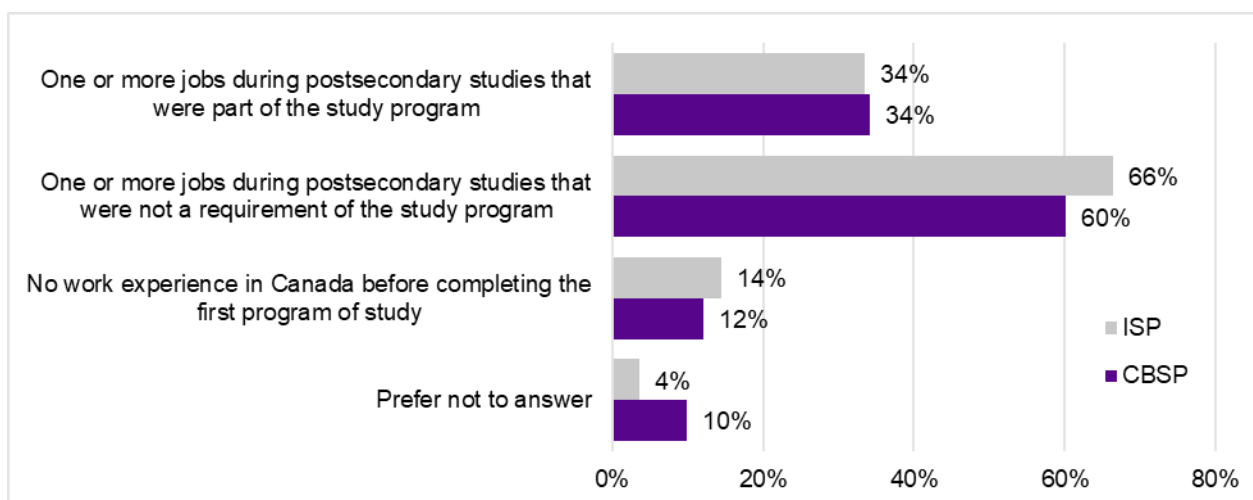
One final aspect that had a positive impact on people looking for a job in the final years is the labour shortage. Consequently, among participants, very few had not succeeded at all in finding work. The numerous job opportunities, especially in recent years, have greatly facilitated the job search for the entire surveyed population. However, it should be noted that these job opportunities do not always match the qualifications of ISP members.

Portrait of economic integration

During studies

The survey shows that members of the ISP are just as likely to work during their studies as those born in Canada, in all three targeted regions. In fact, only 14% of ISP members claim to have gained no work experience in Canada before completing their first postsecondary program, compared with 12% of The CBSP. Furthermore, among ISP members, two thirds (66%) have held at least one job unrelated to their field of study, and one third (34%) have held a position that was a requirement of their program, such as a paid internship. These proportions are respectively 60% and 34% for the CBSP.

Figure 9: Job(s) held during studies



Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

It is important to note the distinctions that exist between these two populations in terms of their professional situation and working conditions. As we will see, during the first year of their studies, compared with members of the CBSP, those in the ISP are more likely to:

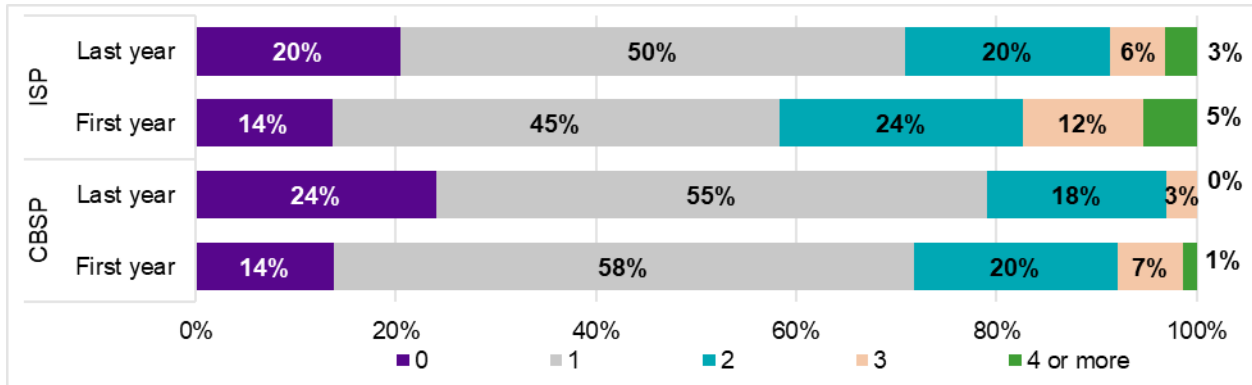
- Hold a larger number of jobs;
- Work fewer hours per week;
- Have a lower annual income;
- Have a more negative assessment of their working conditions;
- Find that they are not treated as well as their colleagues by their employer.

Generally, regarding the professional situation and working conditions of ISP members, there are few significant distinctions between the first and last year of studies, except for the following:

- A better match between employment and field of study;
- An annual income that is slightly higher, but still lower when compared with those born in Canada;
- The explanations put forward by the employer to justify lower pay than their colleagues.

The comments collected during the interviews reveal the heavier constraints that weigh on ISP members: “I had several jobs at the same time to combine the hours and ensure that I had the most hours I could” (CCNB-ISP). On the other hand, for members of the CBSP, growing up in the city where they receive their postsecondary education enables them to conduct a more targeted and more readily satisfactory job search: “I always worked in the same place during my early years. I worked part time at a supermarket for three years. I had the job since I was 16 years old” (UM-CBSP).

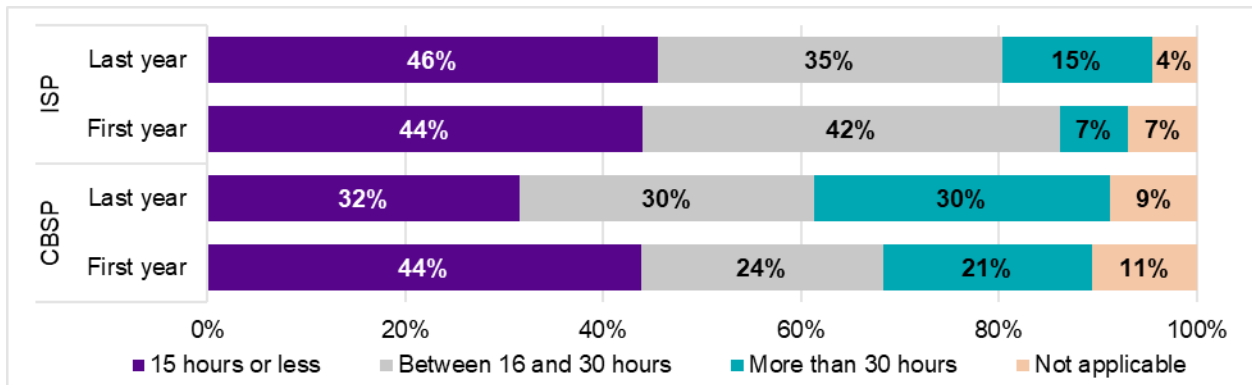
Figure 10: Number of jobs that were not a requirement of the program of study



Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

Thus, during the first year of study, 41% of ISP members held more than one job, compared to 29% of CBSP members. A similar gap was observed during the last year of the program of study. These data illustrate a heightened tendency in the ISP to have numerous small jobs, although during the final year of the program of study, half of this group’s members (50%) only had one job.

Figure 11: Average number of hours worked during regular sessions



Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

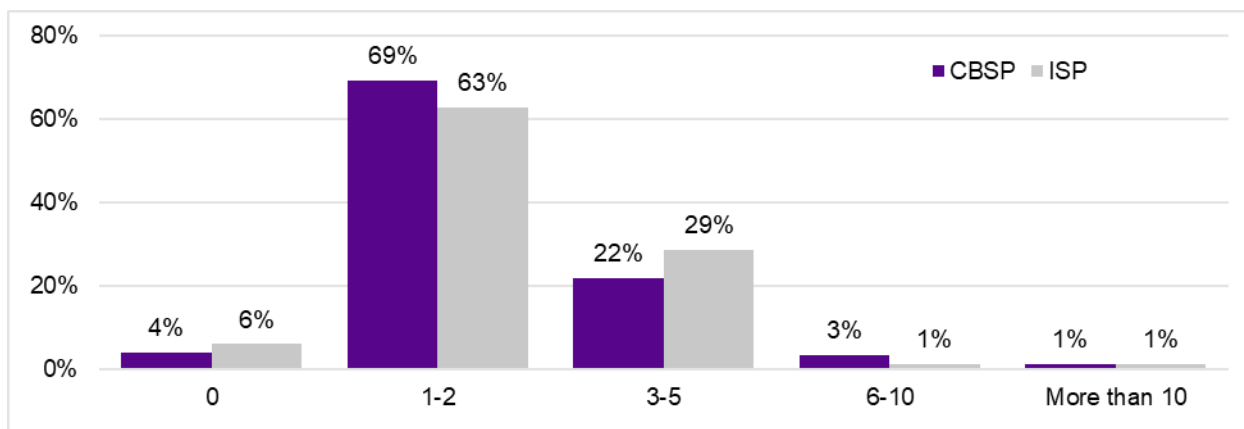
It is also worth noting the distinctions that exist in terms of the average number of hours worked during regular study sessions. The proportion of ISP members who work fewer than 15 hours per week is roughly the same during the first and last year of the study program (44% and 46%), while for the CBSP, this proportion decreases during the last year (44% and 32%). It is important

to note that for the entire period studied, the international student population could not work more than 20 hours per week off campus. This limit can partially explain the differences that exist between the two groups.

After studies

ISP graduates are just as likely to be employed after completing a program of study as CBSP graduates. In fact, only 6% of ISP graduates who were surveyed say they did not find any employment after their studies, compared with 4% of CBSP graduates.

Figure 12: Number of jobs held after graduation



Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

More than half of ISP graduates found their first job in the region where they studied. This proportion is 82% in Atlantic Canada, 67% in the West, and 78% in Ontario. Regarding Ontario, among ISP graduates who were working (78%), 21% found employment in the National Capital Region, but in Quebec (in Gatineau).

It should be noted that there are distinctions between the two populations studied in terms of employment status and working conditions. As we will see, during the first twelve months after obtaining their diploma, compared with those born in Canada, members of the ISP are more likely to:

- Hold a larger number of jobs;
- Work fewer months during the year;
- Spend a longer period actively searching for a job;
- Have a lower annual income;
- Have a less satisfactory work schedule and benefits;
- Consider that they are less well recognized for their work.

At the time of the survey, over half of the participants (51%), regardless of their status during their studies, were employed in a different job than the ones they held during the first 12 months after completing their program of study. Generally, for ISP graduates, the working conditions related to the job held at the time of the interview were better than those related to jobs held during the first few months after graduation.

Regarding the most recent job held, CBSP graduates and those from the ISP were equally likely to:

- Have a similar or more positive assessment of their working conditions;
- Consider that they are treated fairly on the job;
- Work a comparable number of hours per week;
- Rely on local contacts to find a job;
- Go through a similar period of actively searching for employment;
- Still present disparities in annual income.

Reception at a new job

The interviews allowed us to analyze how employment reception and onboarding unfolded. This dynamic illustrates and explains certain aspects of the working conditions analyzed in the survey, particularly support and training, management style, and openness to ethnocultural diversity. Identical situations seem to have been experienced during and after studies.

Many positive school-to-work transition experiences were mentioned during the interviews with ISP and CBSP graduates, reflecting the survey results. People have most often received a welcome that was cordial, even reassuring, generous and warm. The negative experiences have mainly been experienced by members of the ISP. Often, these experiences were considered difficult compared to experiences related to other jobs held in Canada. Several aspects marked the reception of the interviewed individuals, particularly the formal and informal learning experiences they had access to, as well as the informal support from managers and colleagues.

Formal workplace learning

According to the individuals interviewed, mandatory training for newly hired staff was infrequent. Those who benefited from it all worked for large organizations, such as a call centre, an insurance company or a hospital. Both during and after their studies, the interviewed individuals from the ISP more often benefited from such training and all had a positive onboarding experience.

About the City of Ottawa: “The training provided before actually starting the job prepared us very well. It covered a lot of topics and we could ask our questions. It was very well done” (CLC-CBSP).

Regarding a call centre: “I received paid training at the beginning. So my onboarding went well. It lasted for a month before I was working on my own”(CCNB-ISP).

Regarding a big-box store: “We had a training period and the onboarding was really good. I did not feel any discrimination or anything. I kept this job for a long time” (CCNB-ISP).

Informal workplace learning

A majority of the participants benefited exclusively from informal learning experiences when starting their job. During the first year of studies, ISP members more often took on a job where they quickly became independent, as these were mostly unskilled jobs. That being said, these individuals were often still supervised by a staff member responsible for providing them with the information and tools necessary for success at their job. The vast majority of the time, this sharing of knowledge and expertise in an informal context was done adequately. However, for members of the ISP, especially in their first job after graduation, it seemed important to work with colleagues who were “truly understanding” (UM-ISP), since there was a lot to learn. During and after their studies, when negative learning experiences were mentioned, people usually felt that they had either encountered a bad manager or an overworked team.

During studies

“The person who recruited me ... did a good job with my onboarding. I had a bit of on-the-job training. When I needed help, I didn't have any problem: they always answered my questions” (UM-ISP).

“I got a lot of support during my master's degree. I could ask questions to my manager or his colleagues when I had a question about my research assistant position. It also allowed me to learn new research methods. I had good coaching, honestly” (UM-CBSP).

After studies

“I had just finished school, so I didn't know anything. I was brand new to this field. My boss took the time to show me how to do things. That showed that she wanted me to be there. I thought it was great in the beginning. If she had left me all alone, I would have been lost” (CLC-CBSP).

“The pressure was the most difficult part. I would often be in tears when I came home in the evening. I thought I wasn't good enough. But actually, I now realize that it was completely normal for me not to know everything in the first few weeks. It was my boss at the time who lacked compassion for people starting their career” (CCNB-ISP).

Some mentioned that once they graduated, they would have found it beneficial if a human resource related to their training program could bridge the gap between their studies and the workplace, especially for specialized professions and trades that require quick learning upon starting the job.

Support from managers and immigrant colleagues

The presence of caring or sympathetic colleagues and managers was consistently mentioned as a key factor in a positive workplace transition. In addition, on several occasions, for individuals born outside Canada, being surrounded by immigrants was deemed to be a positive factor: “I consider myself lucky, my manager was also an immigrant. She understood me. She tried to give me some tips” (CLC-ISP). The presence of immigrant colleagues helped to create a secure atmosphere, but also facilitated learning. A lack of openness to ethnocultural diversity has been mentioned as a factor that reduces the opportunities to build relationships with colleagues or managers.

In order to promote a workplace that is welcoming and aware of cross-cultural challenges, a good practice highlighted during interviews with stakeholders is providing diversity training in the workplace. For example, a company in northern New Brunswick, in partnership with the supportive local Francophone community, provided training to all of its staff to create a welcoming and inclusive work environment.

Working conditions

During studies

Those who answered the survey were asked to evaluate nine aspects related to their working conditions. Table 1 presents the results of the evaluation of these aspects.

Table 1: Working conditions for jobs held during the first year of study that were not a requirement of the program

Working conditions	Not at all or very unsatisfactory		Moderately satisfactory		Satisfactory or very satisfactory	
	International	Canadian	International	Canadian	International	Canadian
Status during studies						
Benefits offered	59%	43%	17%	12%	21%	29%
Workload	29%	9%	24%	13%	43%	70%
Workplace (physical environment)	19%	6%	26%	11%	52%	76%
Work schedule	17%	10%	21%	10%	59%	72%
Support and training during the first days of work	13%	9%	33%	8%	51%	70%
Recognition of work accomplished	27%	17%	19%	16%	51%	58%
Management style	19%	15%	29%	20%	48%	57%
Openness to ethnocultural diversity	20%	12%	20%	9%	57%	67%
Match between field of study and employment	54%	44%	18%	12%	25%	28%

Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

Regarding the jobs held during the first year of studies, compared to Canadians, ISP members are more likely to consider their working conditions as either not satisfactory or somewhat satisfactory, for each of the evaluated aspects. It should be noted that there is no significant difference between the regions studied for these findings.

For both the CBSP and the ISP, the working conditions considered to be the least satisfactory during the first year of study are: 1) the match between the field of study and the job held; and 2) the benefits offered. This is not surprising since members of these student populations are often not looking for long-term employment, but rather a position that allows them to meet their needs and gain Canadian work experience.

When it comes to dissatisfaction, the largest difference between the two study populations concerns workload. ISP members are more likely (29%) to consider the workload of their job during their studies as a negative factor, compared with CBSP members (9%). The interviews have shown that this dynamic may be related to the fact that ISP members are not allowed to work more than twenty hours per week and that compliance with this limit is a recurring issue. “At the warehouse, I could be obliged to stay on site for periods lasting up to 24 hours. They did not follow the agreed-upon schedules. ... But I had to stay, since it was the only job I could get”(UM-ISP).

According to the survey, the most significant differences between the two student populations in terms of satisfactory or very satisfactory working conditions are support and training during the first work days, workload, workplace (physical environment), work schedule, and openness to ethnocultural diversity. For all these elements, CBSP members have a considerably more positive evaluation than members of the ISP (a difference of over 10 percentage points).

Table 2: Working conditions for jobs held during the last year of study that were not a requirement of the program

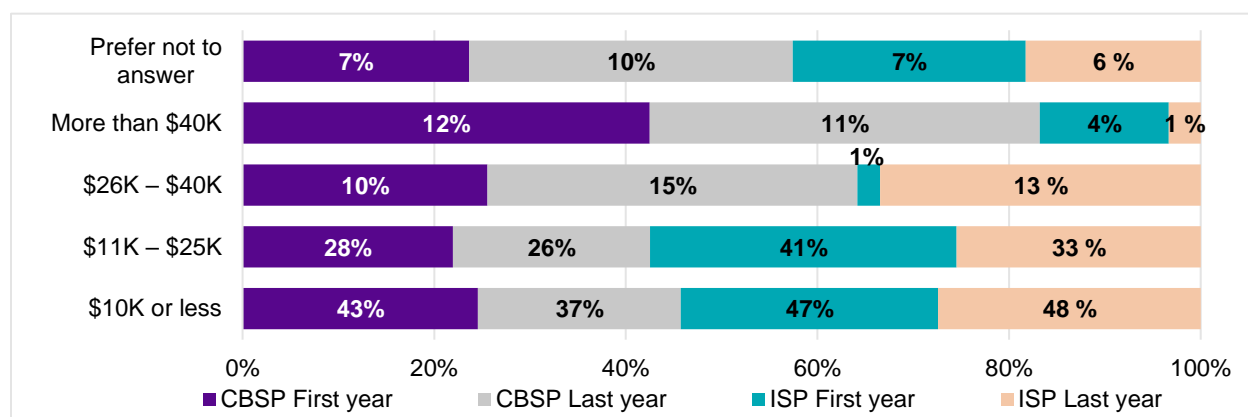
Working conditions	Not at all or very unsatisfactory		Moderately satisfactory		Satisfactory or very satisfactory	
	International	Canadian	International	Canadian	International	Canadian
Status during studies						
Benefits offered	52%	33%	11%	12%	30%	31%
Workload	23%	10%	25%	13%	48%	63%
Workplace (physical environment)	21%	6%	16%	14%	58%	65%
Work schedule	23%	8%	11%	17%	62%	62%
Support and training during the first days of work	21%	7%	22%	13%	52%	63%
Recognition of work accomplished	29%	12%	16%	20%	51%	53%
Management style	27%	14%	20%	15%	50%	56%
Openness to ethnocultural diversity	18%	9%	13%	14%	63%	56%
Match between field of study and employment	48%	32%	13%	9%	34%	38%

Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

Regarding working conditions, the overall portrait of working conditions during the last year of studies is similar to that of the conditions in the first year. For all nine elements evaluated, proportionally, the ISP tends to be less or not satisfied at all. For example, 29% of this population feel little or no recognition for their work, compared with 12% of members of the CBSP.

The annual income of ISP workers increases slightly between the first and last year of the study program. Only 5% of members of this population have an annual income over \$25,000 during their first year of study, compared with 14% during the last year. However, in the ISP, the proportion of individuals earning less than \$10,000, an income that is below the poverty line, remained stable at nearly 50% at the start and at the end of studies.

Figure 13: Annual income during studies



Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

Compared to their counterparts born in Canada, members of the ISP earn a lower annual income, regardless of the year of study. For example, during the first year of the study program, 88% of ISP members earned less than \$25,000 annually, compared with 71% of CBSP members. These proportions were 81% and 63% respectively for members of the ISP and the CBSP during the last year of study. There is no significant difference between the three regions covered by the study with respect to these trends.

After studies

The survey participants were also asked to evaluate various aspects related to their working conditions for the jobs held during the first 12 months after graduation. Once again, more members of the ISP considered their working conditions to be unsatisfactory or somewhat unsatisfactory compared with members of the CBSP for each of the nine elements considered. It should be noted that there is no significant difference between the regions studied regarding these findings.

Table 3: Working conditions for jobs held during the first 12 months after completing postsecondary studies in Canada

Working conditions	Not at all or very unsatisfactory		Moderately satisfactory		Satisfactory or very satisfactory	
	International	Canadian	International	Canadian	International	Canadian
Status during studies						
Support and training during the first days of work	18%	8%	14%	17%	64%	71%
Benefits offered	29%	18%	14%	13%	54%	62%
Workload	19%	12%	17%	16%	61%	70%
Workplace (physical environment)	15%	9%	15%	11%	69%	77%
Work schedule	18%	8%	11%	12%	68%	77%
Recognition of work accomplished	20%	11%	14%	19%	62%	68%
Management style	21%	9%	15%	22%	61%	65%
Openness to ethnocultural diversity	13%	8%	14%	11%	71%	73%

Match between field of study and employment	28%	16%	10%	11%	60%	70%
--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

The conditions considered to be the least satisfactory by the ISP in the first year following graduation are the benefits offered (29%) and the match between employment and field of study (28%).

The comments made in the interview by one student who found a job in a community organization after graduating illustrate this dynamic: “There are not many Canadians, since the conditions are quite unstable. It’s not very well paid. The schedules are horrible” (UO-ISP). Faced with difficult working conditions, ISP graduates often still keep their jobs out of fear of not finding anything better, but also with the goal of quickly qualifying for permanent residence. “I had to reach a certain number of hours to get permanent residency, so I could not change jobs just like that” (UO-ISP). Furthermore, it should be noted that members of this population are more likely to hold multiple jobs during their first year in the labour market, which may partly explain a lower assessment of their working conditions.

Table 4: Working conditions regarding the job held at the time of data collection or the most recent job

Working conditions	Not at all or very unsatisfactory		Moderately satisfactory		Satisfactory or very satisfactory	
	International	Canadian	International	Canadian	International	Canadian
Status during studies						
Support and training during the first days of work	10%	4%	5%	10%	86%	83%
Benefits offered	14%	13%	8%	6%	78%	74%
Workload	13%	6%	13%	14%	75%	76%
Workplace (physical environment)	6%	1%	8%	11%	86%	85%
Work schedule	11%	0%	3%	8%	86%	90%
Recognition of work accomplished	13%	7%	6%	11%	81%	79%
Management style	15%	10%	8%	10%	77%	76%
Openness to ethnocultural diversity	8%	3%	5%	10%	86%	82%
Match between field of study and employment	21%	18%	11%	11%	67%	64%

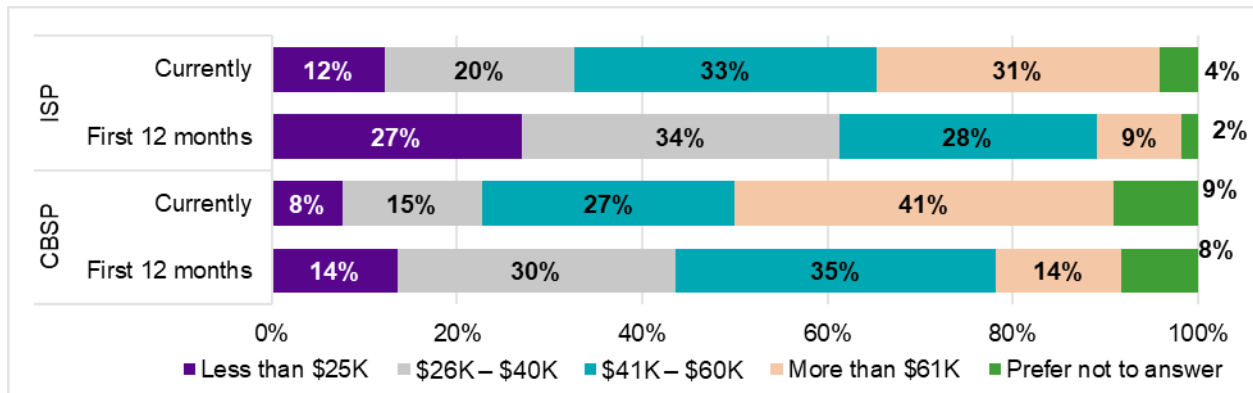
Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

Regarding working conditions, a marked difference was observed between the responses regarding the first 12 months in the labour market and the most recent job held. For each of the factors considered, an increase in job satisfaction is observed for the ISP. In addition, there is no longer any difference between the responses from members of the ISP and the CBSP, as was the case for jobs held during studies and in the year after graduating. The members of the ISP consider their working conditions to be satisfactory in proportions similar to those of CBSP members.

The only aspect that does not achieve a satisfaction rate of 75% or higher is the match between employment and field of study. One third (32%) of ISP members consider this match to be moderately or not very satisfactory. This proportion is similar among the CBSP (29%).

It is not surprising that the annual income of ISP members is higher after the studies than during them. Furthermore, the annual income rises between the year following graduation and the period of our study. For example, at the time of data collection, two thirds (64%) of ISP members earned an annual salary of over \$40,000. This proportion is actually 37% when considering the first 12 months after graduation.

Figure 14: Annual income after graduation



Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

However, despite this growth in annual income, proportionally, members of the ISP still earn a lower annual income than their CBSP counterparts, regardless of the period considered. This is one of the only indicators evaluated in the survey for which a difference persists between the two groups at every stage of the career path. In fact, 41% of members of the CBSP have an annual income of over \$61,000, compared with 31% of members of the ISP. In contrast, one third (32%) of ISP members have an annual income of less than \$40,000, compared with 23% of CBSP members.

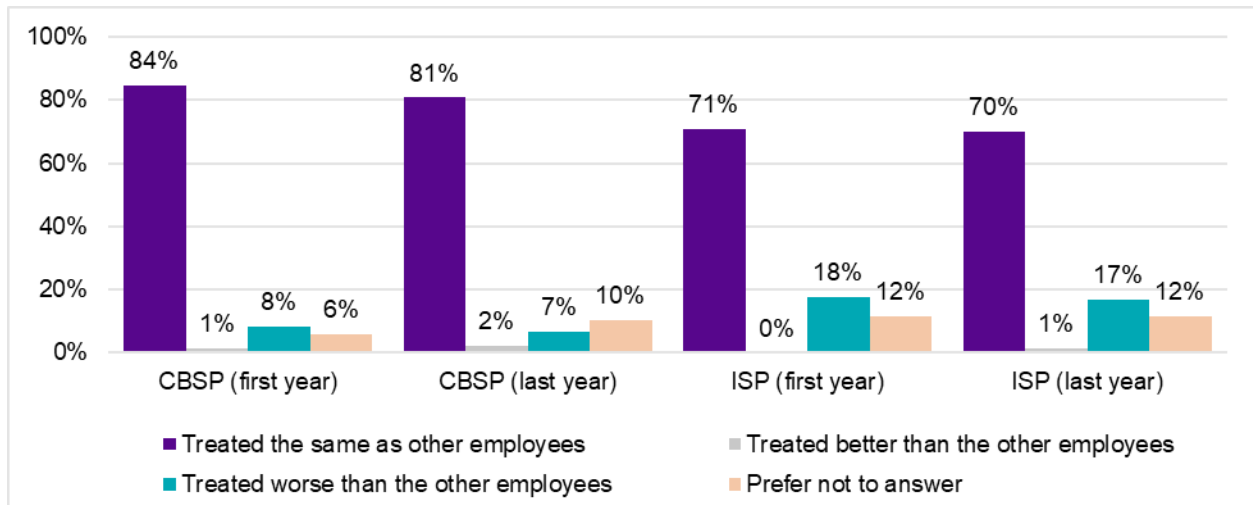
Treatment in the workplace

During studies

Most survey participants believed that they were treated the same as other employees in the jobs they held during their studies. No notable distinction was observed among the study regions.

However, nearly one fifth of ISP members felt that they were not treated as well as other employees by their employer, both during the first year of study (18%) and during the last year (17%). Those who claimed to have been treated worse than their colleagues were asked to specify why they believed they were treated differently, choosing from a list of about a dozen possible reasons.

Figure 15: Treatment in the context of jobs held during studies



Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

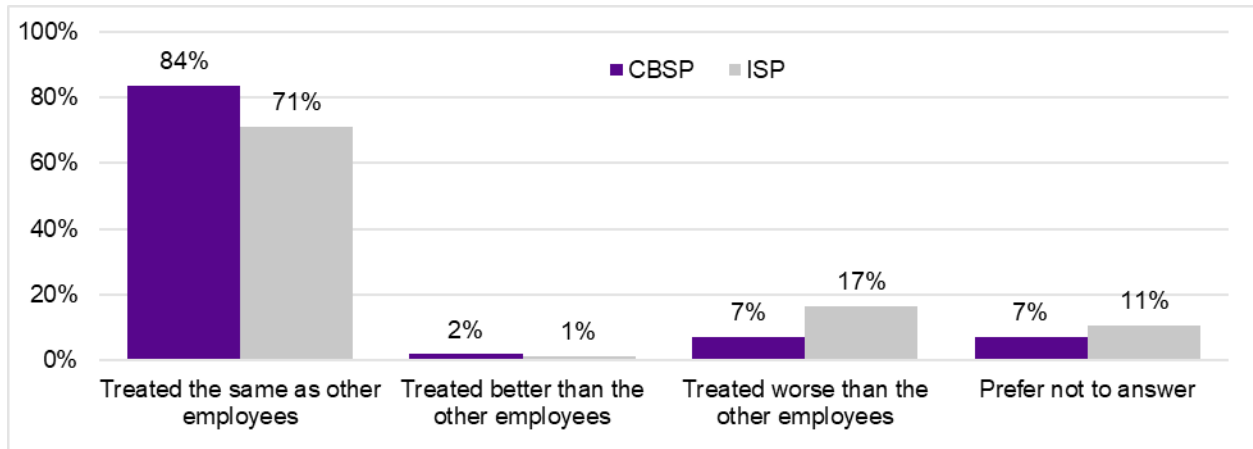
For the jobs held during the first year of studies, nearly two thirds of ISP members indicated that their status as international students (63%) and their level of English proficiency (63%) were factors that led their employer to treat them worse than their colleagues. Furthermore, among the mentioned negative effects that influenced their treatment in the workplace, over half (54%) identified their accented English and 42% their visible minority status. Finally, a quarter (25%) of ISP members feel that they were treated less favourably because of their country of origin.

For the jobs held during the last year of studies, almost as many members of the ISP felt that they were treated worse than their colleagues, but the reasons were more varied. The only factor mentioned as frequently is belonging to a visible minority (43%), on par with the status as a foreign student (43%). The incidence of English proficiency level and accent are only mentioned by one third of the participants (30%).

After studies

During the survey, nearly one fifth (17%) of ISP graduates believe that they were treated worse than other employees by their employer in the positions they held during the first year after graduation, a situation similar to that of jobs held during their studies. Once again, we noted a difference of over ten percentage points between the two study populations. This finding was the same for all regions.

Figure 16: Treatment in the context of jobs held during the first year after graduation



Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

During the first year after graduation, among the dozen reasons that could have influenced their treatment by their employer, the individuals who claimed to have been treated worse than their colleagues mainly cited belonging to a visible minority (57%) as the main reason for this differential treatment. The second reason cited in order of importance is the level of English proficiency (17%). Thus, the only consistent factor mentioned by members of the ISP to explain their poorer treatment in employment at different stages of their professional career is belonging to a visible minority. It is important to note that this issue seems to be resolving itself regarding the employment held during the survey, as 93% of ISP members consider that they are treated the same as other employees.

Factors associated with differential treatment

The experiences related to working conditions and treatment on the job were discussed during the interviews. The most problematic issues mentioned by ISP graduates in the survey were also the most discussed during the interviews, namely holding a foreign student status, belonging to a visible minority, and having a perceived low level of English proficiency. It is important to specify that the situations of differential treatment mentioned in the interview clearly showed the intricate nature of these factors, as well as other factors, such as being a woman.

Belonging to a visible minority or foreign student status

During the interviews, the differentiated treatments related to the international student status and belonging to a visible minority were regularly presented simultaneously. Often, this differential treatment was linked to discrimination, where migratory status and skin colour could both be at issue. Thus, simply being perceived as a “foreigner” could sometimes result in differential treatment.

Several people indicated that discrimination related to skin colour or being born outside Canada more often involved the clientele they interact with rather than their colleagues or managers. Furthermore, it seems that most of the situations experienced, even those involving openly racist remarks, have not resulted in the implementation of significant corrective measures.

During studies

“My first day, at 7-11, it took me some time to find the item he was asking for. He was talking to me and saying: ‘Go back to your country, we don’t need you here.’ I talked to my manager—she was there, she had heard—she told me: ‘Oh, that happens a lot, don’t take it personally’” (CSJ-ISP).

“During this first job, there was a coworker in our office who also studied at [postsecondary institution]. Unfortunately, I believe that he quit his job in the face of discrimination. There was discrimination against him from coworkers, but also from the public, since he was an information officer” (USB-CBSP).

“At one point, we had a new manager and it wasn’t great. Sometimes I had ideas in my head: is he racist against Black people?” (CCNB-ISP).

After studies

“It was horrible. I couldn’t take it anymore. I didn’t know there was a law against bullying. I inquired and I could leave as long as I stayed in the same field. It was the government of Alberta that explained it to me” (CSJ-ISP).

Level of English language proficiency considered too low

As during the job search, in employment situations, English proficiency facilitates integration in the workplace, according to participants, which has benefited the CBSP, who have a better command of English. Thus, limited knowledge of this language has regularly had negative consequences, both in terms of work relationships and learning, as well as the quality and recognition of work accomplished. Language-related integration challenges have proven to be more numerous during studies. Indeed, the jobs held during this period allowed members of the ISP to improve their English skills, especially since these individuals often held jobs where they regularly interacted with customers, such as in fast food restaurants. For this reason, many graduates from the ISP have lamented the fact that they did not have sufficient access to English courses during their studies.

After graduation, members of the ISP and CBSP who had received technical or vocational training mentioned their difficulties in learning specialized vocabulary in English, since their French education did not prepare them to face this challenge.

During studies

“We learn English autonomously while living in the city and we have one or two courses at the university, but that’s not enough. There should be a suitable service for international students who really want to learn English” (UM-ISP).

“The English courses, with the status I had, were extremely expensive. ... If I could, I would have taken them” (UO-ISP).

“It was a challenge because I didn’t understand everything. When colleagues or clients tried to ask me questions, there was this real language barrier” (CLC-ISP).

After studies

“If we could include English concepts in the program, the ones that are actually used in the world of work, instead of strictly using French concepts, it could help people once they start working” (CCNB-ISP).

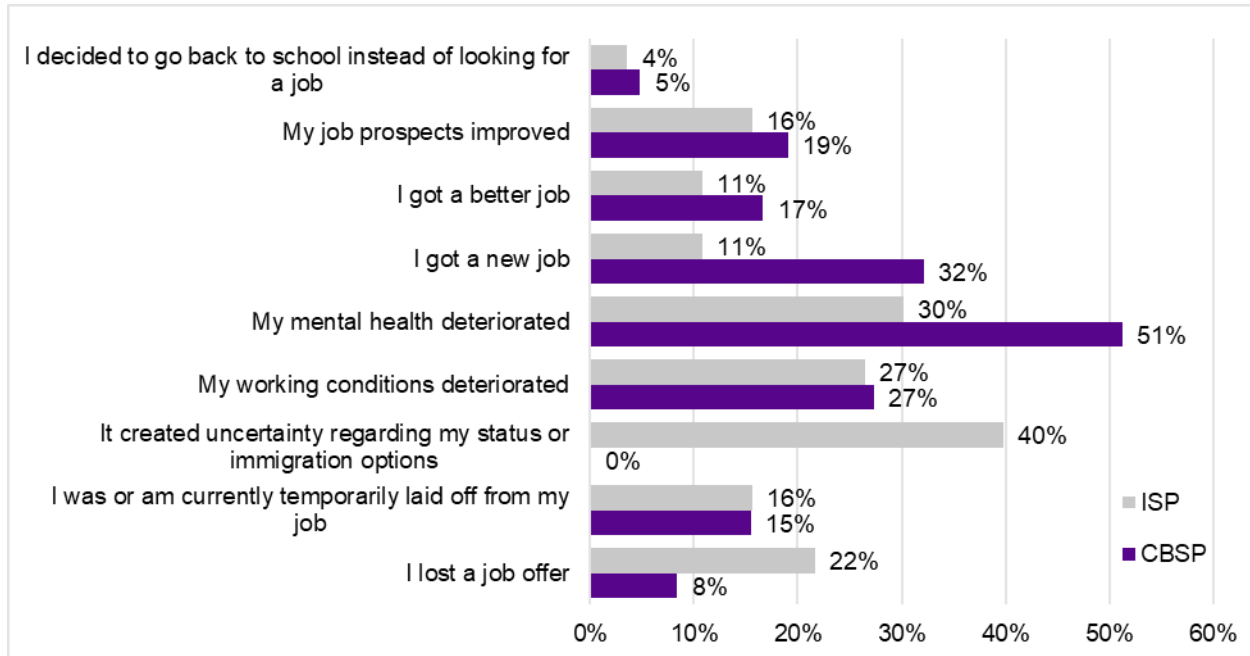
“I had to relearn the words in English. The terms that were used were mainly in English, so I devoted time to learning them” (CLC-CBSP).

“That really was one of the big obstacles to becoming a part of the team. Their prejudices were because I was Francophone” (USB-CBSP).

Impact of the pandemic on the professional situation

The survey results reveal that a similar proportion of the CBSP (56%) and ISP (59%) believe that the pandemic affected their professional situation, but sometimes for different reasons.

Figure 17: Impact of the pandemic on the professional situation



Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

The main negative impacts mentioned by CBSP members are a deterioration of their mental health (51%) or their working conditions (27%). These reasons were mentioned by 30% and 27% of ISP members respectively. For this last population, the main impact of the pandemic is the uncertainty related to their immigration status or options (40%).

Whether during or after studies, the interviews showed that the pandemic sometimes had positive effects on the professional careers of the individuals interviewed. For example, some of them had more work opportunities or earned higher incomes. That said, when the pandemic created a positive professional impact, its negative aspects were also noted. In addition to the dimensions highlighted in the survey, the two target populations addressed the issue of isolation, but from different perspectives. While graduates from the CBSP associated isolation with mental health factors, ISP graduates stressed the limited networking opportunities that resulted from it.

“I made more money than usual. I worked a lot more” (USA-ISP).

“I have a friend and he had to live on a farm. That discouraged me. ... I preferred jobs that observed COVID protocols” (CLC-ISP).

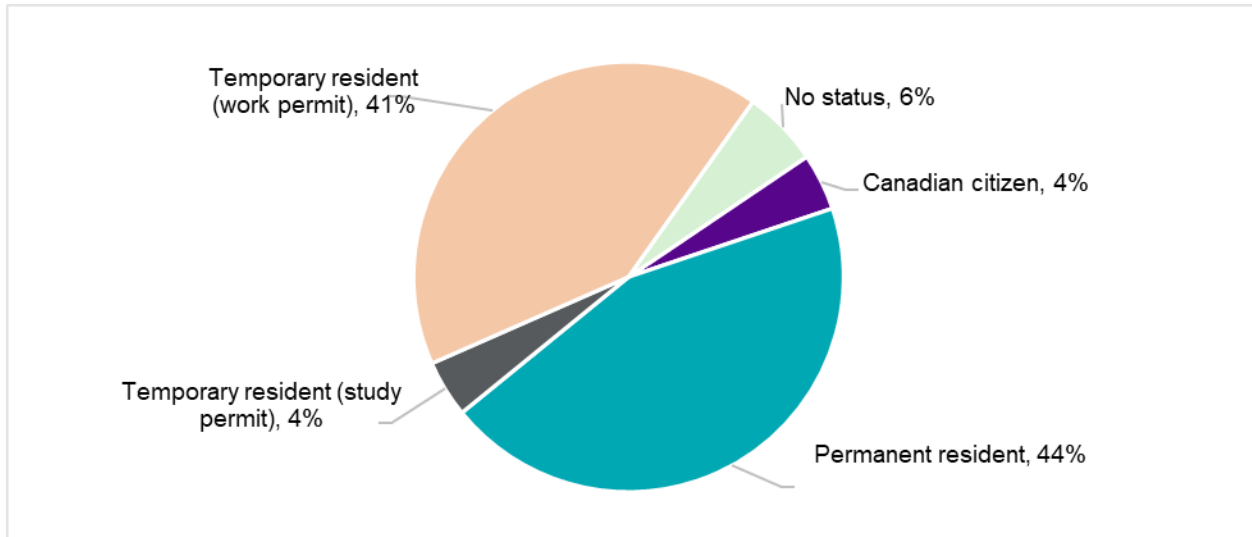
“Online training and intervention scenarios definitely prepare us less well for what we really experience afterwards, while we are working” (CLC-CBSP).

“I developed anxiety and I’d never had that before” (USB-ISP).

Transition to permanent residency

Nearly half of the members of the ISP who responded to the survey have transitioned to permanent residency (48%). Most of them (87%) obtained their permanent residency through an economic immigration program, including the Provincial Nominee Program (29%), the Temporary Resident to Permanent Resident Pathway (21%), or one of the federal economic programs managed under Express Entry (24%).

Figure 18: Current status in Canada, international student population



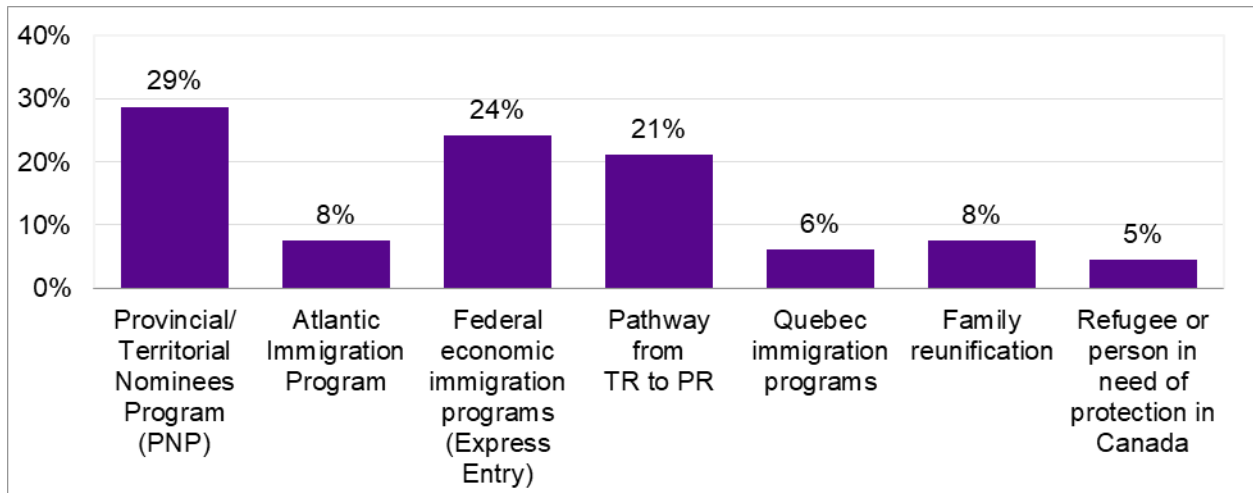
Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

Among the individuals who still had temporary resident status or who were undocumented, an overwhelming majority (98%) want permanent residence. Of these individuals, two thirds (67%) have already started the application process.

Some of the interviewed stakeholders indicated that the French-speaking recent international graduates from a Canadian institution stream⁷ is a preferred route to permanent residence for the ISP targeted by this study. This component specifically targets members of the ISP who are studying in French and is less complex than other pathways.

⁷ For more information, visit the [Temporary public policy to facilitate the granting of permanent residence for French-speaking foreign nationals](#) page.

Figure 19: Pathway to permanent residence used by international student population members who have transitioned to permanent residence



Source: Survey of international students and Canadian-born students in seven post-secondary institutions in Canada outside Quebec, June–October 2022.

Economic and social integration within a Francophone community

According to our interviews, the Francophone community is only relatively present in the minds and daily life of those interviewed. For some, their relationship with French is presented as an individual preference (“I prefer to speak French”), without any apparent links to an imagined community, political community, home community or leisure community. For others, the presence of a Francophone community, and its members, institutions and services, greatly contributes to a feeling of security and well-being. On this theme, in the statements made mainly by ISP graduates, but also by those born in Canada, one element in particular stands out, namely that there is a certain dichotomy needing to be addressed, as illustrated here: “The Francophone community here in Winnipeg could almost be called a dichotomy. There is the international Francophone community and then there is the Franco-Manitoban community. And sometimes, there is a mixture of both” (USB-ISP). This reminds us of the importance of having places and opportunities to promote meetings between the ISP and the local Francophone community.

Reasons for choosing studies in French

The members of the CBSP who were interviewed were aware that their choice to study in French is linked to a lifestyle where opportunities to study, work and have leisure activities in French are important and interconnected. “I feel more comfortable speaking in French. It was just a prerequisite for me to have a job in French in order to communicate well and to be socially integrated” (UM-CBSP). In this sense, the feeling of belonging to the French language and the Francophone community was quite palpable among these individuals.

On the other hand, most of the ISP interviewees only learned about the existence of a Francophone community in their adopted city several months or years after their arrival in Canada. These individuals primarily chose to study in French because they were comfortable speaking French and enjoyed the language. However, for many of them, the opportunity to learn English was also very important.

“Going to a city where there is a Francophone university would be a good thing, because I would have the opportunity to meet people who speak French and people who can help me out a bit with stuff that happens. And, at the same time, I will have the opportunity to learn English” (USB-ISP).

“It’s very important to me, especially since French is my first language. I want to keep speaking it” (CLC-ISP).

“To be honest, when I came here, I made a bigger effort to learn English. It’s an advantage that opens a lot of doors” (UM-ISP).

The other reasons listed for choosing to study in a Francophone minority setting are numerous: friends or family from the same country of origin and living in the region; quality and relevance of training provided; liveability and welcoming reputation of the community (except in Ottawa); more affordable cost of education, less expensive cost of living (in Atlantic Canada); possibility for children to attend a French school; and more numerous immigration opportunities in the selected provinces (compared to Quebec).

These various reasons have led members of the ISP to choose a postsecondary institution in a minority Francophone context; however, specific events and obstacles have affected whether they are a member of a Francophone community and whether they stay.

Dynamics that reduce retention in a Francophone community

For the CBSP interviewees, it seemed more natural to stay in their community during and after postsecondary studies. These individuals' perceptions and experiences were more often characterized by mobility and uncertainty. Furthermore, the Francophone community is sometimes only minimally present in their experiences and minds.

Low visibility of the “majority” Francophone community

Sometimes, members of the ISP enthusiastically embrace their new Francophone community and contribute to its development: “The fact that it is a smaller, liveable community is very positive” (CSJ-ISP). However, most members of the ISP live alongside the Francophone community, participating in activities organized by this community on occasion, as well as interacting with the members of this community who were born in Canada, both during and after their studies. This lack of knowledge of the Francophone community seemed much more significant in Ottawa.

“Well, at first, I didn't even know there was a Francophone community. I just knew that, at my university, we spoke French and English” (UO-ISP).

“I thought Canada was Anglophone. I didn't know that the Francophone community existed until my studies were over” (CLC-ISP).

A Francophone life outside of school did indeed exist for most surveyed ISP graduates, but this life revolved more around colleagues from the ISP or the community of expatriates from the same country or region. Thus, if ISP graduates looking for a job approach these groups first, it is because these groups form their first personal networks. Some people spoke with regret about the limited scope of their lives in French.

“You think you're going to make connections, but it was difficult. So I arrive in class, and I end up just sitting more with Black or Ivorian people. In the classroom, it was a bit like us against them. When we worked in teams, we were the immigrant group” (CLC-ISP).

“The same professor from the Université de Saint-Boniface. It was really great. He really helped me a lot. And a few friends who spoke French. But apart from that, it was Anglophones who helped me most of the time—more often than the Francophones” (USB-ISP).

In this regard, some of those interviewed emphasized the need to establish stronger partnerships between the Francophone community and the postsecondary institution so that the community's activities are very visible and widely accessible, with a particular focus on the ISP.

Limited labour market in Atlantic Canada

In New Brunswick, many members of the ISP had difficulty finding employment. They were all surprised and disappointed to encounter such issues. At least six people had to leave the province or are considering leaving in order to work and settle in Quebec. People who have studied in more technical fields (such as in the mining industry) or who have pursued higher education (master's degree or doctorate) seemed to be more affected by these transition difficulties: "If I had found a job in my field, I wouldn't have left New Brunswick. My friends are here" (CCNB-ISP).

Unfavourable immigration rules for certain categories of immigrants

As mentioned, the surveyed ISP graduates were at different stages of their migration pathway. That said, this pathway was very important to all those interviewed, since individuals without permanent residence aspired to obtain it. Since this status seems to lead to more attractive working conditions and professional opportunities, it is important to specify here that these steps are most often, and above all, part of a personal or family plan to settle in Canada in the medium or long term. In this regard, the recurring delays in obtaining permanent residence in Quebec make postsecondary studies in French outside Quebec more desirable.

For all participants, transitioning from a study permit to a post-graduation work permit did not seem to pose a problem, especially since educational institutions provide a lot of information and support regarding these procedures. However, stakeholders who were interviewed have pointed out that various rules surrounding study permits and post-graduation work permits limit the opportunities to stay and work in Canada in the medium and long term. For example, these stakeholders emphasized that mental health issues (burnout, depression or anxiety) or various life events (death in the family or pregnancy) can affect the performance of ISP members in their studies. However, to date, studying part time or failing a course penalizes these individuals. So, even if they manage to receive their postsecondary diploma, it is very likely that they will have to abandon their plans to stay in Canada.

Analysis and conclusion

This study allowed us to describe and compare the school-to-work transition conditions of members of the ISP and CBSP who completed their studies in French between 2015 and 2021 at seven educational institutions in Francophone communities. In general, the results indicate that the obstacles encountered by the ISP are more numerous, although they decrease over the years. The survey and interviews also show that members of the ISP face obstacles that are often different from those faced by the CBSP.

In terms of job searching, during studies and the year following graduation, ISP members spend longer actively looking for employment compared with CBSP members. It is only for the job held during the survey that this gap is closing. In fact, several factors reduce the effectiveness of job searching for the ISP: a lesser understanding of cultural codes, less openness from employers to diversity, a lack of Canadian experience, limited ability to develop a professional network, less schedule flexibility (temporary status), a lack of mobility or poor English proficiency. Our literature review shows that these obstacles are recognized in the literature on the ISP and on the immigrant population in a Francophone minority setting. That being said, our study allowed us to observe more precisely how limited English language skills and a restricted professional network upon arrival in Canada reduce opportunities to find employment related to a given field of study, and that this situation could affect the career prospects of ISP graduates.

In terms of economic integration, the profile of members of the ISP differs from that of the CBSP, especially during the first year of study. Thus, compared to those of the CBSP, members of the ISP are more likely to:

- Hold a larger number of jobs
- Work fewer hours per week
- Have a lower annual income
- Have a more negative assessment of their working conditions
- Consider that they are treated less well than their colleagues by their employer

When the study populations discuss their recent employment situation, they show more similarities in terms of working conditions and treatment on the job or number of hours worked. It is important to remember that, despite an increase in annual income after graduation, members of the ISP earn a lower annual income proportionally than CBSP members, regardless of the period considered. This finding is consistent with the literature on the subject.

Regarding treatment on the job, nearly one fifth of the surveyed ISP members believed that they were treated worse than their colleagues by their employer in the positions they held during and after their studies. In interviews and during the survey, the most consistent factor contributing to this differential treatment is belonging to a visible minority. The status of international student contributes significantly to differential treatment during studies, while the focus and level of English proficiency negatively affect the entire career path, but in an increasingly moderate way.

We suggest that the gradual improvement perceived by members of the ISP regarding the openness to ethnocultural diversity in employment and differential treatment based on belonging to a visible minority be addressed through an intersectional approach. On one hand, holding a more specialized job can positively influence this perspective. On the other hand, interviews suggest that the gradual acquisition of Canadian experience and English proficiency, among others, influences the overall ability of ISP members to communicate with their colleagues or meet expectations, thus reducing the extent of situations that are likely to give rise to discrimination.

Our study shows that the activities and services offered by postsecondary institutions can greatly facilitate the school-to-work transition for members of the ISP. This population has greatly benefited from these activities and services, especially those who have arrived more recently, as the postsecondary institutions covered by this research have significantly improved their reception and integration practices in recent years. General employment assistance workshops are offered by all establishments. That said, it seems that a proactive, holistic, personalized, and mandatory approach proves to be most beneficial in that it contributes to both networking, language learning, and cultural code learning. The institutions all seem to benefit from promoting increased exchanges between the CBSP and the ISP. Additionally, the various levels of government would benefit from supporting the institutions, since they are also impacted by inclusion and retention of ISP members.

Support offered to members of the ISP off campuses seems to be infrequent or at least little known to these individuals. The business owners who were surveyed had implemented practices that promote diversity in the workplace, such as establishing connections with postsecondary institutions (posting internship and job opportunities) or implementing recruitment strategies focusing on ethnocultural diversity and work policies that value this diversity. However, the interviews remind us that in many workplaces, such approaches have not been adopted.

Graduates from the CBSP have a special relationship with the Francophone community, as they are always aware that their choice to study in French is linked to a way of life where the opportunities to study, work, and enjoy leisure activities in French are important and interconnected. Conversely, the survey revealed that a majority of ISP graduates only learned several months or years after their arrival in Canada about the existence of a Francophone community in their city of residence. Furthermore, many lament the infrequent interactions between members of the ISP and those of the CBSP or with the Francophone community as a whole. Lastly, our study confirmed some findings from the literature, namely that the very limited access of the ISP to language training and employment services offered by the Francophone community was perceived negatively. In fact, such training and services could make a tangible contribution in terms of helping integrate members of the ISP into the Francophone community and fostering among them a sense of belonging.

For almost all of the surveyed ISP members, permanent residence has either been obtained already or they are working towards it. These findings reflect those of the DPMR study (2020) and confirm the desire of a significant portion of ISP graduates to remain in Canada. While the administrative procedures for obtaining permanent residence pose few problems, interviews indicate that temporary status and criteria related to obtaining permanent residence affect the quality of jobs held and professional development opportunities. In this sense, it could be beneficial for new graduates of the ISP to quickly obtain permanent resident status.

The survey results show that just over half of the members of the CBSP and the ISP believe that the pandemic affected their professional situation, but sometimes for different reasons. According to the profile of the CBSP members who took part in the survey, this population observed a greater deterioration in their mental health or working conditions, findings that align with those established in the literature on the impact of the pandemic on the Canadian population. As for the members of the ISP, they instead lamented the fact that the pandemic cast uncertainty on their status or immigration options. Although at first glance, the mental health of this population seems to have been less affected by the pandemic, it is legitimate to think that this climate of uncertainty may have helped to undermine this population's mental resilience. Furthermore, the survey results show that members of the ISP lost a job offer twice as often as members of the CBSP, which is notably linked to the fact that this population works less frequently in their field of study and more often in sectors that have been heavily affected by the pandemic, such as the restaurant industry.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, we recommend six initiatives to the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

1) Support postsecondary institutions in adopting a holistic and personalized approach that promotes the economic integration of members of the Francophone ISP community during and after their studies.

The collected data clearly showed that social and cultural integration, as well as the migration process, cannot be separated from economic integration. All postsecondary institutions included in this study offer a wide range of services to the ISP. Some of these institutions, however, seem to adopt more exemplary practices because their services are more visible, more aligned, more comprehensive, and more personalized. The services offered to the ISP after graduation that support migration and economic integration processes are very positive in contributing to both social and cultural inclusion within Francophone communities, Francophone immigration, and professional inclusion that matches the expertise of this population. Government funding to support these “postgraduate” services would strengthen the capacity of institutions in this area and promote the dissemination of best practices.

2) Allow the Francophone ISP to access all IRCC-funded settlement services, including language training and employment services.

Settlement services offered in French outside Quebec are funded almost exclusively by IRCC. However, to date, with few exceptions, individuals holding a temporary residence permit are not eligible for these services. This measure directly undermines the objectives of Francophone immigration, especially since the majority of individuals who obtain permanent residence first resided in Canada for a few years through temporary permits. Comprehensive access to settlement services provided by the Francophone community is best structured in collaboration with postsecondary institutions to ensure that this completeness of services does not lead to overlaps and promotes a better understanding of the Francophone community and inclusion within it. To date, it is mainly language training and community connection services that are the least often offered by postsecondary institutions.

3) Establish a program that has the objective of ensuring the visibility and presence of the Francophone community within postsecondary institutions in a Francophone minority setting, particularly with the ISP.

As shown by our data and the approach of the États généraux du postsecondaire en contexte francophone minoritaire (Forest and Belliveau, 2022), the visibility of the Francophone community within postsecondary institutions needs to be strengthened. When they learned about the existence of a Francophone community, many interviewees expressed regret for not having known about it at the beginning of their journey. A number of writings remind us that these opportunities to work, thrive, develop, socialize, and volunteer in French are precious when considering the linguistic and geographical retention of the ISP. This program could build on the objectives of the Community Connections component of IRCC’s direct services. It will also need to be aware that members of the ISP are usually more drawn to cultural groups that are close to their own. This program will therefore contribute to reducing the isolation of the ISP and promoting connections between Canadian individuals and members of the ISP.

4) Create a program with the goals of providing workplace language training to the Francophone ISP and raising employers' awareness of the specific characteristics and added value of this workforce.

Despite the clear openness and sensitive reception from most employers, the experiences of the individuals interviewed remind us of the need for more involvement among business owners. These individuals would benefit from better understanding the advantages of hiring ISP members, particularly through internship programs. They would also benefit from support to provide workplace language training to members of the ISP who have low English proficiency. Lastly, they would benefit from being able to better assess the expertise of members of the ISP, even if this expertise was acquired abroad.

5) Relax the rules regarding study permits and work permits, both during and after studies, in order to allow for a greater range of pathways.

Interviewed stakeholders stressed the need to relax the rules that apply to the ISP so that the consequences of mental health issues or personal problems (failing a course, studying part-time for a semester, etc.) are taken into account and do not result in revocation of study permits.

6) Ease immigration rules to facilitate the transition of members of the Francophone ISP to permanent residency.

Most ISP members now want to work in Canada and potentially settle here permanently. However, despite the relaxation to the rules in recent years, their migratory pathway remains filled with obstacles. Given the specific challenges faced by members of the ISP who have studied in a Francophone minority setting and the federal government's objectives regarding Francophone immigration, it would be beneficial to consider accommodations for these individuals or to design an immigration program specifically for this population. For example, as a pathway to permanent residency, the French-speaking recent international graduates from a Canadian institution stream could be made permanent.

Bibliography

- Arthur, N., & Flynn, S. (2011). Career development impacts on international students who choose to immigrate permanently to Canada. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 11, 221–237.
- Atlin, J. (2020). Skilled immigrants & workforce integration: How has COVID-19 affected the financial well-being of immigrants, temporary workers, and international students in Canada? *World Education News & Reviews*.
- Ba, H. (2018). *L'intégration professionnelle réussie des immigrants appartenant aux minorités visibles : le cas des immigrantes africaines francophones à Winnipeg*. Winnipeg : Université de Saint-Boniface.
- Belkhdja, C. (2011). Introduction. *Canadian Diversity*, 8(5), 3–6.
- Belkhdja, C., Traisnel, C., & Wade, M. (2012). *Typology of Canada's Francophone minority communities*. Prepared for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.
- Bouchard, L., Colman, I., & Batista, R. (2018). Santé mentale chez les francophones en situation linguistique minoritaire. *Reflets*, 24(2), 74–96.
- Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), (2022). *CBIE 2021 International Student Survey*.
- Chen, Z., & Skuterud, M. (2017). The Relative Labour Market Performance of Former International Students: Evidence from the Canadian National Graduates Survey. IZA Discussion Paper No. 10699.
- Chira, S. (2011). International students in Atlantic Canada: investments and returns. *Canadian Diversity*, 8(5), 30–34.
- Chira, S. (2013). *Dreaming Big, Coming Up Short: The Challenging Realities of International Students and Graduates in Atlantic Canada*. Halifax: Atlantic Metropolis Centre.
- Chira, S., & Belkhdja, C. (2013). *Best Practices for the Integration of International Students in Atlantic Canada: Findings and Recommendations. A Study of the Policies and Practices Surrounding the Settlement of International Students in the Atlantic Provinces*. Prepared for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.
- Choi, Y., Crossman, E., & Hou, F. (2021). *International students as a source of labour supply: Transition to permanent residency*. Statistics Canada: Economic and Social Reports.
- Choi, Y., Hou, F. & Chan, P. C. W. (2021). *Early earnings trajectories of international students after graduation from postsecondary programs*. Statistics Canada: Economic and Social Reports.
- Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (CCNB) & Université de Moncton (UM). (2013). *Instauration d'une approche concertée pour l'intégration des étudiantes et étudiants étrangers francophones dans leur nouveau milieu d'accueil – région du grand Moncton (Dieppe)*. Fredericton: Ministry of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour.
- Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada (OCOL). (2021). *Statistical analysis of the 4.4% immigration target for French-speaking immigrants in Francophone minority communities: Almost 20 years after setting the target, it is time to do more and do better*. Ottawa, Ontario.
- Dauwer, Z. (2018). *Assessing Canada's Support for International Students: A Comprehensive Review of Canada's Retention and Settlement of its "Model Immigrants."* Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement. RCIS Working Paper No. 2018/2.
- Deschênes-Thériault, G. & Forest, M. (2023). *L'immigration francophone au Canada atlantique : portrait statistique, projections démographiques et impacts de la pandémie*. Sociopol. Prepared for the Comité atlantique sur l'immigration francophone.

- Deschênes-Thériault, G. & Forest, M. (2022). *Faire le point sur la cible en immigration francophone. Bilan, enjeux et pistes d'avenir*. Sociopol. Prepared for the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) du Canada.
- Díaz Pinsent Mercier Research (DPMR). (2020). *Projet de priorité à la recherche et à l'analyse portant sur l'établissement des étudiants internationaux sélectionnés dans les communautés francophones en situation minoritaire (CFSM)*. Prepared for the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne (ACUFC).
- Duchesne, C. (2018). Langue, culture et identité : défis et enjeux de l'intégration professionnelle des enseignants d'immigration récente en contexte francophone minoritaire. *Alterstice*, 8(2), 13–24.
- Dunn, W., & Olivier, C. (2011). Creating welcoming and inclusive university communities. *Canadian Diversity*, 8(5), 35–39.
- El Masri, A., Choubak, M., & Litchmore, R. (2015). *The Global Competition for International Students as Future Immigrants: The role of Ontario universities in translating government policy into institutional practice*. Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.
- Esses, V., Huot, S., Ravanera, Z., Thakur, S., & Vanderloo, L. (2016). *Synthesis and analysis of research on immigrants to official language minority communities in Canada*. Pathways to Prosperity.
- Esses, V., Sutter, A., Ortiz, A., Luo, N., Cui, J., & Deacon, L. (2018). *Retaining International Students in Canada Post-Graduation: Understanding the Motivations and Drivers of the Decision to Stay*. Pathways to Prosperity.
- Esses, V., McRae, J., Alboim, N., Brown, N., Friesen, C., Hamilton, L., Lacassagne, A., Macklin, A., & Walton-Roberts, M. S. (2021). *Supporting Canada's COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery Through Robust Immigration Policy and Programs*. Prepared for the Royal Society of Canada.
- Fang, T., Zhu, J., & Wells, A. D. (2021). *Employer attitudes towards hiring newcomers and international students in the Atlantic provinces*. St. John's: The Harris Centre, Memorial University of Newfoundland.
- Fang, T., Xiao, N., Zhu, J. & Hartley, J. (2022). *Employer Attitudes and the Hiring of Immigrants and International Students: Evidence from a Survey of Employers in Canada*. IZA Institute of Labor Economics. April.
- Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) du Canada. (2018). *Bâtir ensemble : Des communautés dynamiques, plurielles et inclusives. Plan stratégique communautaire en immigration francophone 2018–2023*. Ottawa, Ontario.
- Firang, D. (2020). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international students in Canada. *International Social Work*, pp.1–5.
- Firang, D. & Mensah, J. (2022). Exploring the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on International Students and Universities in Canada. *Journal of International Students*, 12(1), 1–18.
- Forest, M. & Deschênes-Thériault, G. (2021). *Études postsecondaires dans la langue de la minorité. Portrait et analyse des enjeux*. Sociopol. Prepared for the Department of Canadian Heritage.
- Forest, M., Duvivier, J., & Hieu Truong, A. (2020). *French-speaking immigrant teachers living in Francophone minority communities: understanding and facilitating their professional integration pathways*. Sociopol. Prepared for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.
- Forest, M. & Lemoine, M. (2020). *Occupational integration in healthcare by French-speaking immigrants living in minority communities*. Sociopol. Prepared for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.
- Fourot, A. C. (2016). Redessiner les espaces francophones au présent : la prise en compte de l'immigration dans la recherche sur les francophonies minoritaires au Canada. *Politique et Société*, 35(1), 25–48.

- Galarneau, D., Corak, L., & Brunet, S. (2023). Early career job quality of racialized Canadian graduates with a bachelor's degree, 2014 to 2017 cohorts. Statistics Canada, catalogue number 75-006-X.
- Government of Canada. (2014). Canada's International Education Strategy (2014–2019). International Trade.
- Government of Canada. (2019). Francophone Immigration Strategy. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.
- Hou, F., & Bonikowska, A. (2018). Selections before the selection: the earnings advantage of host-country work experience before permanent residence. *International Migration Review*, 52(3), 695–723.
- Hyppolite, I. (2012). Contribution au développement socioéconomique de la région d'Edmonton par les femmes africaines noires francophones immigrées entre 2000 et 2006. *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, 45–46, 239–259.
- Kamara, A., & Gambold, L. (2011). Immigration and diversity: exploring the challenges facing international students on and off campus. *Canadian Diversity*, 8(5), 25–29.
- Langlois, A. & Gilbert, A. (2006). Typologie et vitalité des communautés francophones minoritaires au Canada. *The Canadian Geographer*. 50(4), 432–449.
- Lowe, S. (2011). Welcome to Canada? Immigration incentives may not be enough for international students to stay. *Canadian Diversity*, 8(5), 20–24.
- Lu, Y. & Hou, F. 2017. International Students, Immigration and Earnings Growth: The Effect of a Pre-immigration Canadian University Education. Statistics Canada: Social Analysis and Modelling Division.
- Madibbo, A. (2010). Pratiques identitaires et racialisation des immigrants africains francophones en Alberta. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 41(3), 175–189.
- Madibbo, A. (2014). L'état de la reconnaissance et de la non-reconnaissance des acquis des immigrants africains francophones en Alberta. *Francophonies d'Amérique*, (37), 155–171.
- Madibbo, A. (2016). The way forward: African francophone immigrants negotiate their multiple minority identities. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 17(3), 853–866.
- Mesana, V. & Forest, M. (2020). *Francophone immigrant business owners in minority communities: challenges and incentives*. Sociopol. Prepared for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.
- Mianda, G. (2018). Genre, langue et race : l'expérience d'une triple marginalité dans l'intégration des immigrants francophones originaires de l'Afrique subsaharienne à Toronto, Canada. *Francophonies d'Amérique*, 46–47, 27–49.
- Mulatris, P. & Skogen, R. (2012). Pour une inclusion complète : l'insertion professionnelle des étudiants stagiaires des minorités visibles dans l'école francophone albertaine. *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, (45/46), pp. 331–352.
- Nunes, S. & Arthur, N. (2013). International students' experiences of integrating into the workforce. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 50(1), 34–45.
- Oreopoulos, P. (2011). Why Do Skilled Immigrants Struggle in the Labor Market? A Field Experiment with Thirteen Thousand Resumes. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, (3) 148–171.
- Sall, L. (2019). Les politiques publiques d'immigration francophone en Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick : entre incomplétude institutionnelle et succès symbolique. *Lien social et Politiques*, (83), 272–294.
- Sall, L., Zellama, F., Piquemal, N. & Huot, S. (2022). La théorie critique de la race. Un outil de lecture ambiguës entre les communautés francophones en situation minoritaire et leurs immigrants noirs francophones. *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 59(3).

- Scott, C., Safdar, S., Trilokekar, R., & El Masri, A. (2015) International students as 'ideal immigrants' in Canada: A disconnect between the assumptions made by policy makers and the real-life experiences of international students. *Comparative and International Education*, 43(3).
- Shu, F., F. Ahmed, S., L. Pickett, M., Ayman, R. & T. McAbee, S. (2020). Social support perceptions, network characteristics, and international student adjustment. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 74(1), 136–148.
- Skuterud, M. & Chen, Z. (2018). Comparing Outcomes: The Relative Job-Market Performance of Former International Students. *C.D. Howe Institute Commentary*, 518(1).
- Statistics Canada. November 25, (2020). International students accounted for all of the growth in postsecondary enrolments in 2018/2019. *The Daily*, Statistics Canada, catalogue number 11-001-X.
- Sultana, N., Schlosser, F., & Preston, V. (2021). *Ottawa, is there a problem? International student numbers, job experiences and pathways to permanent residency*. York University: Policy Preview (6).
- Traisnel, C., Deschênes-Thériault, G., Pépin-Filion, D., & Guignard Noël, J. (2019). *Réussir la rencontre. Les francophones nés à l'étranger et installés au Canada atlantique : contexte, accès, expérience, représentations*. Moncton: Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities.
- Traisnel, C., Deschênes-Thériault, G., Pépin-Filion, D., & Guignard Noël, J. (2020). *La promotion, le recrutement et la rétention des nouveaux arrivants francophones en Atlantique : dispositifs, expériences et représentations*. Moncton: Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities.
- Traisnel, C., Guignard Noël, J., & Deschênes-Thériault, G. (2016). *Les étudiants internationaux francophones dans les Maritimes : un portrait au regard du marché de l'emploi*. Moncton: Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities.
- Traisnel, C. & Violette, I. (2016). *L'immigration dans la région du Grand Moncton : cartographie, défis et enjeux*. Moncton : Université de Moncton.
- Trilokekar, R. D., Safdar, S., El Masri, A., & Scott, C. (2014). *International education, labour market and future citizens: prospects and challenges for Ontario*. Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.
- Usher, A. (2021). *The State of Postsecondary Education in Canada*. Higher Education Strategy Associates.
- Vultur, M. (2015). *Logiques de mobilité, projets de carrière et expériences interculturelles des étudiants internationaux au Québec* [Oral presentation]. La Salle University, Canoas, Brazil.
- World Education Services (WES). (2019). *Who is succeeding in the Canadian labour market? Predictors of career success for skilled immigrants*.
- Wu, X. & Veronis, L. (2022). English-speaking international students' perceptions and experiences in a bilingual university: A geographic approach to linguistic capital. *The Canadian Geographer*, pp.1–14.

Appendix I – Supplementary table

Table 5: International student population by postsecondary institution covered by this research (2018–2019)

Institution	International student population
Université Sainte-Anne (university stream)	30.7%
Université Sainte-Anne (college stream)	15.3%
Université de Moncton	17.0%
Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick	20.5%
University of Ottawa ⁸	16.9%
Collège La Cité	10.3%
Université de Saint-Boniface (university stream)	14.3%
Université de Saint-Boniface (college stream)	60.3%
Campus Saint-Jean (university stream)	2.2%
Campus Saint-Jean (college stream)	38.5%

Source: Forest and Deschênes-Thériault, 2021: 76–78

⁸ Only individuals enrolled in a French program are included.

Appendix II – Research participation consent form⁹

Comparative experiences in the labour market within Francophone minority communities of international and Canadian-born student populations

I agree to participate in this research project co-directed by Christophe Traisnel, professor at the Université de Moncton, and Mariève Forest, lead researcher at Sociopol. This research is financially supported by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

Research objectives

Research shows that international graduate students face more obstacles when it comes to their economic integration in Canada, compared with those born in Canada. Furthermore, the members of the international student population who study in French and are interested in staying in the region where they have studied are not always able to do so, particularly due to difficulties related to economic integration.

The objective of this research is to better understand and compare the economic integration conditions in the Francophone communities of the international student population and the Canadian-born student population. In doing so, we seek to understand the obstacles and success factors of this integration and how the international student population can have more positive employment integration experiences.

My participation

My participation will mainly consist of taking part in a recorded interview lasting approximately one (1) hour. During this interview, the researcher will ask me questions about my career path. I understand that the relevant passages of the interview will be transcribed by the researcher or by software; they will then be analyzed. I confirm that I am 18 years of age or older.

Why participate in this research?

It is very important for a linguistic minority community to understand what leads its members to economically integrate into the community. Based on my experience, I am able to contribute significantly to a better understanding of these factors. That is why the research team contacted me. This participation can also allow me to take stock of my human and professional experience here. Of course, the requested assistance, though very important, is optional.

Financial compensation

I will receive \$30 in financial compensation for my participation in the interview.

Data usage

I expect the contents to be used only for research purposes and for the research team to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of my statements. The team is committed to ensuring that all

⁹ This form has been adapted for each participating institution based on the criteria required by the institution's ethics committee.

measures are taken to preserve the anonymity of the interviewees: personal information and references to other known individuals or organizations will be omitted from the transcript.

Researchers' commitment and participant rights

I understand that my participation in this project does not involve any greater risks than those encountered in everyday life. The continuous right of the subject to information regarding this project is guaranteed. I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, before or during an interview, without prejudice and without needing to provide any justification. Similarly, I can refuse to answer certain questions.

The team is committed to ensuring that all measures are taken to preserve the anonymity of the interviewees: personal information and references to other known individuals or organizations will be omitted from the transcript. The electronic files of the interviews and other collected data will be stored on a secure virtual server at the University of Ottawa. They will only be accessible to the research team and will be stored for a period of at least five years following the completion of the interview. Before the research is published, I can ask at any time for the contents of the interview not to be used by contacting the individuals responsible for the research.

Communication

For more information about this project or my rights as a participant in this research, I can contact the individuals responsible for this research, either Mariève Forest or Christophe Traisnel.

Contact information of the lead researcher and co-researcher

Christophe TRAISNEL
Professor at the École des hautes
études publiques
Université de Moncton
christophe.traisnel@umoncton.ca
(506) 858-4371

Mariève FOREST
Lead researcher at Sociopol and
Visiting professor at the School of Sociological
and Anthropological Studies – U. of Ottawa
marieforest@sociopol.ca
(819) 661-4787

Contact information of associated researchers

Halimatou BA
Professor at the École de travail social
Université de Saint-Boniface
hba@ustboniface.ca

Judith PATOUMA
Professor of Education Sciences
Université Sainte-Anne
Judith.Patouma@usainteanne.ca

Guillaume DESCHÊNES-THÉRIAULT
Associate researcher
Sociopol
guillaumedt@sociopol.ca

Luisa VERONIS
Professor at the Department of Geography
University of Ottawa
lveronis@uottawa.ca

If I have any ethical concerns about this project or if I wish to file a complaint, I can contact the Office of Graduate Studies and Research at the Université de Moncton (Université de Moncton, Édifice Taillon, Moncton, E1A 3E9; phone: 506-858-4000, ext. 4310; email: fesr@umoncton.ca).

Signatures

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which I can keep.

I have understood the information regarding this research project and I understand that I can ask questions at any time. I understand that I can end my participation at any time without having to justify myself in any way and that, if I withdraw before the end of the interview, the recordings and collected data will be destroyed. I hereby freely consent to participate in this research project under the conditions specified above.

Name of the consenting person in block letters

Consenting person's signature

Date

I certify that I have explained to the signatory the terms of this form, the objectives and implications of the research project, have clearly answered their questions, and have indicated to them that they are free to withdraw from participation in the described research project at any time without having to justify themselves in any way and without harm.

Name of the researcher in block letters

Researcher's signature

Date

Appendix III – Interview guides

International student population

First objective: Understanding the economic integration context of the person being interviewed when they were studying in French as an international student. Understanding the effect of the Francophone experience, being an international student, being a woman, being a visible minority or other factors on economic integration.

[Questions 1 to 3 are for individuals who have held one or more jobs during their studies.]

- 1) Please explain how you found your first job at the start of your studies in French as an international student?
 - How did your job search go?
 - If applicable, which personal networks, resources or services helped you find this job? How were these elements helpful?
 - How did your interview go?
 - What was the role of the Francophone community?
- 2) Please describe how your onboarding at this first job went?
 - How did your first days at work go? What was the attitude of your colleagues and your employer?
 - Did you benefit from tools and resources to help with your onboarding?
 - How would you describe your employment conditions (schedule, salary, workload, management style, etc.)?
 - Did you feel that your school-to-work transition was different because of your international student status? Because you were Francophone? Another reason? Please explain.
 - What was the role of the Francophone community?
- 3) Please explain what led to you leaving this job.

[Question 4 is for individuals who did not work during their studies.] Adapt the question based on the reasons given for not having a job.

- 4) Why did you not have a job during your studies? Were you looking for a job? What challenges did you encounter?

The first four questions are about the first work experience and the following ones are about economic integration in a more general way during the study period.

- 5) How was your economic integration as an international student comparable to that of your colleagues who study in French and were born in Canada? How was it different?
 - With respect to job searching?
 - With respect to employment integration?
 - With respect to working conditions?
 - With respect to internships?

- How did your skills in English and/or French affect your ability to integrate into the labour market?
- 6) During your studies as an international student, what were the main obstacles you encountered (networks, resources, services, skills, knowledge, attitudes, etc.) regarding your economic integration?
- With respect to job searching?
 - With respect to employment integration?
 - Do you think employers hesitated to hire you because of your international student status? Because you are a visible minority? Because you are Francophone? Please explain.
- 7) During your studies as an international student, what were the main factors (networks, resources, services, skills, etc.) that helped with your economic integration?
- With respect to job searching?
 - With respect to employment integration?
- 8) During your studies as an international student, what additional support factors would have helped with your economic integration?
- Which organization is best able to provide this support?

Second objective: Understanding the economic integration context of the interviewee after their studies in French as an international student. Understanding the effect of the Francophone experience, being a former international student, being a woman, being a visible minority, or other factors on economic integration.

- 9) Please explain how your first job search process went after completing your postsecondary studies in French?
- If applicable, which personal networks, resources or services did you use to find a job?
 - In what way were they helpful? Were they not helpful?
 - How long were you actively seeking employment?
 - How many resumes did you submit before landing your first job (if applicable)?
 - How many interviews did you have before landing your first job (if applicable)?
 - How did your interviews go? What feedback did you receive? How did being a Francophone and/or a recent graduate affect these interviews?
- 10) Please explain how your onboarding at this job went?
- How did your first days at work go? What was the attitude of your colleagues and your employer?
 - Did you benefit from tools and resources to help with your onboarding?
 - How was your job related to your field of study?
 - Did you feel that your school-to-work transition was different because of your international student status? Francophone? Other? Explain.
- 11) If applicable, please explain the reasons that led to leaving this job?

- 12) How were your economic integration and working conditions after your studies as an international student comparable to those of your colleagues who were born in Canada? How was it different?
- How did your skills in English and/or French affect your ability to integrate into the labour market?
 - How has studying in French positively or negatively affected your economic integration?
 - How has studying at institution X positively or negatively affected your economic integration?
- 13) After your studies as an international student, what were the main obstacles encountered (networks, resources, services, skills, knowledge, attitudes, etc.) regarding your economic integration?
- With respect to job searching?
 - With respect to employment integration?
 - With respect to your working conditions?
 - Do you think employers hesitated to hire you because of your international student status? Because you are a visible minority? Because you are Francophone? Please explain.
- 14) After your studies as an international student, what were the main factors (networks, resources, services, skills, etc.) that helped with your economic integration?
- With respect to job searching?
 - With respect to employment integration?
- 15) After your studies as an international student, what additional support factors would have helped your economic integration?
- Which organization is best able to provide this support?

Third objective: Understanding the factors that encourage staying in Canada and in a Francophone community.

- 16) What are the reasons that prompted you to study in Canada?
- In a Francophone community?
- 17) What role did the Francophone community play in your economic integration?
- Organizations? The postsecondary institution? Networking? Resources?
- 18) What are the reasons that prompted you to apply for/obtain (or not apply for) your permanent residency? What program did you use? What challenges did you face during this transition to permanent residency?
- 19) If applicable, what role did the Francophone community play in your decision to work and/or live in region X?

Fourth objective: Understanding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the career paths of the student population.

- 20) How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your mental health? And your ability to integrate into the labour market?

- If applicable, do you consider that being an international student and/or Francophone student increased these challenges? Please explain.

Canadian-born student population

First objective: Understanding the economic integration context in which the person being interviewed was studying for their postsecondary education in French. Understanding the impact of the Francophone experience, being a woman, being a visible minority or other factors on economic integration.

[Questions 1 to 3 are for individuals who have held one or more jobs during their studies.]

- 1) Please explain how you found your first job when you started your postsecondary studies in French?
 - How did your job search go?
 - If applicable, which personal networks, resources or services helped you find this job? How were these elements helpful?
 - How did your interview go?
 - What was the role of the Francophone community?
- 2) Please explain how your onboarding at this first job went.
 - How did your first days at work go? What was the attitude of your colleagues and your employer?
 - Did you benefit from tools and resources to help with your onboarding?
 - How would you describe your employment conditions (schedule, salary, workload, management style, etc.)?
 - Did you feel that your employment integration was different because you are Francophone? Another reason? Please explain.
 - What was the role of the Francophone community?
- 3) Please explain the reasons that led to you leaving this job.

[Question 4 is for individuals who did not work during their studies.] Adapt the question based on the reasons given for not having a job.

- 4) Why did you not have a job during your studies? Were you looking for a job? What challenges did you encounter?

The first three questions are about the first work experience, and the following ones are about economic integration in a more general sense during the study period.

- 5) Did you know any foreign students during your studies? In your view, how comparable was your economic integration, during your postsecondary studies, to that of your colleagues who study in French and were foreign students? How was it different?
 - With respect to job searching?
 - With respect to employment integration?
 - With respect to working conditions?
 - With respect to internships?

- 6) How did your skills in English and/or French affect your ability to integrate into the labour market?
- 7) During your studies, what were the main obstacles encountered (networks, resources, services, skills, knowledge, attitudes, etc.) regarding your economic integration?
 - With respect to job searching?
 - With respect to employment integration?
 - Do you think employers hesitated to hire you because of your international student status? Because you are a visible minority? Because you are Francophone? Please explain.
- 8) During your studies, what were the main factors (networks, resources, services, skills, etc.) that helped with your economic integration?
 - With respect to job searching?
 - With respect to employment integration?
- 9) During your studies, what additional supports would have helped with your economic integration?
 - Which organization is best able to provide this support?

Second objective: Understand the economic integration context of the person interviewed after their postsecondary studies in French. Understanding the impact of the Francophone experience, being a woman, being a visible minority or other factors on economic integration.

- 10) Please explain how your first job search process went after completing your postsecondary studies in French.
 - If applicable, which personal networks, resources or services did you use to find a job?
 - How were these elements useful? Were they not helpful?
 - How long were you actively seeking employment?
 - How many resumes did you submit before landing your first job (if applicable)?
 - How many interviews did you have before landing your first job (if applicable)?
 - How did your interviews go? What feedback did you receive? How did being a Francophone and/or a recent graduate affect these interviews?
- 11) Please explain how the onboarding for your first job went.
 - How did your first days at work go? What was the attitude of your colleagues and your employer?
 - Did you benefit from tools and resources to help with your onboarding?
 - How was your job related to your field of study?
 - Did you feel that your school-to-work transition was different because you were Francophone? Other? Explain.
- 12) If applicable, please explain the reasons that led to leaving this job.
- 13) How comparable were your post-studies economic integration and working conditions to those of your colleagues who were born abroad? How was it different?

- How did your skills in English and/or French affect your ability to integrate into the labour market?
 - How has studying in French positively or negatively affected your economic integration?
 - How has studying at institution X positively or negatively affected your economic integration?
- 14) After your studies, what were the main obstacles encountered (networks, resources, services, skills, knowledge, attitudes, etc.) regarding your economic integration?
- With respect to job searching?
 - With respect to employment integration?
 - With respect to your working conditions?
 - Do you think employers hesitated to hire you because you are Francophone? Because you are a visible minority? Explain.
- 15) After your studies, what were the main factors (networks, resources, services, skills, etc.) that helped with your economic integration?
- With respect to job searching?
 - With respect to employment integration?
- 16) After your studies, what additional support factors would have helped your economic integration?
- Which organization is best able to provide this support?

Third objective: Understanding the factors that encourage staying in Canada and in a Francophone community.

- 17) What are the reasons that prompted you to study in French outside Quebec?
- 18) What role did the Francophone community play in your economic integration?
- Organizations? The postsecondary institution? Networking? Resources?
- 19) If applicable, what role did the Francophone community play in your decision to work and/or live in region X?

Fourth objective: Understanding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the career paths of the student population.

- 20) How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your mental health? And your ability to integrate into the labour market?
- If applicable, do you consider that being Francophone has increased these challenges? Explain.
- 21) How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed the support you provide to international students who have studied in French?

Employers who hire a graduate population that has taken postsecondary education outside Quebec

Objective: Understanding the support (resources, training, guidance, procedures, activities, etc.) available to the student population that studied in French. Understanding how to enhance these supports.

- 1) What kind of support do you typically provide to newly hired staff?
- 2) In your opinion, how are people who have studied in French outside Quebec constitute or do not constitute new personnel who are different from other graduates that you hire?
 - How are these differences an asset for their school-to-work transition? For your business?
 - What challenges do these differences pose to their school-to-work transition? For your business?
 - Do these individuals receive different types of support (accompaniment, resources, etc.)?
- 3) In your opinion, how do the individuals who were international students differ from other graduates you hire?
 - How are these differences an asset for their school-to-work transition? For your business?
 - What challenges do these differences pose to their school-to-work transition? For your business?
 - Do these individuals receive different types of support? From whom (company, public integration program, recruitment program)?
- 4) What types of support (guidance, resources, training, etc.) do you use to promote ethnocultural diversity and reduce discrimination related to language, race, gender, ethnocultural origin, etc. in your professional sector? Explain.
 - How are these types of support helpful for the graduated international student population?
 - In your view, how are these initiatives performing (evaluation)?
- 5) How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed your strategies for recruiting, integrating or retaining students who have completed their education in French? And for international students?

Stakeholders in the economic integration of the international student population who have studied in French outside Quebec

Objective: Understanding the support (services, resources, training, assistance, procedures, activities, etc.) offered by stakeholders in the economic integration of the international student population who have studied in French. Understanding how to enhance these supports.

- 1) In your opinion, what specific needs does the international student population who studied in French outside Quebec have, when compared with the Canadian-born student population?
 - What additional obstacles does the international student population who have studied in French face compared with the Canadian-born student population?
 - Would an official policy aimed at providing guidance for international students in their school-to-work transition be useful? Explain.
- 2) Please explain the services provided by your organization to support the economic integration of the international student population. What other types of support are available?
 - What needs do these types of support meet?
 - How are these types of support useful to the international student population?
 - Have you already assessed the scope of these types of support?
 - How could these types of support be improved?
- 3) What other types of support could be put in place to promote the economic integration of the international student population?
 - What needs would these types of support meet?

How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed the support you provide to international students who have studied in French?