



# Special Feature: Education Abroad

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# What We Count and How We Do It: The CBIE Education Abroad Data Collection Survey

Institutions across the country grapple with tracking education abroad participation. Should one week abroad be counted in the same way as one semester? Is it best to count by semester, academic year, or calendar year? How to report the hard-to-access data collected by different offices across campus?

Processes around the collection of education abroad data are not standardized in Canada. With a decentralized education structure, there is no overarching system to track and measure outbound mobility. Canadian post-secondary institutions have varying definitions of education abroad, count participation in programs differently, and use different systems to track outbound mobility. As a result, we lack reliable annual participation statistics, which has an effect on planning, policy, and our ability to accurately compare participation rates at the international level.

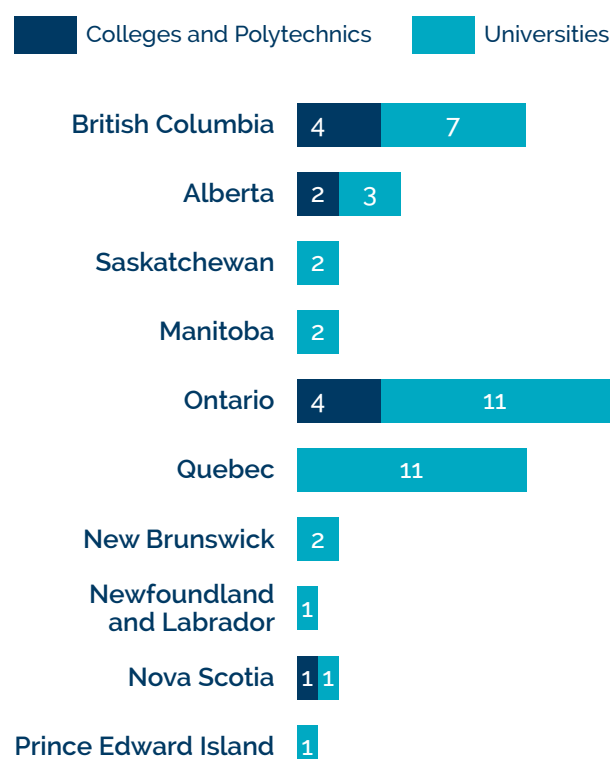
There are many reasons why it is beneficial for institutions to have a clear picture of their outbound mobility numbers. Accurate statistics are important for evaluating internationalization goals, pursuing funding opportunities, reporting to provincial governments and other bodies, tracking for risk management purposes, measuring against local comparator institutions, and for reports that inform international rankings. Participation data can also be reflected in recruitment materials for international students and for domestic students who wish to have an education abroad experience.

The impetus behind *What We Count and How We Do It: The CBIE Education Abroad Data Collection Survey* is to inform our understanding of how individual institutions across Canada currently track, measure, and report education abroad participation. The findings are presented in this chapter. Based on survey results, stakeholder consultation, and an analysis of international comparators' mobility statistics,<sup>64</sup> the chapter concludes with a series of best practice guidelines to standardize data collection and align our national efforts with wider global processes.

<sup>64</sup> Comparator countries/regions include Australia, Europe (Erasmus Plus program), Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

A total of 52 institutions from across all 10 provinces took part in this bilingual survey.<sup>65</sup> Specifically, 41 universities and 11 colleges and polytechnics participated between March and April 2016. See figure 21.

Figure 21:  
Institutions Represented, by Province and Type



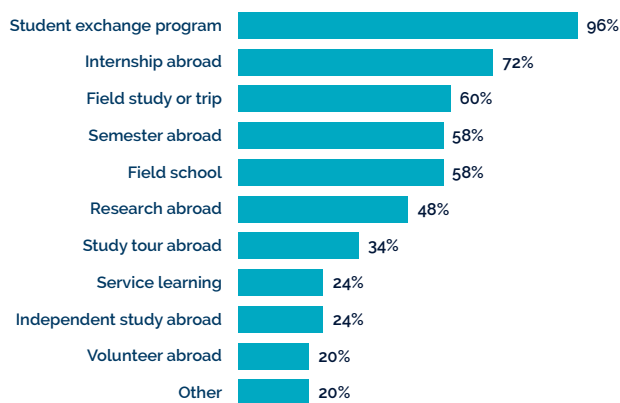
<sup>65</sup> Bishop's University, Brock University, Camosun College, Capilano University, Centennial College, College of New Caledonia, College of the Rockies, Concordia University, Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Fanshawe College, Georgian College, Grant MacEwan University, HEC Montréal, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Langara College, Laurentian University, McGill University, Medicine Hat College, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Niagara College, Nova Scotia Community College, Polytechnique Montréal, Queen's University, Quest University Canada, Ryerson University, Saint Mary's University, Simon Fraser University, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, Université de Moncton, Université de Montréal, Université de Saint-Boniface, Université de Sherbrooke, Université du Québec à Montréal, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Université du Québec en Outaouais, Université Laval, University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Guelph, University of New Brunswick, University of Ontario Institute of Technology, University of Ottawa, University of Prince Edward Island, University of Regina, University of Saskatchewan, University of Victoria, University of Winnipeg, Vancouver Island University, Western University, Wilfrid Laurier University, York University, York University - Glendon campus.

## Who collects education abroad data and what do they track?

All but two of the 52 institutions surveyed keep education abroad statistics. As shown in figure 22, the most common program for which institutions keep statistics is student exchange, with 96% of institutions keeping participation data for these programs. Other common programs include internship abroad (72%), international field study or trip (60%), semester abroad (58%), and international field school (58%), research abroad (48%), study tour abroad (34%), service learning (24%), independent study abroad (24%), and volunteer abroad (20%). Twenty percent of institutions keep statistics on programs other than those listed above, such as practicum/clinical placements and language courses abroad.

Figure 22:

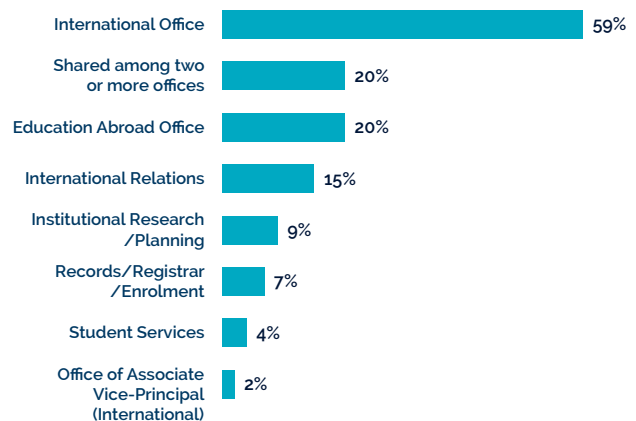
### On which types of education abroad experiences do you collect data?<sup>66</sup>



Of the 50 institutions that collect education abroad data, 46 (92%) indicated that there was an office responsible for tracking education abroad at their institution. As seen in figure 23, by far the most common office responsible for tracking outbound mobility is the International Office (59%). For 20% of institutions, tracking education abroad data is the responsibility of the Education Abroad Office, and for another 20% tracking is shared among two or more offices. The International Relations (15%), Institutional Research/Planning Offices (9%), Records/Registrar/Enrolment Offices (7%), Student Services (4%), and the Office of the Vice-Principal, International (2%) are also involved with tracking outbound mobility.

Figure 23:

### Which office is responsible for tracking education abroad?

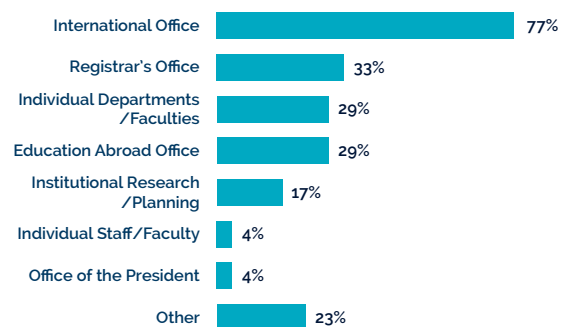


Half of the data-collecting institutions house education abroad statistics at more than one office. With 24% of institutions housing this data in three or more places, the storage of data is commonly shared between multiple offices.

As shown in figure 24, the most common place outbound mobility data is kept is at the International Office, with 77% of institutions housing their data at this location. However, data is also housed at the Registrar's Office (33%), with individual departments/faculties (29%), Education Abroad Office (29%), Institutional Research/Institutional Planning (17%), as well as with individual staff/faculty (4%) and at the Office of the President (4%) in some cases. In addition, almost one quarter of institutions house education abroad data at offices other than those listed above.

Figure 24:

### Where is data on education abroad housed?<sup>3</sup>



<sup>66</sup> As multiple responses per institution are possible, percentages do not add to 100%.

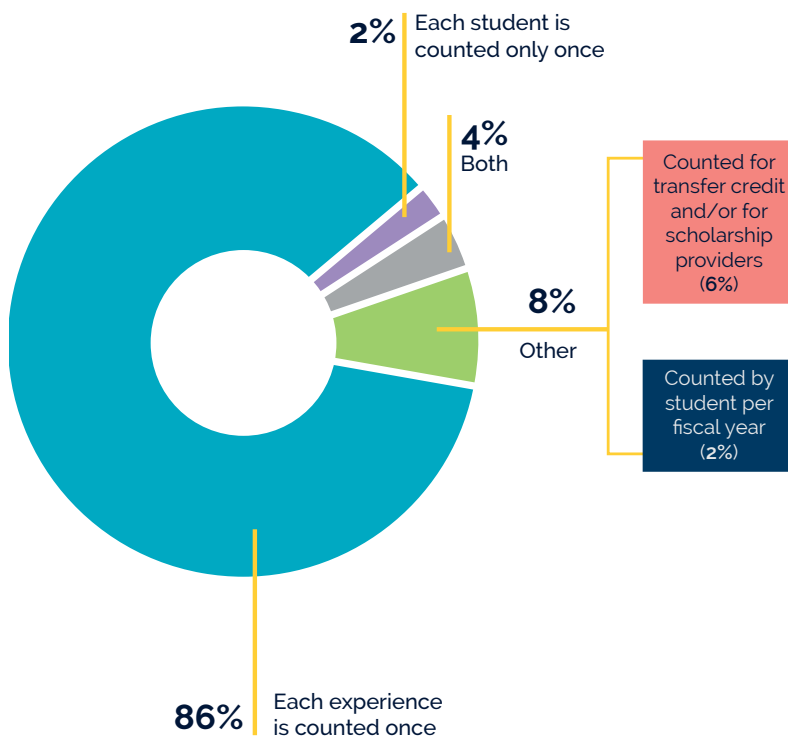
## How do institutions count and report outbound mobility?

Institutions were asked how they count the number of students who go abroad. As seen in figure 25, for the vast majority of institutions (86%), each time a student leaves the country counts as one experience (i.e. a student who goes abroad on more than one experience is counted more than once). In contrast, for only 2% of institutions, each individual student who goes abroad is counted as one experience (i.e. a student who has more than one experience abroad during their degree/diploma is only counted once). Four percent indicated that they are able to report data in both ways.

The “other” category is made up of 8% of institutions who described additional ways of counting the number of students who go abroad. Of this group, 6% count education abroad participation according to requests for transfer credit and/or for scholarship providers, and 2% count by student per fiscal year.

Figure 25:

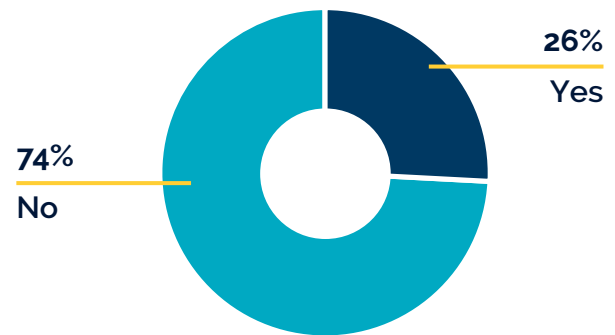
### How do you count the number of students who go abroad?



While the majority of institutions have no required minimum length of time abroad to be counted as one experience (74%), one quarter of institutions do not count mobility experiences if they are shorter than a specified duration. See figure 26.

Figure 26:

### Is there a specific length of time abroad required to be counted as one experience?



- Each time a student leaves the country for an international experience counts as one experience (i.e. a student who goes abroad on more than one experience is counted more than once)
- Each individual student that goes abroad is counted as one experience (i.e. a student that has more than one experience abroad during their degree / diploma is only counted once)
- Data can be generated both ways
- Counted to recognize transfer credit and/or for scholarship providers
- Counted by student per fiscal year

Of these 13 institutions (26%), the minimum duration to receive one count varies considerably, ranging from five days to four months, with an average minimum of 6.1 weeks abroad to be counted. See figure 27.

Institutions reported flexibility in the range of ways that they are able to report experiences abroad. Given current data collection methods, the majority of institutions that collect education abroad data are able to report outbound mobility by academic year (90%) and/or by semester (84%). A number of these same institutions are also able to report participation by completed program/degree (34%). See figure 28.

Almost one quarter of institutions indicated that they are able to report outbound mobility in additional ways. The responses to the “other” category (24%) can be divided into three areas:

- 10% of these institutions indicated that they are able to report by academic year, semester, completed program/degree plus additional criteria.
- 6% reported that although they likely could report on year, semester and completed program/degree, this would not be a straightforward task.
- 8% of institutions indicated that they are unable to report on academic year, semester or completed program/degree, but can report on other criteria such as fiscal year, calendar year, program type, level of study, country, credit/non-credit programs, or Quebec mobility bursaries received.

As seen in figure 29, almost half (44%) of surveyed institutions produce an annual report that provides a summary of education abroad statistics.

Figure 28:

**Ways institutions are able to report education abroad participation**

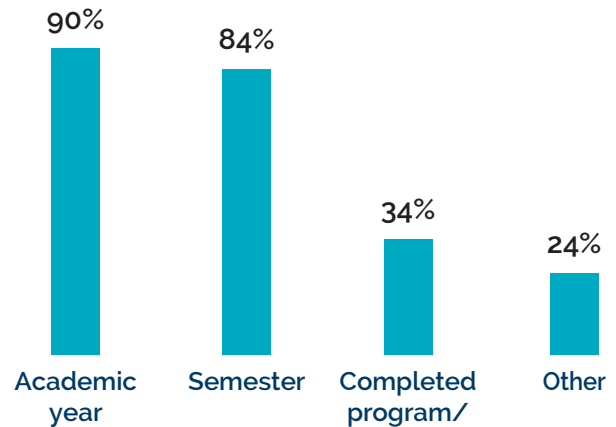


Figure 29:

**Does your institution produce an annual report which gives a quantitative summary of education abroad?**

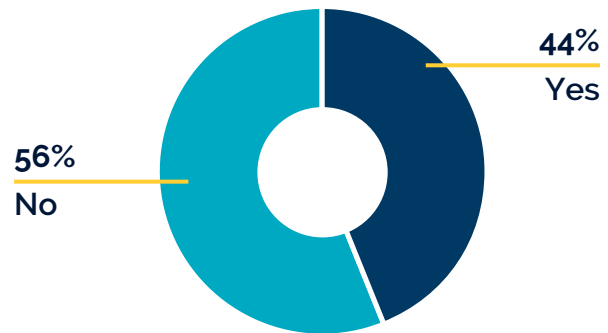
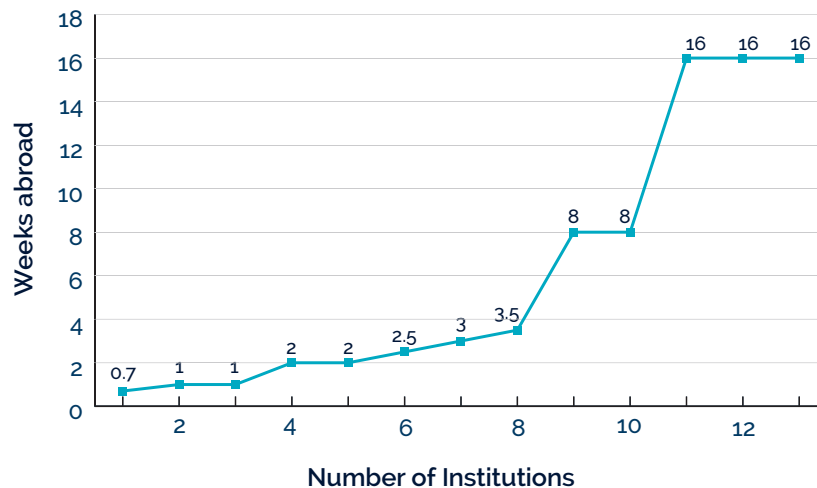


Figure 27:

**Minimum duration abroad counted as one experience (in weeks)**



## Spotlight on Education Abroad Software

Of the 50 surveyed institutions that keep education abroad statistics, only 16 (32% of respondents) reported using a software program to track outbound mobility. The information below was derived from this limited sample. Although findings do not reflect a wide consensus around any particular education abroad software packages, general trends and common themes reported by respondents are presented.

### What Respondents say about Common Software Packages

Name	Pros	Cons
<b>QS MoveOn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large database</li> <li>• Easy to use</li> <li>• Online format accessible anywhere</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eurocentric (based on Erasmus model)</li> <li>• System stability issues</li> </ul>
<b>Simplicity Horizons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very customizable</li> <li>• Wide range of functionality</li> <li>• Good reporting options</li> <li>• Good technical support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed for US education; some features not relevant in the Canadian context</li> <li>• Time-consuming to implement and adapt to institution</li> <li>• Technical glitches</li> </ul>
<b>Terra Dotta<sup>1</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide tracking options ensures that all offshore activity is monitored</li> <li>• Creates reports</li> <li>• Mediates risk by being able to contact students and staff abroad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not provide health and travel warnings</li> </ul>
<b>Custom software developed by individual institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be developed for the unique needs of the institution</li> <li>• Technical support readily available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depends on the custom software</li> <li>• Respondents report a variety of issues with their in-house software</li> </ul>
<b>Microsoft Excel<sup>2</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be sufficient to manage data from a limited number of outbound students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires manual input</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Review comments for this software were provided by one user

<sup>2</sup> Review comments for this software were provided by one user.

## Barriers to Tracking Education Abroad

All 52 respondents shared their insights on the barriers to tracking outbound mobility at their institution. Their comments were subsequently coded into the categories elaborated below.

As seen in figure 30, the most significant barrier identified by over half of the respondents is the decentralized nature of education abroad tracking and reporting across the institution. As one respondent explains:

Not all international activities are reported consistently to the International Office. For example, the exchange program is run through the International Office and so the exchange coordinator is easily able to report the exact number of students incoming and outgoing by term, year, and program. However, other short-term trips run by the academic divisions, or individual student experiences such as a co-op/placement abroad, are not reported to the International Office in a standard format. This can result in some international activities being left off the annual international activities inventory report.

Challenges in tracking students who participate in independent education abroad activities were mentioned by 6% of respondents. This is related to the overall issue of the decentralized nature of data tracking and reporting, as there is no centralized mechanism to ensure that independent mobility experiences are reported to the International Office.

The second most significant barrier is the lack of adequate software or database systems for tracking and housing education abroad data, reported by 27% of respondents.

The third most commonly-cited barrier, reported by 20% of respondents, is a lack of resources to track outbound mobility statistics. This includes financial resources in general, as well as a lack of education abroad staff roles and limited staff time to track, enter, and present participation data.

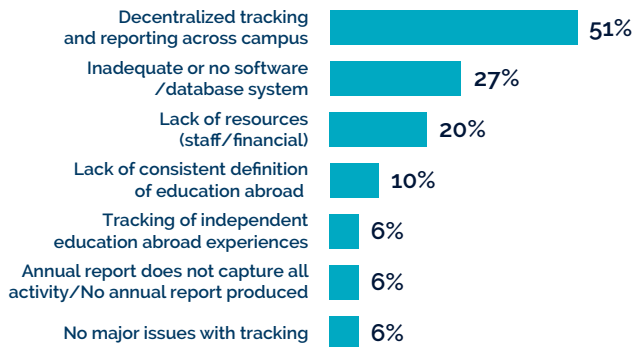
Ten percent of respondents noted the challenges emanating from the lack of a consistent definition of education abroad at their institution. This includes the need to establish best practices around how to count participation, define programs, and quantify experiences abroad that vary significantly in duration.

Issues regarding annual reports were identified by 6% of respondents; some commented that institutional annual reports may not accurately represent the numbers of students going abroad, while others noted that their institutions do not produce annual reports.

Finally, 6% of respondents commented that they did not have any real issues with tracking, or that the partial data collected met their institutional needs.

Figure 30:

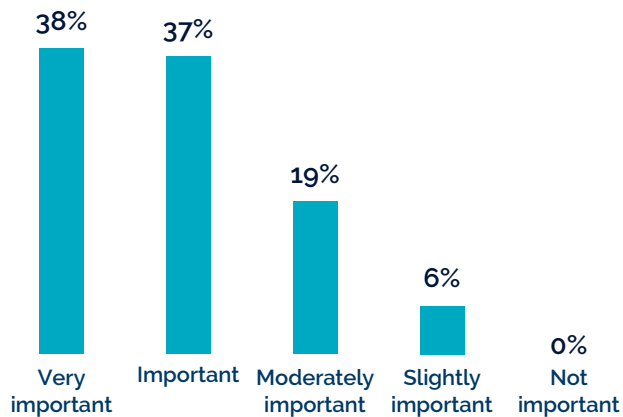
### In your opinion, what are the barriers to tracking education abroad at your institution?



As shown in figure 31, three quarters of respondents believe that is either important or very important to standardize education abroad tracking measures to develop a framework for nationally comparable statistics. While 25% indicated that it is moderately or slightly important, no respondents believe that standardizing tracking measures is unimportant.

Figure 31:

### How important is it to standardize education abroad tracking measures to develop a framework for nationally comparable statistics?



## Conclusions

The results of this survey suggest that standardizing education abroad metrics and streamlining data collection processes would be of value to the international education sector in Canada. Respondents expressed a need to establish best practices for how to count participation, define programs, and quantify experiences abroad that vary in duration.

The findings indicate that most institutions keep education abroad statistics and have an office dedicated to tracking outbound mobility. However, the types of experiences counted vary. Student exchange data is widely collected, while tracking experiences such as research abroad, service learning, independent study abroad, and volunteering abroad is less common. The gaps in data on these programs likely stems from the decentralized nature of education abroad tracking at the institutional level.

Most institutions are able to report education abroad participation in comparable ways. Given current data collection methods, the majority of institutions report outbound mobility by academic year (90%) and/or by semester (84%). For nine in 10 institutions, each time a student leaves the country for an international experience counts as one experience. That is, a student who goes abroad on more than one experience is counted more than once.

These commonalities are promising. However, it will be necessary for all institutions to adopt a common measurement system in order to generate accurate national statistics.

The biggest inconsistency in counting participation relates to duration abroad. Three quarters of surveyed institutions have no minimum criteria for experiences to be counted. In contrast, one quarter do not count experiences if they are shorter than a specific length of time. This minimum criteria varies widely, from five days to four months, creating gaps in data when aggregating across institutions to establish national statistics.

The findings suggest that the most significant challenge that institutions face relates to the lack of a central mechanism for tracking education abroad. Tracking and reporting is decentralized across campus and data is commonly housed among multiple offices on campus. In fact, half of the surveyed institutions store data in more than one office, while one quarter house data across three or more offices, making it challenging and time-consuming to generate accurate statistics.



The lack of consistent practices in reporting all participation to one designated office undoubtedly results in some mobility not being documented or not being tracked in ways that are reportable. As a result, participation is underrepresented in some institutional reports. It is also worth noting that more than half of institutions do not produce an annual report containing a summary of education abroad participation numbers. Some respondents identified this as a concern in terms of tracking mobility.

A second significant tracking barrier identified by respondents is the lack of adequate software or database systems on campus. Only one-third of institutions surveyed use a specific software program. Amongst these respondents, there was no real consensus as to a preferred package (see Spotlight on Education Abroad Software for respondent feedback on software packages), and only half of this group indicated that they would be willing to change their software programs to standardize tracking at the national level.

Another important barrier to tracking education abroad identified by respondents is a lack of resources. This relates not only to software, but also to time being allocated for regular data tracking and analysis within staff roles.

## Best Practice Recommendations

### **Standardize education abroad terms, definitions, and metrics within and across Canadian institutions**

Responding to the issues emanating from a lack of common definitions of education abroad, CBIE's Education Abroad Lexicon was established in 2015. The development of this tool is led by CBIE's Education Abroad Advisory Committee (EAAC) and involves an ongoing consultative process with a wide range of educational institutions. The Lexicon is available on the CBIE website at [www.cbie.ca/canadas-education-abroad-lexicon](http://www.cbie.ca/canadas-education-abroad-lexicon). Wide adoption of this terminology by institutions and external stakeholders will result in greater consistency in understanding of the types of education abroad and facilitate statistical comparability on a national level.

### **Allocate resources dedicated to establishing and maintaining education abroad tracking systems**

Resources should be allocated for mobility-tracking systems/software, staff training, and the provision for regular education abroad tracking and reporting. As the success of any system depends on how well it is known and communicated to everyone responsible for students going abroad, all staff should receive training and/or information regarding the process on a regular basis.

### **Centralize mobility statistics in one office through the implementation of an effective education abroad software system**

To ensure that all data is captured and accessible, education abroad data should be tracked and maintained by one central office. Effective tracking systems and software programs that are user-friendly and capture key mobility criteria (identified in section below) are valuable tools that should be implemented for managing data.<sup>67</sup>

The CBIE Education Abroad lexicon identifies a wide range of education abroad opportunities that should be tracked. These include decentralized mobility such as graduate students, research mobility, independent education abroad experiences, and students who go abroad as part of small, department-led programs, who may fall through the cracks if not recorded consistently. Institutions should have campus-wide policies and procedures that require that all travel be reported.

## Recommendations for Aligning National Data Collection with International Standards

Canadian institutions commonly collect data on outbound students' year of study, academic discipline, type of program, gender, and length of program duration.<sup>68</sup> This criteria is important; however, in order to align our national education abroad participation data with typical statistics reported by other countries, additional criteria needs to be tracked and reported.

Through a review of a number of international comparators, the following common elements have been identified. Tracking the following criteria in consistent ways at the institutional level will ensure that national statistics are aligned with internationally-reported participation data.

### **Track and report participation by academic year**

Institutions should develop systems that allow education abroad participation data to be tracked in ways that the numbers can be reported by academic year. This outbound mobility figure should include students who participate in a variety of temporary for credit and not-for-credit education-related visits abroad (for a description of the types of education abroad programs, see CBIE's Education Abroad Lexicon). The establishment of a reliable annual participation rate will put Canada on par with international comparators and allow changes in participation over time to be monitored. Systematic tracking of education abroad provides the option to

<sup>67</sup> Student mobility practitioners at Canadian institutions who wish to ask questions and share experiences around purchasing and using study abroad software may join the Study Abroad Software listserv by contacting Lynne Mitchell at [lmitchel@uoguelph.ca](mailto:lmitchel@uoguelph.ca)

<sup>68</sup> Universities Canada, *Canada's Universities in the World: AUCC Internationalisation Survey* (Ottawa: UNIVCAN, 2014)



report participation numbers in other formats of interest, including by semester or as the percentage of students who have an education abroad experience during their degree.

### **Count all experiences, regardless of duration, and track length abroad**

It is common practice among a number of international comparators to count all outbound mobility experiences and document the specific duration abroad. Counting all credit and not-for-credit experiences, including those of very short duration, ensures that there are no gaps in national data. With this complete data, mobility can then be categorized into short, medium, and long-term experiences during data analysis. Classifying experiences according to the Open Doors US study abroad model is one approach to consider:

- Short-term (up to eight weeks)
- Mid-length (one or two quarters, or one semester)
- Long-term (academic or calendar year)

### **Track by level of study**

Outbound mobility data is commonly collected by Canadian institutions and internationally according to level of study (undergraduate/graduate). This practice should be implemented by institutions who do not yet track level of study and be continued by those who do. In addition to the undergraduate/graduate level distinction, a further breakdown by level of study (i.e. diploma, master's, PhD, etc.) should be tracked when possible.

### **Track by discipline**

There is no international consensus on how the major fields of study are grouped when reported; however, the collection of education abroad data by broad discipline (e.g. Social Sciences, Humanities, Sciences, Engineering, Business, etc.) at the institutional level provides flexibility to group disciplines into various major fields of study when compiling and reporting statistics.

### **Track by education abroad activity type**

Participation by type of mobility is reported by a number of international comparators. Canadian institutions generally collect data according to program type; however, the definitions of these programs can vary. The CBIE Education Abroad Lexicon is a tool developed to promote a consistent understanding of the types of education abroad activities that Canadian students are undertaking. Institutions should track all types of programs defined in the Lexicon when possible.

### **Track education abroad destination countries**

Following the standard international practice of reporting top destination countries, this key criteria should also be tracked by Canadian institutions. Collecting annual data by destination allows for an understanding of current mobility patterns as well as an analysis of trends over time.

# Canada's Global Engagement Challenge: The CBIE Education Abroad Student Survey



“ My education abroad experiences made me really appreciate the freedoms, resources and opportunities I have in Canada which aren't even an option elsewhere. I'm more appreciative and grateful to be Canadian and I have more empathy and compassion for world issues after having experienced some of the oppression and difficulties in other countries. ”

— Undergraduate student with education abroad experiences in France, Cuba, and Australia

Education abroad is often a transformative experience, altering a student's sense of self and understanding of others. The richness of the experience extends well beyond the classroom and exposure to new ideas and immersion in a new culture often result in a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of the world.

Employers value the soft skills developed and enhanced through living and studying abroad, such as openness to new challenges, and skills in intercultural communication, problem solving, and decision making. A 2014 study by Leger Marketing for Universities Canada found that 82% of hiring managers from Canadian Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) believe employees who possess intercultural knowledge and an understanding of the global marketplace enhance their company's competitiveness.<sup>69</sup>

69 Leger: The Research Intelligence Group, *International/Intercultural Skills: Importance Assigned by Employers and Perceived Impact on Employee Performance* (Ottawa: Universities Canada, 2014).

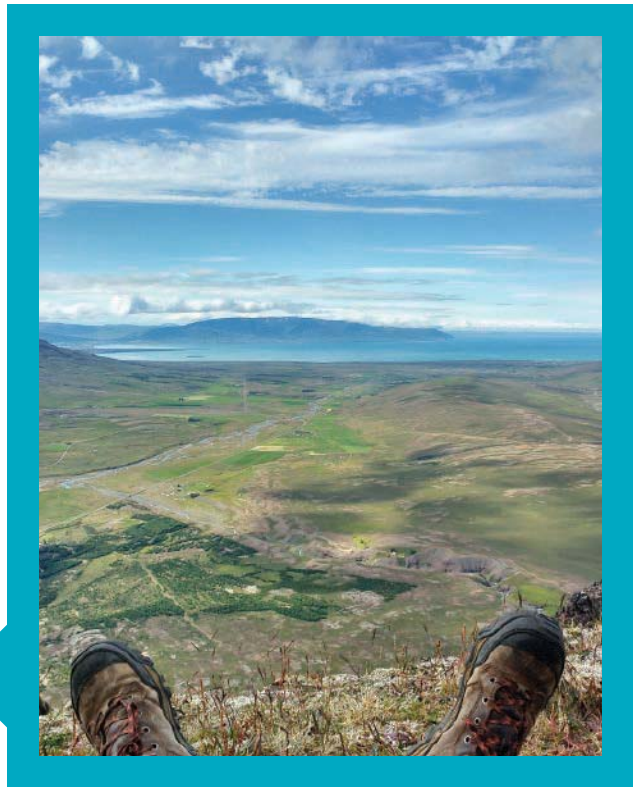
A recent European Commission report found that graduates of the Erasmus program were half as likely to be unemployed than their peers who did not go abroad.<sup>70</sup> The Erasmus alumni unemployment rate was 23% lower five years after graduation than that of students who did not go abroad. This statistic is evidence that the benefits extend beyond initial employability and into later career development.

In light of the documented personal and professional benefits of education abroad, why does participation remain low? What are student perceptions of the value of education abroad? How aware are they of the opportunities available at their institutions? What are the best channels to inform students about mobility programs in this rapidly-changing technical landscape?

70 University of Oxford, *International Trends in Higher Education 2015* (Oxford: University of Oxford, 2015), accessed June 21, 2016, <https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/International%20Trends%20in%20Higher%20Education%202015.pdf>

“ My experiences abroad were both research opportunities abroad in two of the leading research centres in the world. The most memorable learning experience was to face my fears of inadequacy and arrive as a respectful visitor, and do the best work that I can. Both experiences were challenging but I achieved my research goals and left with more confidence and awareness of my own capabilities as an academic researcher. ”

— PhD student with education abroad experiences in the United States and Japan



With these and other questions in mind, CBIE undertook the 2016 Education Abroad Student Survey, engaging 35 CBIE member institutions across the country. This is CBIE's first large scale survey focused on outbound student mobility since our comprehensive education abroad study in 2009,<sup>71</sup> and it offers timely insights into key issues in education abroad in Canada.

The objectives of the CBIE Education Abroad Student Survey were to:

- provide demographic information on students who do and do not participate in education abroad
- identify factors affecting students' decisions to participate or not, including perceived benefits and obstacles
- determine students' current interest level, motivation and plans to participate in education abroad
- provide feedback to Canadian institutions about student awareness of education abroad opportunities offered at their own institution and how this information is most commonly accessed by students
- examine the characteristics and impacts of students' previous education abroad experiences
- generate education abroad benchmarking data

<sup>71</sup> Sheryl Bond et al., *World of Learning: Canadian Post-Secondary Students and the Study Abroad Experience* (Ottawa: CBIE, 2009). Available at: <http://cbie.ca/what-we-do/research-publications/research-archives>

## Outbound Mobility Rates in Canada

To benchmark current outbound mobility rates, CBIE collected education abroad participation data from all participating institutions. Findings suggest that during that period, 2.3% of university students (undergraduate and graduate) went abroad for a credit or not-for-credit experience in the 2014–15 academic year. This outbound mobility rate ranged from 0.4% to 6% at the majority of participating universities. However, with an annual outbound mobility rate of 15.7%, Qwest University Canada stood apart from other institutions for its highly mobile student population.

Although Canadian post-secondary institutions are dedicating considerable energy and resources to mobility programs, these estimates suggest that participation has declined since the 2012–13 academic year when an estimated 3.1% of university students went abroad.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Universities Canada, *Canada's Universities in the World: AUCC Internationalisation Survey* (Ottawa: UNIVCAN, 2014).

Data submitted by the five participating college and polytechnics indicates that 1.0% of their students went abroad in the 2014–15 academic year; however, this number is not representative due to the limited sample of institutions. Although it is estimated that college participation may be as high as 2.5%,<sup>73</sup> the 1.0% participation rate in the limited sample is congruent with previous numbers that suggest that 1.1% of full-time college students participate in education abroad annually.<sup>74</sup>

These and other estimates of mobility in Canada are based on the best data currently available; however, there is likely international activity that is not included in this count. The development of more robust and standardized tracking and reporting procedures will allow for a more complete account of education abroad participation in Canada. See the previous section of this special feature for a discussion on education abroad data collection.

## Methodology

In total, 35 of CBIE's university (30) and college/polytechnic (5) member institutions<sup>75</sup> across all 10 provinces surveyed a sample of their current student population between March and May 2016.

A random sample of approximately 1,600 students was taken from each institution and yielded a 14% response rate. This representative sample included students from all faculties, disciplines, years and levels of study, as long as they were enrolled in a program in which they were eligible to participate in education abroad. International students completing full degree or certificate/diploma programs were also included, on the condition that they were eligible to go abroad as part of their Canadian program.

Although survey invitations were sent to a random sample of students, self-selection bias is a potential limitation of this study. That is, respondents were given the choice to self-select whether or not to take part in the survey, which may bias the sample towards attracting respondents who have an interest in education abroad. Students who have gone abroad may be highly motivated to respond, which likely had an impact on the overall education abroad participation rate reported by students.

<sup>73</sup> Colleges and Institutes Canada, forthcoming, 2016.

<sup>74</sup> Colleges and Institutes Canada, *Internationalizing Canadian Colleges and Institutes: The First National Report on International Education and Mobility* (Ottawa: CICan, 2010).

<sup>75</sup> Participating institutions include: Bishop's University, Brock University, Capilano University, Centennial College, College of the Rockies, Concordia University, Georgian College, Grant MacEwan University, HEC Montréal, Laurentian University, McGill University, McMaster University, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Niagara College, Polytechnique Montréal, Quest University Canada, Ryerson University, Saint Mary's University, Simon Fraser University, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, Université de Moncton, Université de Saint-Boniface, Université de Sherbrooke, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Université du Québec en Outaouais, Université Laval, University of Alberta, University of New Brunswick, University of Ottawa, University of Prince Edward Island, University of Regina, University of Saskatchewan, University of Victoria, Western University, York University

To ensure that the parameters of education abroad were understood by all respondents, the following definition was visible to respondents throughout the survey:

*Education abroad is education that occurs outside the country of the participant's home institution during the current program of study. Examples include for-credit and not-for credit studies, internships, work, volunteering, and directed travel, as long as these programs are driven to a significant degree by learning goals and are officially recognized by your academic institution.*<sup>76</sup>

## Participant Demographics

As a national body, CBIE strives for regional and linguistic representation in every data sampling exercise. In this survey, institutions from all ten provinces were represented. Eight institutions were francophone, two were officially bilingual, and the remainder were anglophone. With three quarters of survey responses completed in English and one quarter in French, this linguistic diversity is reflected in the participation rates of individual survey respondents.

Provincial representation of respondents was as follows: Ontario (2,091), Quebec (1,691), British Columbia (1,058), New Brunswick (682), Alberta (565), Prince Edward Island (224), Newfoundland and Labrador (217), Saskatchewan (196), Manitoba (148), and Nova Scotia (131). See figure 32.

The sample of survey respondents was made up of 7,028 post-secondary students (66% female, 34% male), 1,433 of whom have participated in education abroad. Because many international students completing programs at Canadian institutions participate in short-term outbound experiences, this group was invited to participate and made up 16% of survey responses.

The majority (92%) of the sample were full-time students with 8% enrolled in part-time studies. As seen in figure 33, most respondents fell into the 18–24 age range (70.5%), while students in the 25–34 age range made up another significant group (21.6%).

The majority of the sample was studying towards a bachelor's degree (63%), and were in their second (29%) and first (28%) years of study. Top fields of students in the sample were Business (17%), Health Science (15%), Engineering (13%), Social Sciences (11%), Natural Sciences (8%), and Education (7%). See figures 34 to 36.

<sup>76</sup> Source: Canada's Education Abroad Lexicon: <http://cbie.ca/canadas-education-abroad-lexicon/>

Figure 32:

Surveys completed by province of study

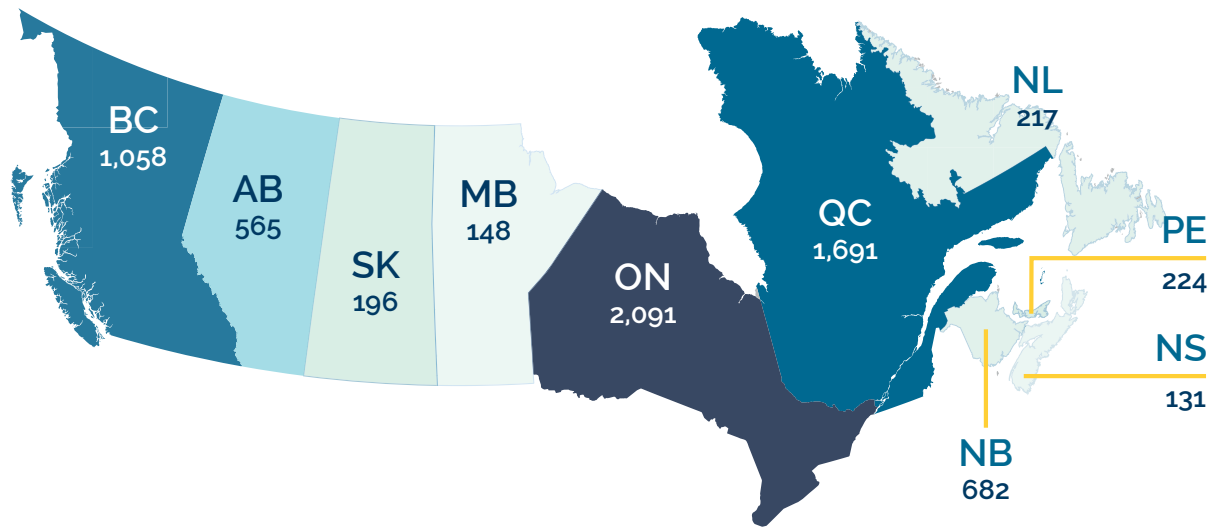


Figure 33:

Respondent Age

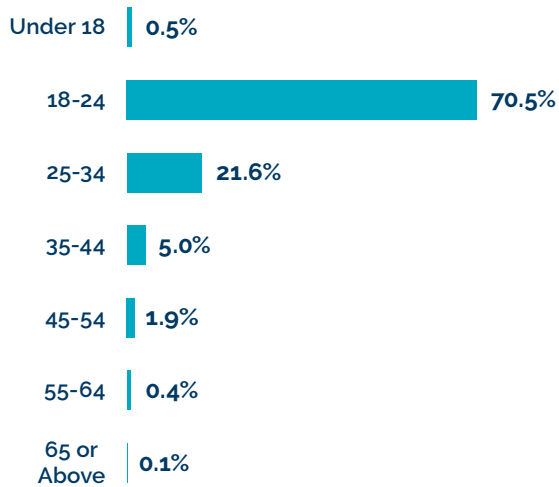
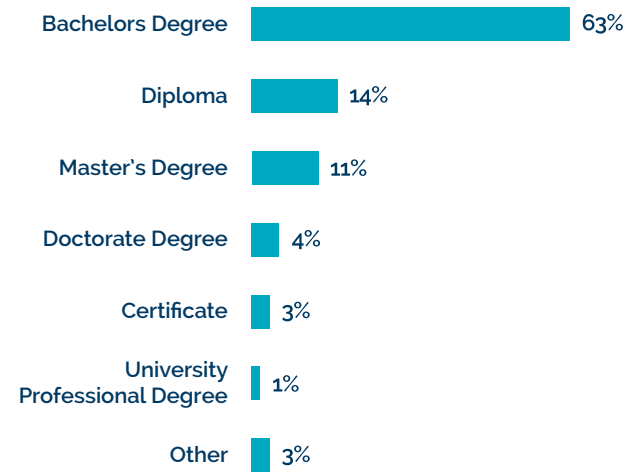


Figure 34:

Degree type of respondents<sup>77</sup>



<sup>77</sup> Percent distributions in charts in this chapter may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 35:

### Respondent year of study

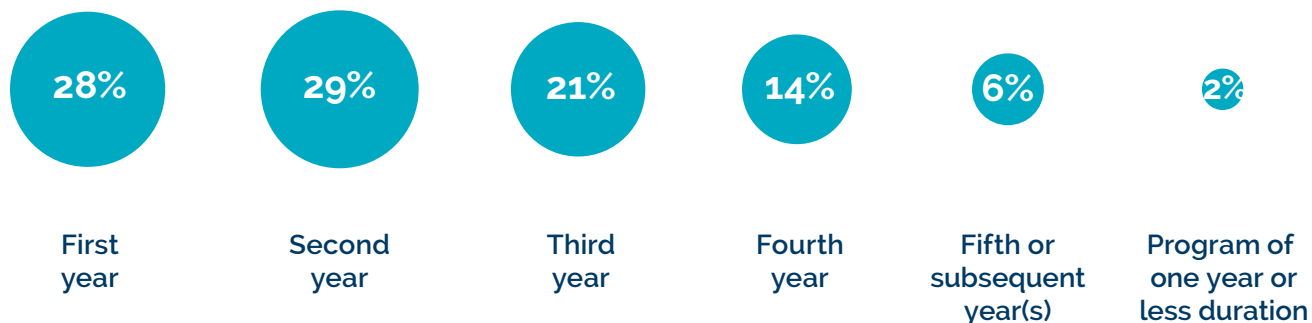
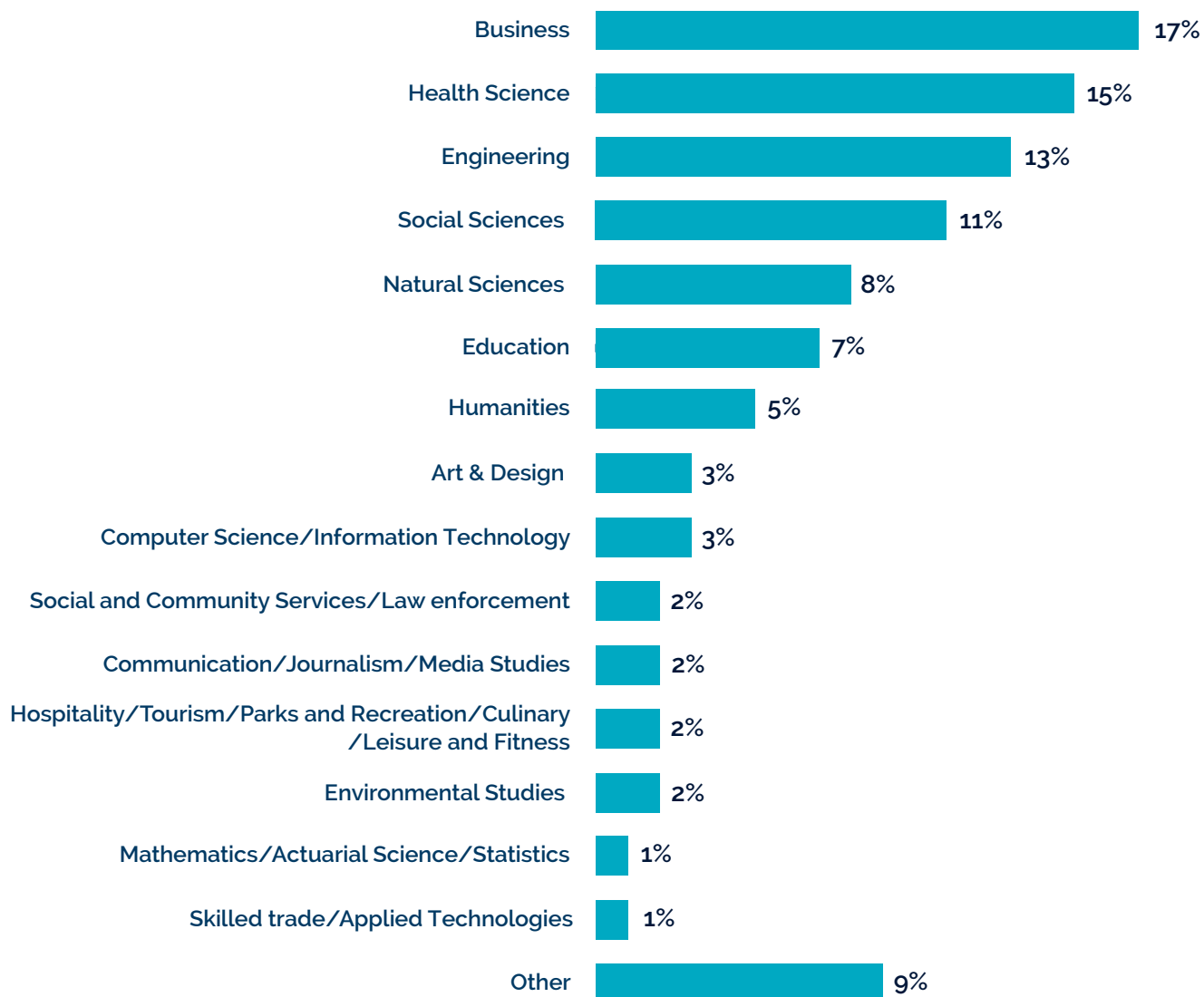


Figure 36:

### Respondent fields of study





## Student interest in global-mindedness

Nine in ten students reported that they are very interested (48%) or somewhat interested (43%) in being global minded. While women and men had similar general levels of overall interest, 52% of men and 46% of women reported being very interested in keeping informed about world issues, international events and cultural issues. See figure 37.

To determine how students become globally minded, students were asked how they learn about world events and cultural issues. Top responses indicate that students are most likely to use social media (60%) and websites (56%) to keep up with global news. Interestingly, given the high levels of international students coming to Canada, less than one quarter work with international students in their classes and assignments. See figure 38.

Figure 37:

How interested are you in keeping informed about world issues, international events and cultural issues?

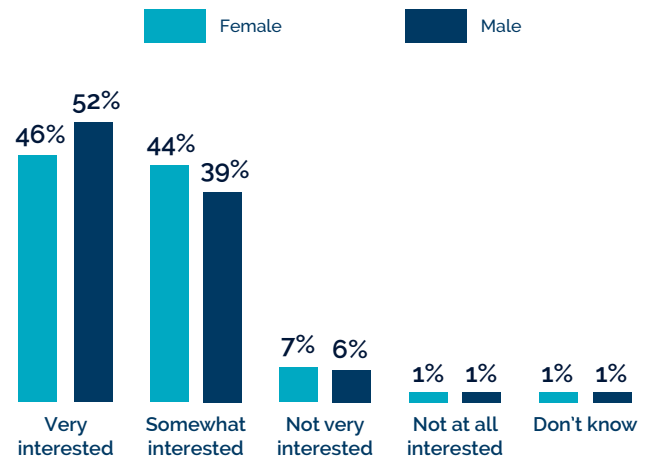
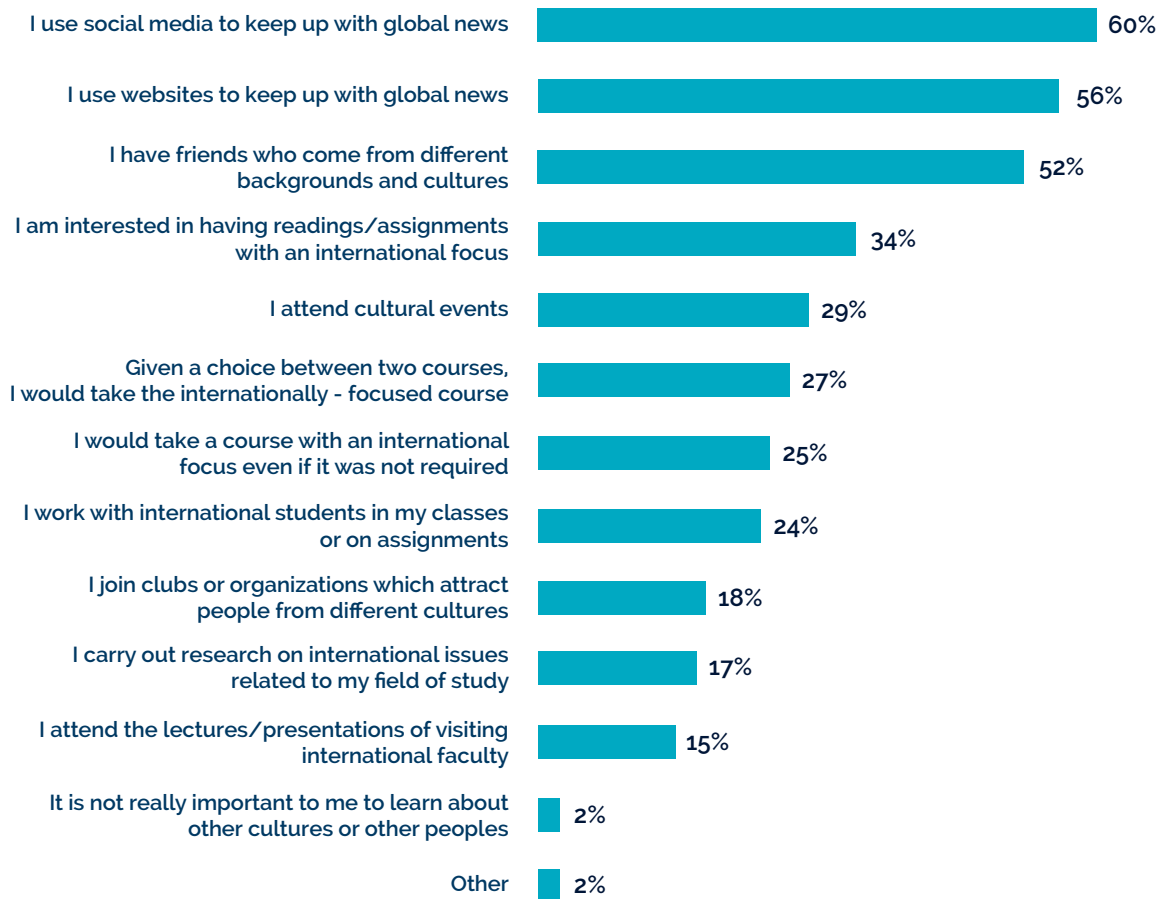


Figure 38:

Which best describe how you learn about world events and cultural issues?<sup>78</sup>



<sup>78</sup> Percentages add up to more than 100% as students could select multiple responses.



## Institutions' role in promoting global-mindedness and international opportunities

With 91% of students reporting that they are interested or very interested in being globally minded, what role do institutions play in creating or nurturing this interest?

The vast majority (80%) of students were aware of education abroad opportunities offered by their institution (see figure 39) and 64% of students agreed or strongly agreed that education abroad opportunities are encouraged on campus (figure 40). To a lesser degree, students agreed or strongly agreed (45%) that graduating students who are globally knowledgeable and culturally aware is a priority at their institution, but almost one quarter (23%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that this is the case. See figure 40.

Figure 39:

### Does your current institution offer education abroad opportunities for students?

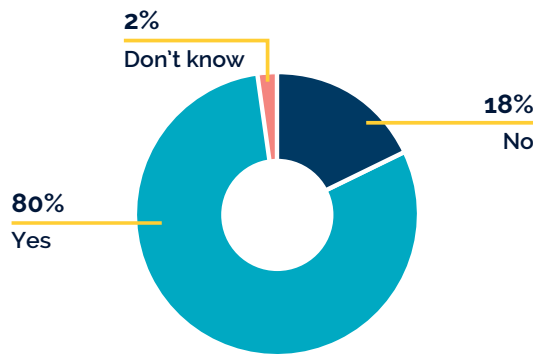


Figure 41:

### How did you hear about these education abroad opportunities?

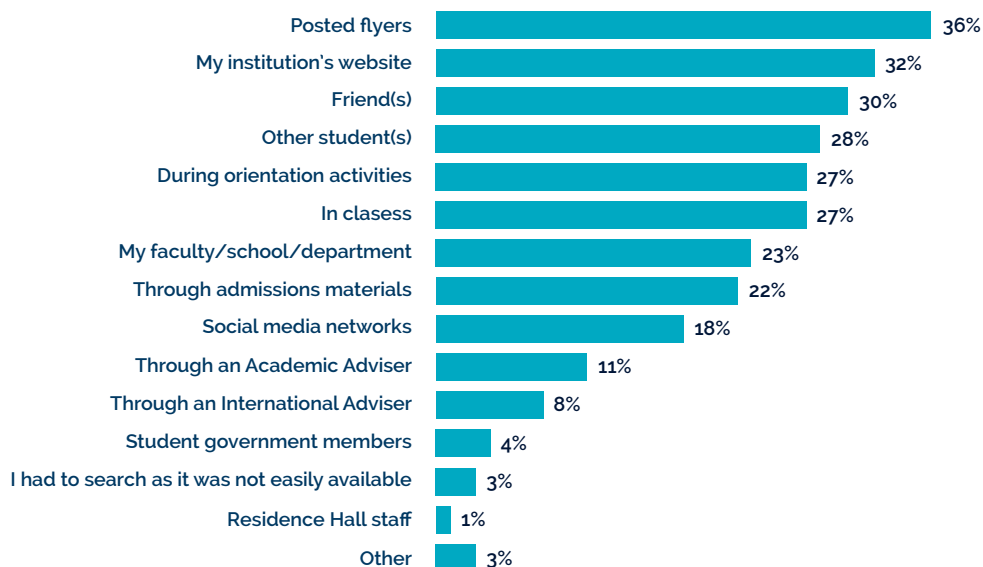
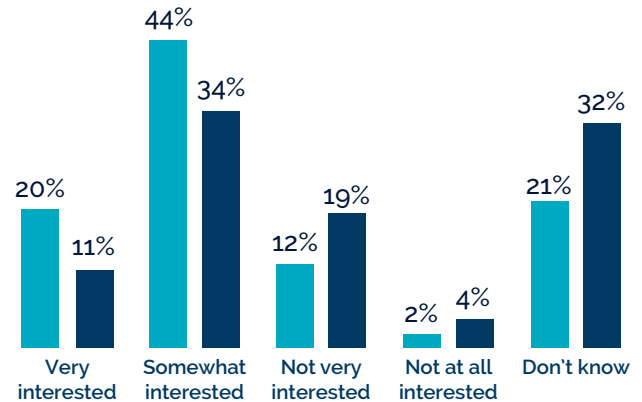


Figure 40:

### Perceived institutional commitment to education abroad and global mindedness

Education abroad opportunities are encouraged on campus at my institution

Graduating students who are globally knowledgeable and culturally aware is a priority at my institution

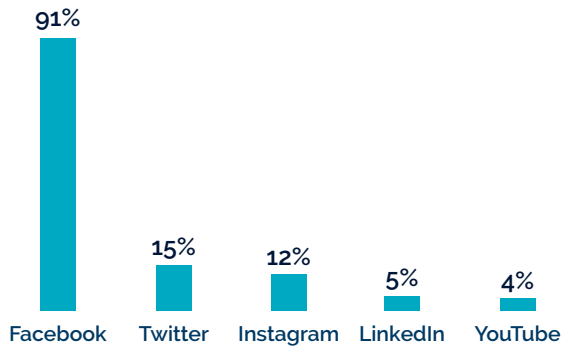


Consistent with CBIE's 2009 study, posted flyers (36%) remain the top way that students hear about education abroad opportunities, followed by the institution website (32%), and social interactions with friends (30%) and other students (28%).

Of the students who indicated that they had heard about education abroad opportunities at their institutions through social media networks, Facebook (91%) was overwhelmingly the most common. See figure 42.

Figure 42:

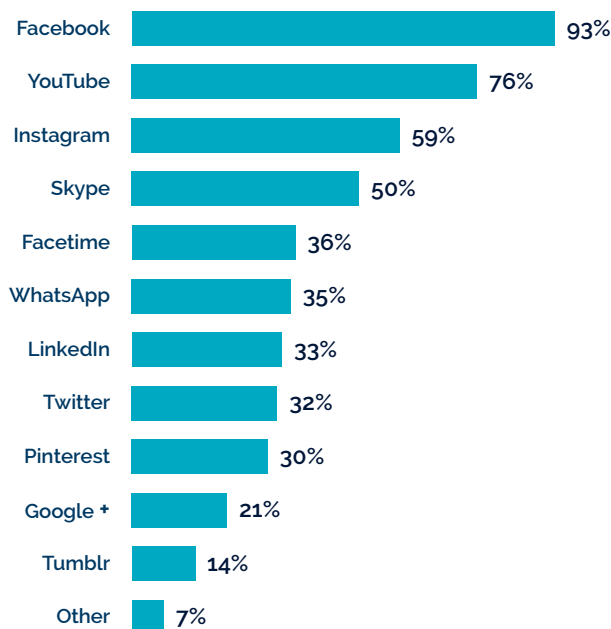
### Through which social media networks did you hear about education abroad opportunities at your institution?



As seen in figure 43, the overall sample was asked which social media channels they use. Again, Facebook was the most popular (93%), followed by YouTube (76%), Instagram (59%), and Skype (50%). In terms of the “Other” category (7%), 4% of students indicated that they use Snapchat. Insights into the top modes of digital communication are not only valuable for promoting education abroad opportunities to students, but also in terms of understanding the channels that students use to keep in contact with family, friends, and school support systems while abroad.

Figure 43:

### Which of the following social media channels do you use?



Respondents were asked in which places on campus they learned the most about different peoples, cultures or countries. As shown in figure 44, students learn most in classes in their fields of study (44%), as opposed to student clubs (32%), discussions with professors (25%), and classes outside their fields of study (22%).

Figure 44:

### Sites on campus for learning about different peoples, cultures or countries



“ My most memorable learning experience while abroad was working in a building of 100 employees who were all working together to accomplish parts of the same task, the design of a Canadian Coast Guard ship. I lived with a Danish family and learned much more about Danes and Denmark than I could have even imagined. I took every opportunity I could to ask questions beyond my department of work to further my understanding of the design process of a ship on such a large scale. ”

-Undergraduate student with education abroad experience in Denmark

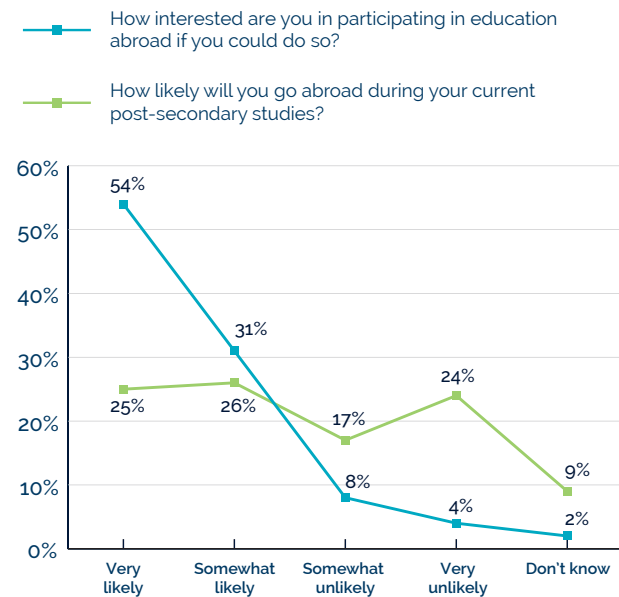
## Interest in Education Abroad and Likelihood of Participating

The vast majority (86%) of students were interested in participating in an education abroad experience if they could do so, with over half being very interested (54%). Levels of reported interest were similar for female and male respondents, although women reported being very interested (57%) slightly more than men (50%). It is worth noting that only 13% of all respondents are completing a degree/program of study that requires or strongly suggests that students participate in education abroad before graduation.

Given this strong level of interest in education abroad, how likely is it that students will go abroad during their current post-secondary studies? As seen in figure 45, among the students who were very interested in going abroad (54%), only one quarter believed that it is very likely that they will do so. The reported likeliness of going abroad was virtually the same for female and male respondents. See figure 45.

Figure 45:

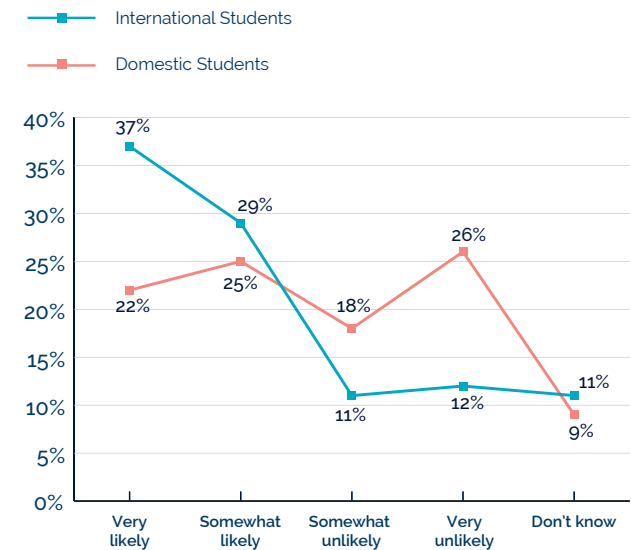
### Level of interest and likelihood of participating in education abroad



Compared with domestic students, international students reported a much greater likelihood of having a temporary experience abroad as part of their current Canadian degree. Thirty-seven percent of international students reported being very likely to go abroad, compared with 22% of their domestic student counterparts. See figure 46.

Figure 46:

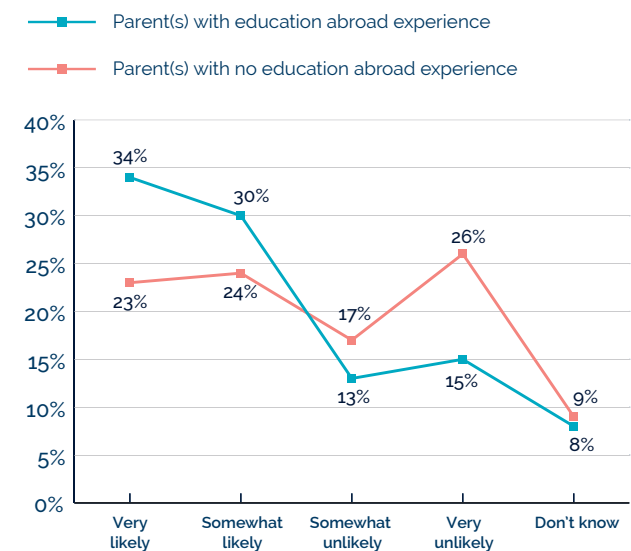
### Likelihood of participating in education abroad during current studies, by international and domestic student status



Another group reporting a much greater likelihood of participating in education abroad are students who have one or both parents that have done so. Of the total sample, 16% reported that one or both parents had completed an education abroad experience outside the country of their home institution during their post-secondary studies. Of this group, 34% reported being very likely to go abroad during their current post-secondary studies, compared to 23% of students with parents who had not gone abroad. See figure 47.

Figure 47:

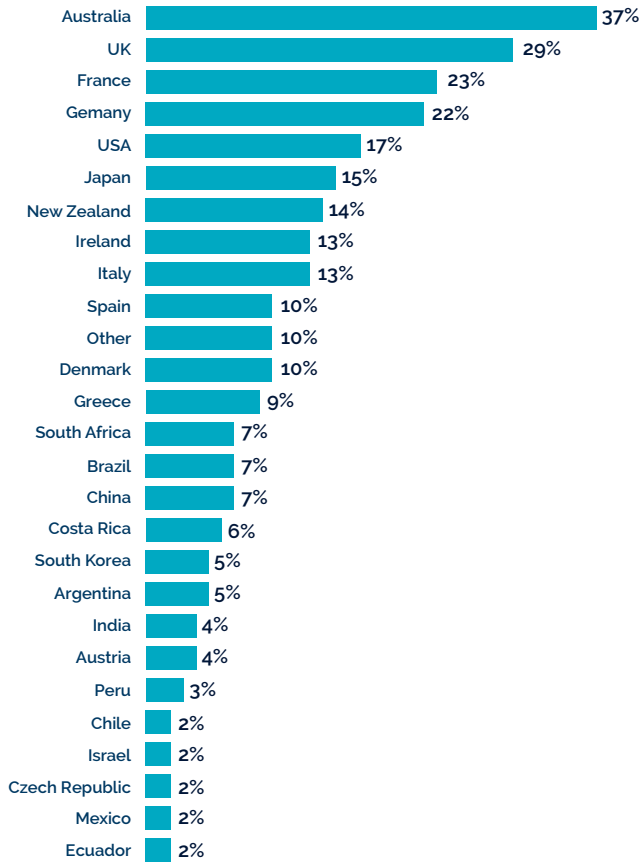
### Likelihood of participating in education abroad during current studies, by parental education abroad experience



Students were asked, “If you were considering an education abroad program, which THREE countries would be of interest to you?” Top choices tended to be in highly developed countries, primarily in Europe, where Canada’s official languages are widely spoken. In terms of the “Other” category (10%), students indicated that the following countries are of interest: Switzerland, Sweden, Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Finland, Belgium, Russia, Iceland, and Thailand, among others. See figure 48.

Figure 48:

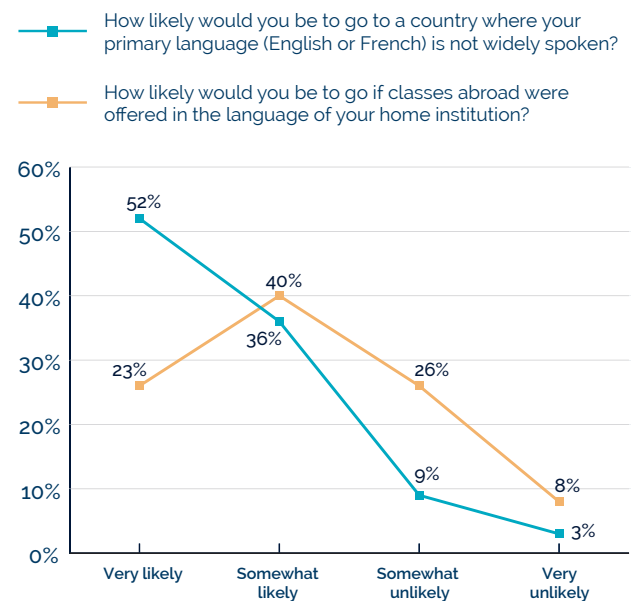
### Countries of interest



The data suggests that there is an appetite for destinations other than English and French speaking countries, especially if classes were offered in the language of students’ home institution. As can be seen in figure 49, almost 7 in 10 students would be somewhat (40%) or very likely (26%) to go to a country where their primary language (English or French) is not widely spoken. If classes abroad were offered in the language of their home institution, this increases to almost 9 in 10 students who would be somewhat (36%) or very likely (52%) to go. Although this effect was present for both English- and French-speaking students, it was slightly more prevalent among English language respondents.

Figure 49:

### Likelihood of country choice, by linguistic profile and language of classes offered



## Education abroad enablers

Students were asked to select the three most important benefits associated with education abroad. As seen in figure 50, a chance to travel was the top response (56%), followed by career benefits (48%), learning to live and work in different cultures/countries (37%), and developing global awareness (35%).

Students were then asked, “Who, if anyone, has ever encouraged you to participate in an education abroad program?” The fact that almost half did not receive any encouragement from others might suggest that in Canada education abroad is not considered a natural part of the education experience. Friends and family are seen as more influential than those in education such as teachers, counselors and student organizations. See figure 51.

Figure 50:

### Three most important benefits associated with education abroad

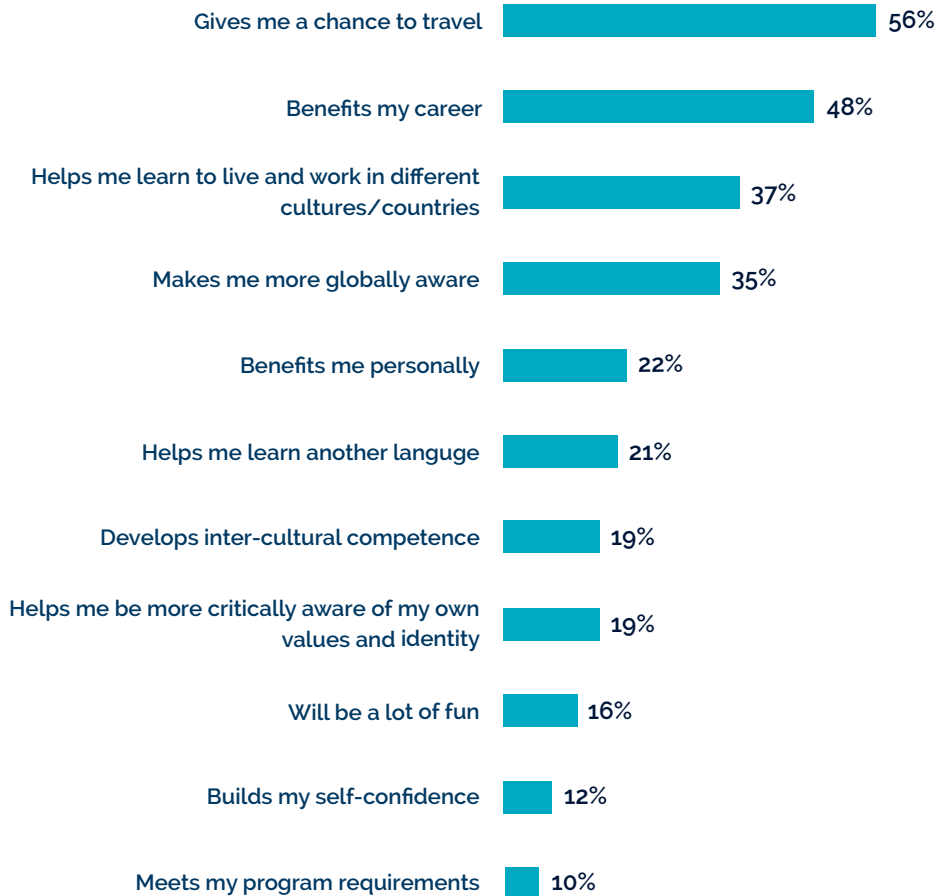
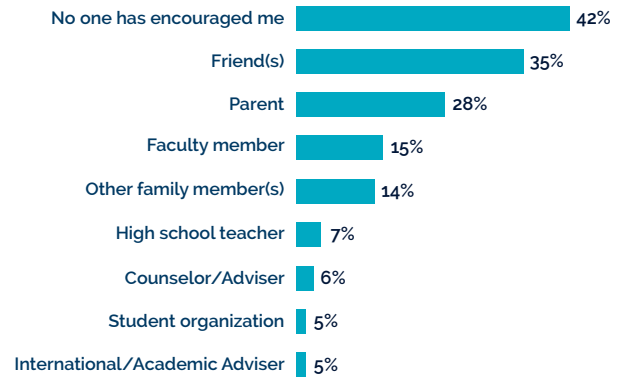


Figure 51:

### Top Sources of Encouragement



## Obstacles to participation

What are the barriers to education abroad that students face? Respondents were asked to select three potential obstacles that are most likely to keep them from participating in an education abroad experience. By far, the most significant barrier was financial, with 70% of students indicating that going abroad requires money that they do not have.

Delaying graduation (28%), course credit concerns (26%), and the need to work during the school year (26%) held distant second, third, and fourth places, respectively. Interestingly, 7% indicated that none of these barriers are obstacles, while only 3% are not interested in education abroad.

Figure 52:

### Which three potential obstacles are most likely to keep you from participating in an education abroad experience?



“ My most memorable learning experience was personal knowledge I gained from travel and being forced outside my comfort zone. I was forced to mingle with individuals from many different countries and learn about their cultures. I feel I left this experience much more worldly, well-rounded, and confident. Studying abroad in Australia was one of the hardest but most rewarding experiences of my life. I don't regret it for one minute, even despite the many sacrifices I was forced to make. ”

-Undergraduate student with education abroad experience in Australia

Underscoring the fact that finances are the most significant obstacle to going abroad, eight in 10 respondents indicated that they would require financial assistance to pay for the costs if they wanted to participate in an education abroad program. Only 9% indicated that they would be able to go abroad without financial assistance.

Despite this expressed need, almost two thirds did not know whether their institution offered financial assistance. This suggests that these opportunities may not be well advertised, or that other real or perceived barriers may be preventing students from seeking out financial assistance information. See figure 53.

Fifteen percent of students indicated that it is not possible to go abroad during their post-secondary studies. In contrast, just over one quarter (27%) of students indicated that is possible. Only 11% indicated that they have already gone abroad during their post-secondary studies, with almost half (46%) not yet knowing whether education abroad will be possible. See figure 54.

Figure 54:

### Is education abroad a possibility for you?

- It is possible that I will have an education abroad experience sometime during my post-secondary studies.
- It is not possible for me to have an education abroad experience during my post-secondary studies.
- I do not yet know if education abroad will be possible or not.
- I have already gone abroad during my post-secondary program.

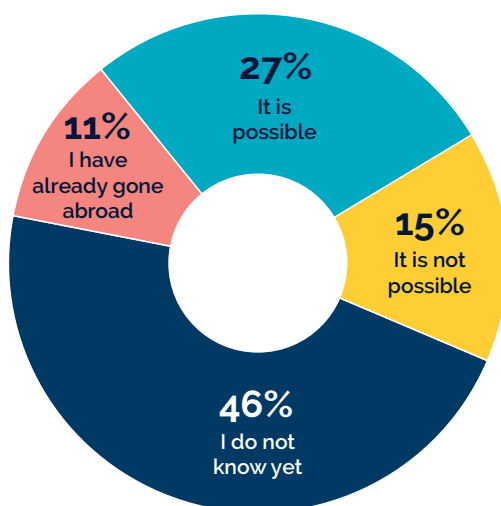
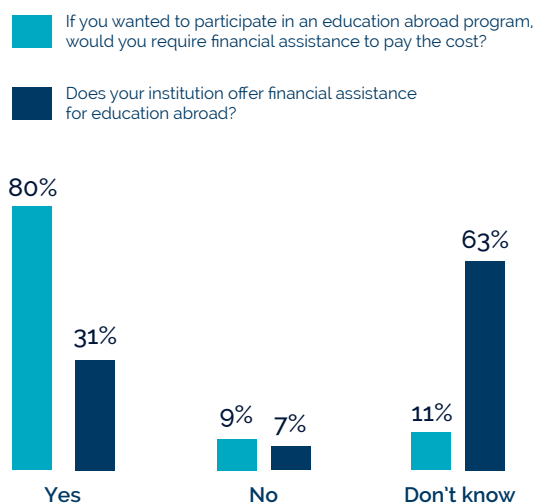


Figure 53:

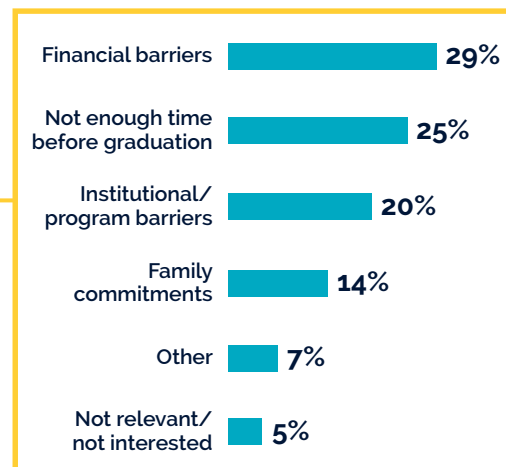
### Financial assistance required/knowledge of institutional financial assistance



Of the 15% of students who said it is not possible for them to have an education experience abroad, financial issues were cited as the biggest barrier (29%) in the 970 comment-based responses. One quarter of students commented that they will not have enough time to participate before completing their program. One in five students described institutional/program barriers that make it impossible for them to go abroad. These include limited or no options available for their program of study at their institution, restrictive program structures, lack of transfer credits, and the need to complete their research with a particular supervisor at their home institution. See figure 55.

Figure 55:

### Why is it not possible to have an education abroad experience?





## The face of education abroad: Who does and who does not participate?

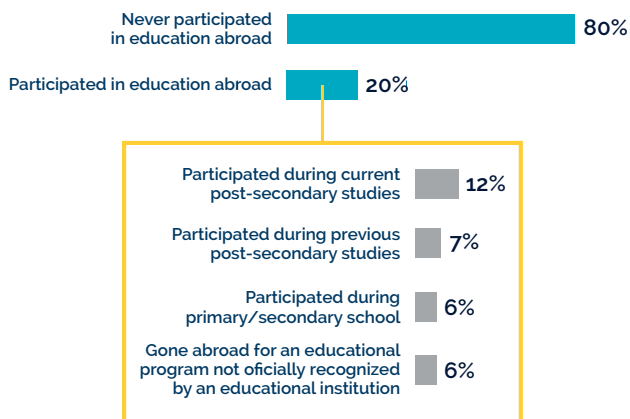
Institutions are ramping up their efforts to engage more students in education abroad. Given the benefits of going abroad, it is important to analyze which students are accessing these opportunities to ensure that participation rates grow in an equitable manner, providing personal and professional development experiences to a representative cross-section of students. The following section examines the demographics, experiences, and views of the 1,433 outbound respondents.

Of all 7,028 survey participants, 20% indicated that they have had one or more for-credit or not-for-credit education abroad experiences in their lifetimes. Of this group of mobile students, 61% have gone abroad once, 23% have gone twice, and 15% have had three or more education abroad experiences. These experiences include studies, internships, work, volunteering, and directed travel, as long as they were driven to a significant degree by learning goals.

When do students go abroad? Twelve percent of mobile students went abroad during their current post-secondary studies, 7% during their previous post-secondary education, and 6% during primary/secondary school. An additional 6% participated in an educational program not officially recognized by an educational institution (e.g. through an NGO or private sector organization not affiliated with their school). See figure 56.

Figure 56:

### Participation vs. non-participation, with level of study breakdown<sup>79</sup>

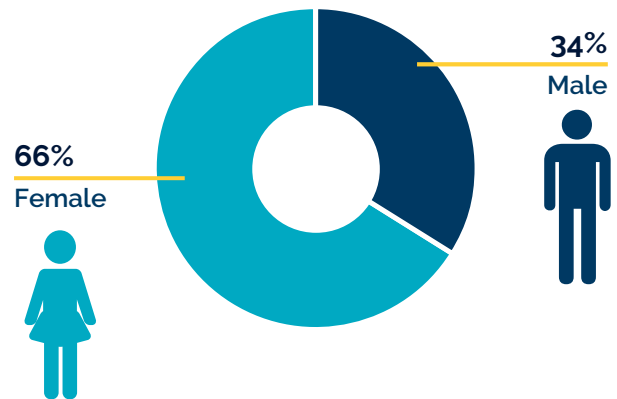


<sup>79</sup> Percentages do not add up to 20%, as some respondents have had more than one education abroad experience.

Of the 1,433 students who have gone abroad, 66% are female, compared with 56% of women enrolled in post-secondary education in Canada,<sup>80</sup> which suggests that females are likely over-represented in education abroad participation. While it is worth noting that more women than men responded to the survey, and therefore are over-represented in the sample, low male participation has been a persistent trend in the US, Europe, and other regions.<sup>81,82</sup> See figure 57.

Figure 57:

### Education abroad participation, by gender



Business (21%) was the most common major field of study for outbound students, followed by Engineering (14%), Social Sciences (12%), and Health Science/Kinesiology/Nursing (10%). See figure 58.

By far, the most popular international experience was coursework abroad. Nearly seven in ten of the students went abroad for either an exchange (41%), field school (7%) or courses other than exchange or field school (20%) during their most recent education abroad experience.<sup>83</sup> See figure 59.

The largest number of outbound students was hosted by France (13.7%), almost double that of the UK (8.5%) and the US (7.8%),<sup>84</sup> which came in second and third. See figure 60.

<sup>80</sup> Statistics Canada, *Canadian postsecondary enrolments and graduates, 2013/2014*, (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2015), accessed August 11, 2016, <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/151130/dq151130d-eng.htm>

<sup>81</sup> Institute of International Education, *Open Doors 2015: Report on International Educational Exchange* (New York: IIE, 2015).

<sup>82</sup> Lucas Böttcher et al., "Gender Gap in the ERASMUS Mobility Program," *PLoS ONE* 11(2) (2016): 1-8, accessed July 12, 2016, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0149514.

<sup>83</sup> When respondents reported more than one education abroad experience, only data on the most recent experience is included, where noted throughout this chapter.

<sup>84</sup> As destination of students' most recent education abroad experience.

Figure 58:

### Major fields of study of outbound students

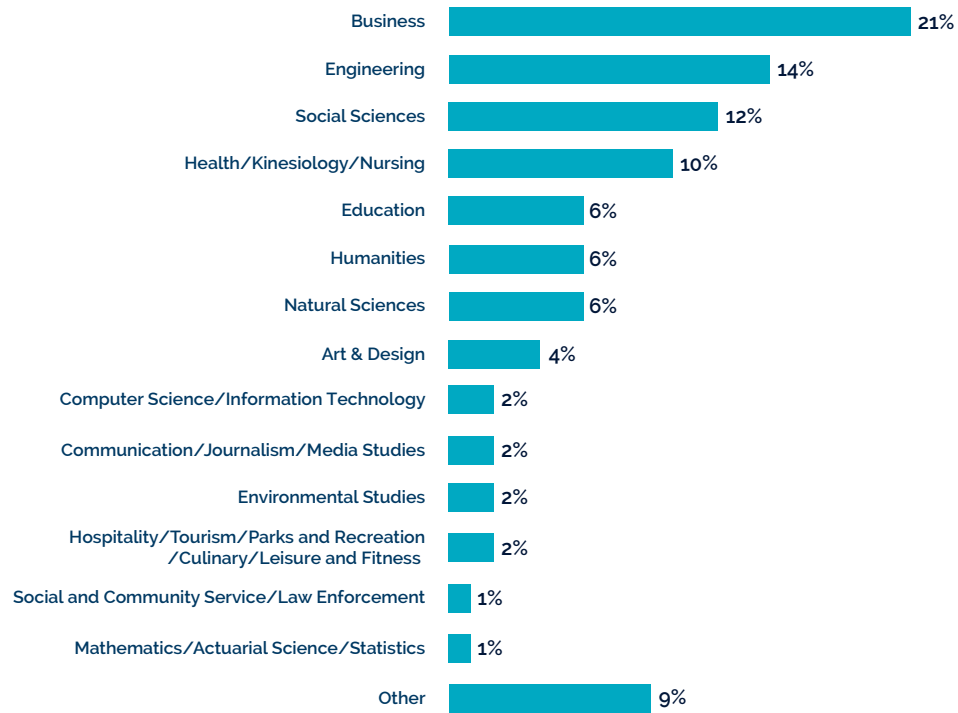


Figure 59:

### What was the main purpose of your education abroad program experience?

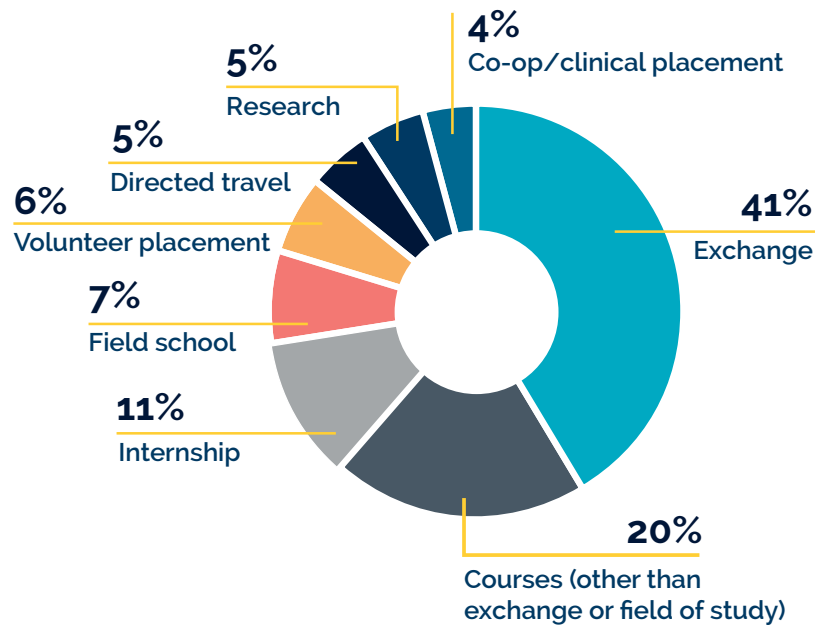


Figure 60:

### Top 15 destinations for outbound students

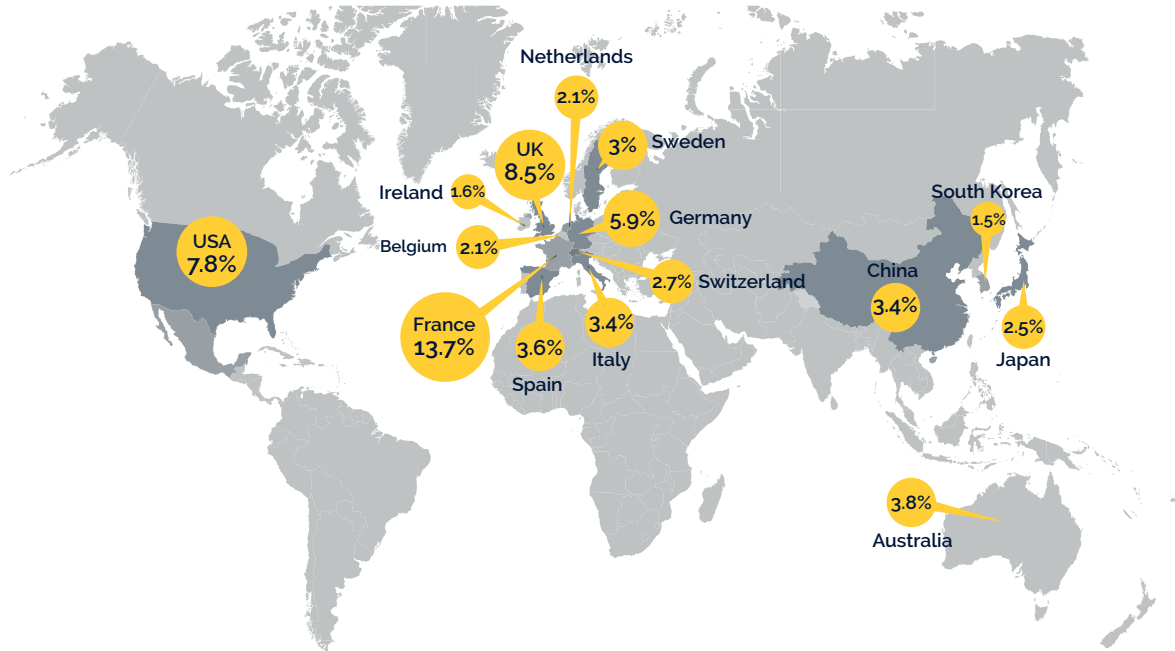
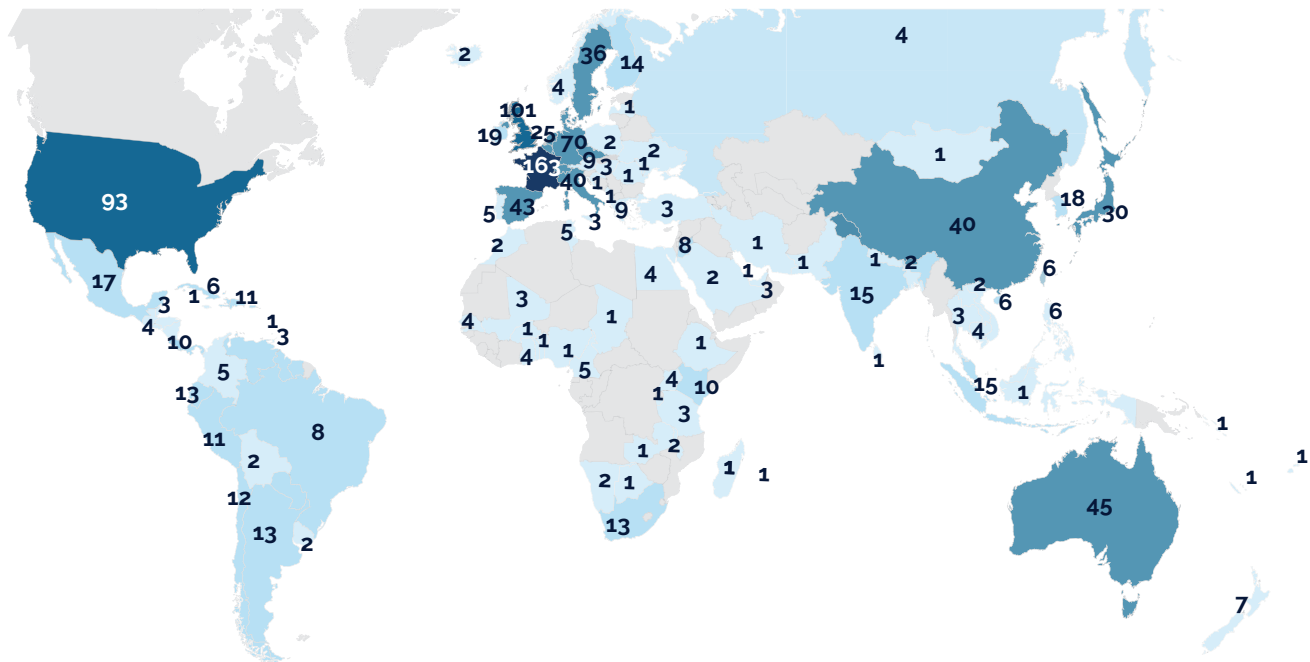


Figure 61:

### All destination countries for outbound students, by number of participants

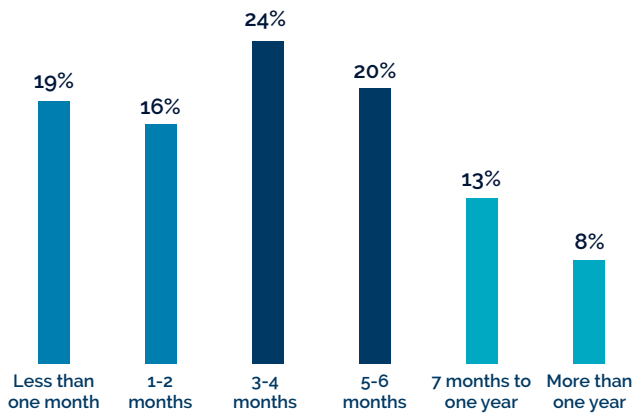


Despite the focus on European and English-speaking destinations, students in the sample have participated in education abroad in 119 destination countries during their most recent education abroad experience. Figure 61 shows the breadth of destination countries during respondents' most recent education abroad experience.

As shown in figure 62, the most common duration of respondents' most recent experience abroad was either a semester (24%) or 5-6 months (20%), although short-term experience of less than one month were also popular (19%).

Figure 62:

### Duration of experiences abroad



As seen in figure 63, more than half of students received credit on their Canadian transcript for their most recent education abroad experience.

How do students who go abroad deal with the costs? Half relied on parents, relatives, or guardians (49%) to finance their education abroad experience. This may be complemented by a combination of other sources such as personal savings (45%), a university or college scholarship or grant (34%), work income (26%), and scholarships, financial aid, and/or loans from a government or agency in Canada (21%).

Figure 63:

### Credit received by experience abroad and course abroad

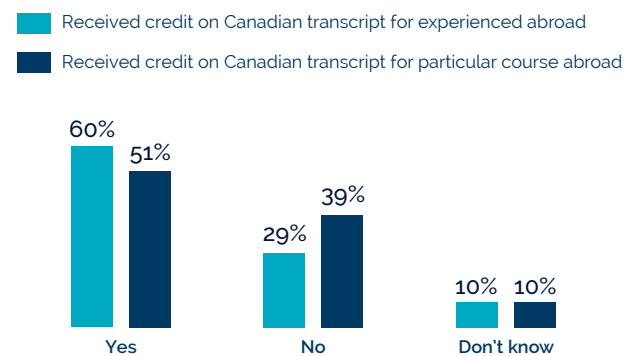
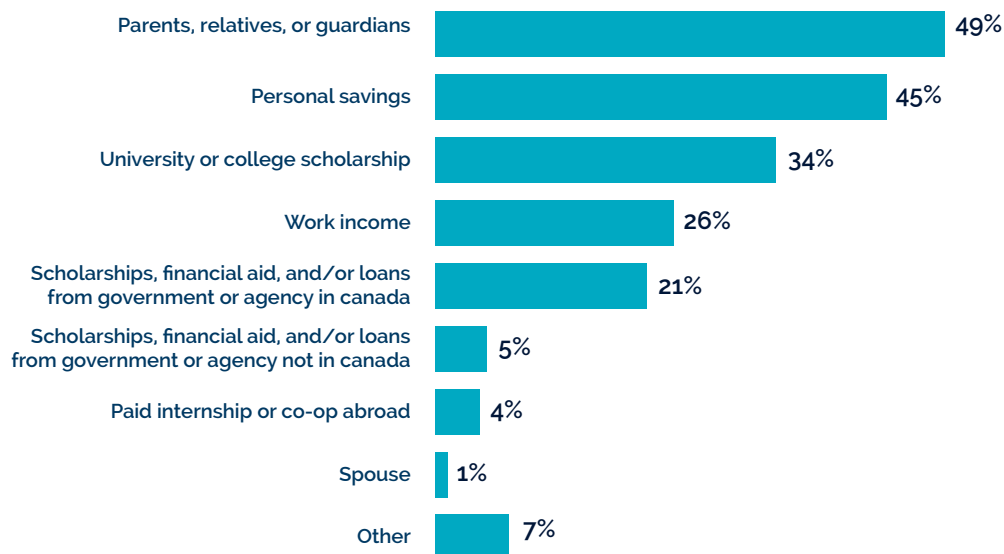


Figure 64:

### How did you finance your education abroad experience(s)?<sup>85</sup>



<sup>85</sup> Percentages do not add up to 100, as participants could select up to three options.

## The Impact of Education Abroad

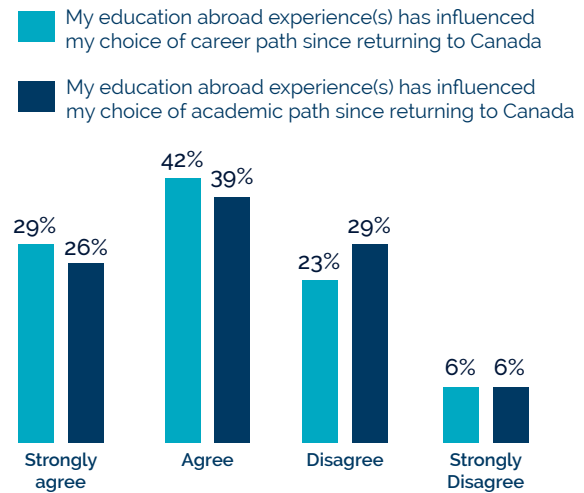
The group of over 1,400 respondents who went abroad were asked about the impact of their education abroad experience. For 12 learning domains students were asked to rate what they learned while abroad compared with what they would have expected to have learned if they had remained at their home campus for the same period of time. For virtually all domains, the growth that students reported achieving during their education abroad experience was at least as high as or significantly higher than what they think they would have learned at home during the exact same period. See figure 65.

It is notable that some of the highest rated domains reflect areas that go beyond typical classroom learning, such as leaps in cultural awareness and understanding, openness to different ways of thinking, self-confidence, and awareness of own identity. While growth in job-related skills and academic accomplishment were rated lower than other domains, it is possible that students responded in terms of technical and specific learning outcomes rather than considering the effect of the wider skillsets and perspectives that can be applied to, and often enhance, future careers and academic endeavours.

The transformative effect of education abroad is further demonstrated in figure 66. Almost three quarters of students agreed or strongly agreed that their experience abroad influenced their choice of career path. Similarly, two-thirds agree or strongly agree that their experience influenced their choice of academic path since returning to Canada.

Figure 66:

### Influence of education abroad on future career and academic choices

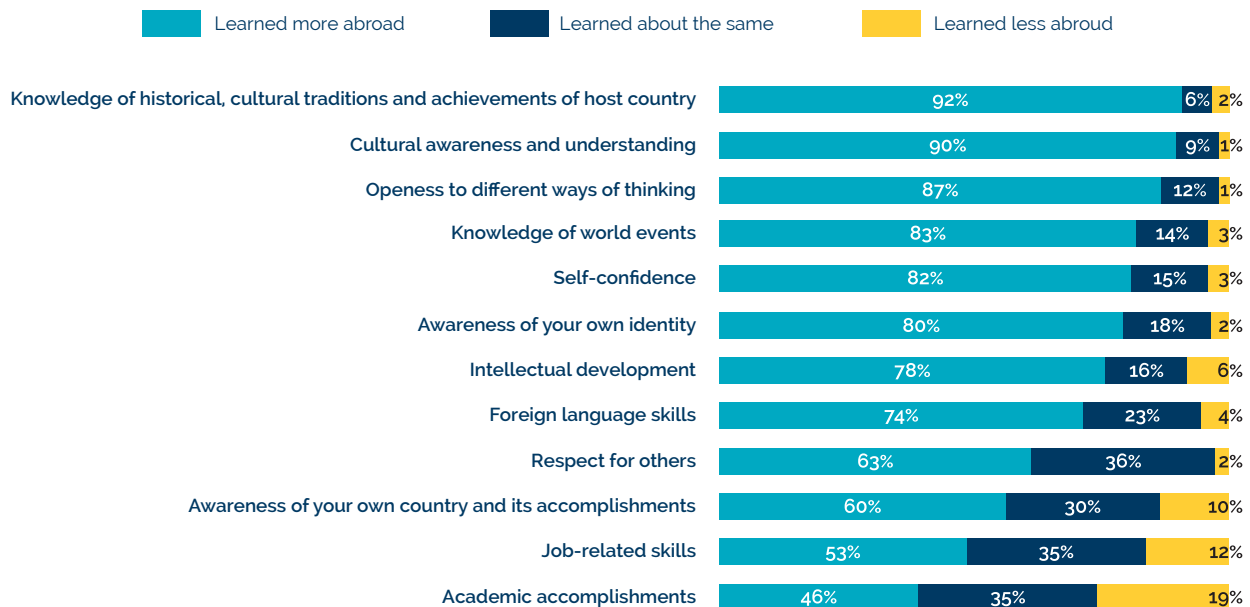


“ Living on your own in another country at this age is transformative in a way, and I feel that I’ve learned a lot more about myself in my year here than my three previous years in Canada. ”

— Undergraduate student with education abroad experiences in Europe

Figure 65:

### Growth/learning reported to take place abroad, as compared with growth/learning on home campus



The impact of education abroad is underscored by the fact that once students go abroad they are much more likely to have repeat experiences. When asked how likely they are to participate in an education abroad experience during their current post-secondary studies, 46% of mobile students reported being very likely to do so, compared with 19% of their peers who had never gone abroad. See figure 67.

Figure 68 provides a breakdown of the reported likelihood that students will go abroad based on their level of study during their previous experience(s). Seventy-three percent of students who went abroad during primary or secondary school were very or somewhat likely to do so during their current post-secondary program. This was followed by those who had participated during their current program (71%), through an educational program abroad not recognized by an educational institution, e.g. through an NGO or private sector organization not affiliated with their school (69%), and by those who had gone abroad during previous post-secondary studies (60%).

Figure 67:

### Likelihood of participating in education abroad during current studies, by students who have gone abroad compared with those who have not

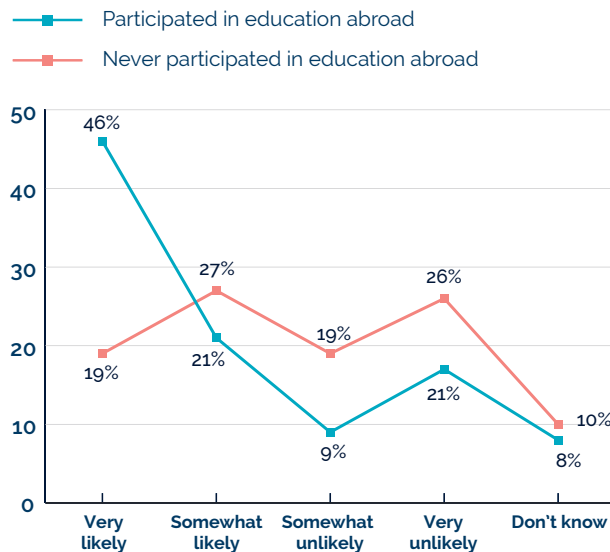
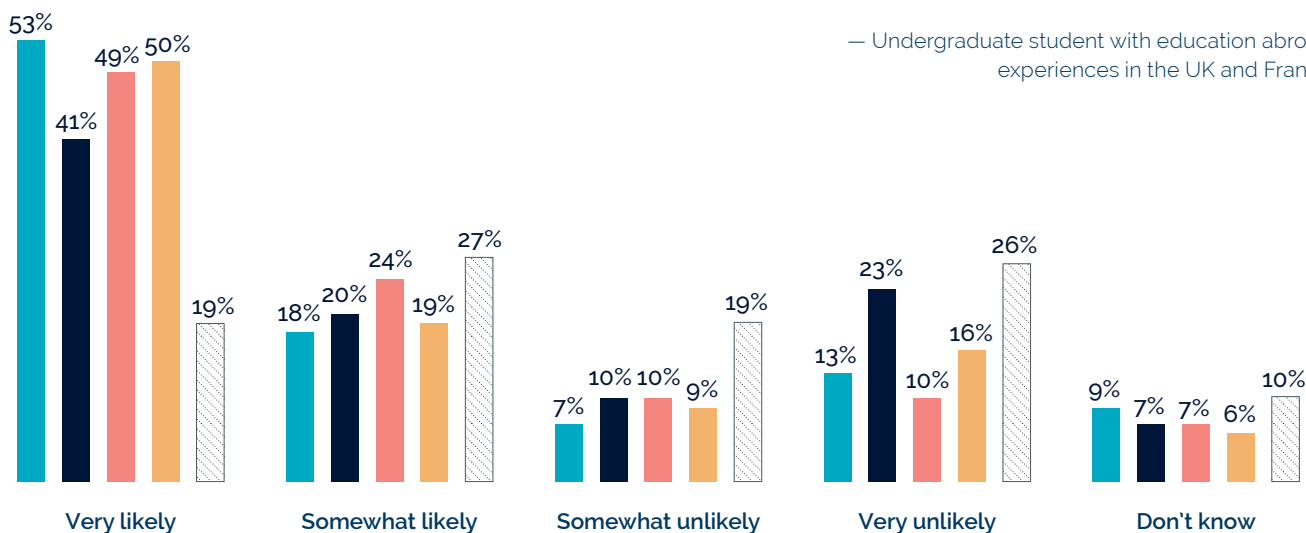


Figure 68:

### Likelihood of going abroad during current studies, by level of study during previous education abroad experience

- Current post-secondary
- Previous post-secondary
- Primary / secondary school
- Program abroad not recognize by an educational institution
- Never participated in education abroad



“ I was recently hired for my first job with a company in Quebec - my cross cultural experience and French language experience definitely helped me to get noticed and land this amazing position. ”

— Undergraduate student with education abroad experiences in the UK and France

## Spotlight on Minority Identities and Outbound Mobility

Which students are benefiting most from education abroad? Given the personal and professional enrichment associated with going abroad, it is important to promote these opportunities to the greatest number of students. At the same time, it is also important to analyze which students are mobile to ensure that these benefits are being accessed in an equitable manner.

In the US, diversity in education abroad is a key issue. Although visible minority participation has increased in recent years, only 26% of minority students went abroad in 2013–14, as compared with a 42% overall US minority student population.<sup>1</sup>

How does Canada fare in comparison? Of the 1,433 students who participated in education abroad, 14.7% identified as a visible minority, making them underrepresented compared with all minority survey respondents (18.3%), and with the general Canadian minority population (19.1%).<sup>2</sup> See figure 69. Similarly, 16.2% of foreign-born Canadians went abroad, which falls short of the total population of foreign-born Canadians (20.6%), as reported in the 2011 census data.<sup>3</sup>

As seen in figures 69 and 70, East-Asian students (e.g. Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, etc.) had the highest outbound mobility rate, comprising 3.5% of the visible minority total, but short of the East-Asian population rate in Canada (6.7%).<sup>4</sup> Students identifying as South Asian–East Indian (e.g. Indian from India, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, East Indian from Guyana, Trinidad, East Africa, etc.) were the second largest minority group to go abroad (1.9%), although this group is also underrepresented compared to the national population (4.8%). Aboriginal students ranked third and comprised 1.8% of students that went abroad, but again are underrepresented compared to Canada’s national Aboriginal population (4.3%).

In order to further examine the link between social inequities and barriers to outbound mobility, participation rates were further disaggregated. In terms of LGBTQ students, the percent who went abroad was slightly higher (9.4%) than overall LGBTQ survey respondents (7.8%).<sup>5</sup>

1 Institute of International Education. *Open Doors 2015: Report on International Educational Exchange* (New York: IIE, 2015).

2 In order to draw comparisons between census statistics and domestic education abroad participation demographics, international students were not included in the reported visible minority and foreign-born Canadian survey data.

3 Statistics Canada. *Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada. The National Household Survey, 2011* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2013). accessed July 11, 2016. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.pdf>

4 Statistics Canada. *NHS Profile. Canada, 2011*. accessed July 11, 2016. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Ge01-PR&Code1-01&Data-Count&SearchText=Canada&SearchType=Begin&SearchPR-01&A1-All&B1-All&Custom=&TABID=1>

5 Statistics Canada. *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit: National Household Survey, 2011* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2013). accessed July 11, 2016. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.pdf>

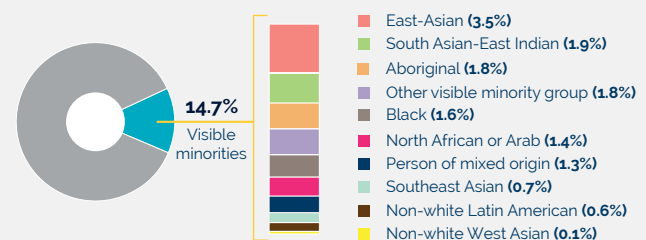
Figure 69:

Percentages of outbound students by visible minority identity, as compared with overall survey responses and national census statistics

	Participated in Education Abroad	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Canadian Population (Stats Can, 2011)
Non-visible minorities	85.3%	81.7%	80.9%
Total visible minorities	14.7%	18.3%	19.1%
East-Asian	3.5%	4.6%	6.7%
South Asian–East Indian	1.9%	2.9%	4.8%
Aboriginal	1.8%	3.5%	4.3%
Other visible minority group	1.8%	1.5%	0.3%
Black	1.6%	2.2%	2.9%
North African or Arab	1.4%	1.1%	1.2%
Person of mixed origin	1.3%	1.3%	0.5%
Southeast Asian	0.7%	0.6%	0.9%
Non-white Latin American	0.6%	0.7%	1.2%
Non-white West Asian	0.1%	0.2%	0.6%

Figure 70:

Canadian students abroad, breakdown by visible minority identities



Students were asked whether they have a disability which has interfered or might interfere with their ability to participate in any aspects of an education abroad program/experience. It is not surprising that the percentage of these students who went abroad was slightly lower (3.3%) than the overall percentage of survey respondents with a disability (4.0%).



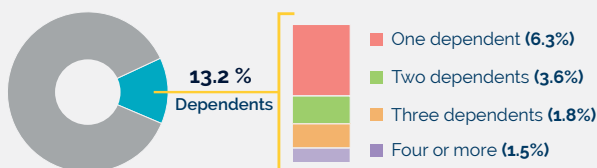
## Spotlight on Students with Dependents and Outbound Mobility

Family responsibilities are another barrier associated with decreased participation in education abroad. Compared to the overall 20% mobility rate of survey participants, only 13% of students with dependents report ever having gone abroad. As noted in the limitations section, students who have participated in education abroad – both with dependents and without – may be overrepresented in the sample; however, the proportional difference in participation rates between these two groups is worth noting.

Although the group of students with dependents may include individuals who went abroad before they became responsible for others, this supports other data that identifies family responsibilities as a barrier to participation. As can be seen in figure 71, students report lower levels of mobility as their number of dependents increases.

Figure 71:

### Students who have ever participated in education abroad, by current number of dependents



## Key Findings

The findings of this survey provide insights on key questions around outbound mobility in Canada.

### Behind the Mobility Numbers

Data submitted by participating institutions indicates that 2.3% of university students (undergraduate and graduate) went abroad for a credit or not-for-credit experience in the 2014-15 academic year.

This suggests that participation has declined since the 2012-13 academic year when an estimated 3.1% of university students went abroad.<sup>86</sup> Data submitted by a limited sample of college and polytechnic students suggests that 1.0% participated in 2014-15, in line with previous research<sup>87</sup> on annual education abroad participation at the college level.

In contrast with annual participation rates, 20% of survey respondents (1,433 of 7,028 students) reported having an education abroad experience at some point in their lives. As noted in the limitations section, respondents were given the choice to self-select whether or not to take part in the survey, which may have attracted a higher proportion of respondents with a particular interest in education abroad.

That said, this study captures education abroad experiences that post-secondary institutions normally do not track, including previous and non-institutional experiences abroad, as well as experiences that might not be counted within current institutional tracking mechanisms (see the previous section of this special feature for a discussion of education abroad data collection). Twelve percent of mobile students went abroad at any point during their current post-secondary studies; however, the survey also accounts for others who went abroad during their previous post-secondary studies (7%), primary/secondary school (6%), and those who participated in an educational program not officially recognized by an educational institution (6%).

### Lesson Learned:

The development of a systematic national approach to tracking, measuring, and reporting participation will go a long way towards having accurate participation statistics; however, much still needs to be done to significantly increase education abroad participation and the benefits associated with these experiences.

<sup>86</sup> Universities Canada, *Canada's Universities in the World: AUCC Internationalisation Survey* (Ottawa: UNIVCAN, 2014).

<sup>87</sup> Colleges and Institutes Canada, *Internationalizing Canadian Colleges and Institutes: The First National Report on International Education and Mobility* (Ottawa: CICan, 2010).

## Where students go and what they study

The top destinations of students who went abroad were France, the UK, the US, and Germany. With 119 destination countries represented, students in the sample have participated in education abroad in a diverse breadth of destinations.

Top countries of interest for future education abroad tended to be highly developed countries, primarily in Europe, where Canada's official languages are widely spoken. Although 66% of respondents would be interested in destinations where their primary language is not widely spoken, nearly nine in 10 would be likely to go if classes were offered in the language of their home institution.

In terms of fields of study, Business was the most common for outbound students, followed by Engineering, Social Sciences, Health Science fields, Education, Humanities, and Natural Sciences.

Course-based programs were the most common, with nearly seven in ten students participating in an exchange, field school, or other courses during their most recent education abroad experience. Others engaged in internships, research abroad, volunteer placements, directed travel, and co-op/clinical placements. The most common duration abroad was either a semester (24%) or 5-6 months (20%), although short-term experience of less than one month were also popular (19%). Just over half of students received credit on their Canadian transcript for their most recent education abroad experience.

### Lesson Learned:

Although potential unintended effects of programs in non-native languages of destination countries should be considered, offering more education abroad opportunities in the languages of Canada's educational institutions may increase participation.

## The gender gap

Female and male respondents reported very similar levels of interest and likelihood in participating, as well as similar interest in global issues; however, females appear to be over-represented in education abroad. Sixty-six percent of students who have gone abroad are female, compared with a 56% enrolment rate in post-secondary education in Canada. While it is worth noting that women are over-represented in the overall survey sample, low male outbound mobility has been a persistent trend seen in the US, Europe, and other regions.

### Lesson Learned:

Further research to understand the roots of the gender gap in Canada is recommended. Some research has suggested that marketing education abroad in terms of preparation for graduation and career may engage more male students. Additional outreach to men, with a focus on internships and work abroad, may have the potential to engage more males in education abroad.<sup>88</sup>

“ Living in Greece during austerity riots in 2011 did a lot to educate us about the political state in Greece... academically working in the dig site with ancient Greek burials went a long way towards solidifying my career in archaeology. ”

— Undergraduate student with education abroad experience in Greece

<sup>88</sup> Institute of International Education, *Open Doors 2015: Report on International Educational Exchange* (New York: IIE, 2015).

## Perceived benefits and impact of education abroad

Although the top perceived benefit associated with education abroad was a chance to travel, other benefits, such as career advancement, the opportunity to learn to live and work in different cultures, become more globally aware, and learn another language were also highly valued. Students who went abroad overwhelmingly recognized the impact of their experience. Respondents report learning and growth that occurred while abroad was at least as high as or indeed higher than what they would have learned at home. Notably, some of the highest rated domains reflect areas that go well beyond typical classroom learning, such as leaps in cultural awareness and understanding, openness to different ways of thinking, self-confidence, and awareness of their own identity.

It is evident that an experience abroad often has long-lasting and transformative effects. The majority of respondents who went abroad said that their experience influenced their choice of career path (71%) and/or academic path (65%) since returning to Canada. The impact of education abroad is underscored by the fact that students who went abroad reported being much more likely to have repeat experiences than their peers who had not done so.

## A question of finances

By far, the most significant barrier is financial, with 80% of students requiring financial assistance in order to participate in an education abroad program. Although the vast majority of students reported financial issues as the most significant barrier, two thirds did not know whether their institution offers financial assistance, suggesting that this information was either difficult to find or not sought out.

Students reported financing their education abroad experiences through a combination of sources, primarily through parental resources and through personal savings. Although students reported accessing some institutional and governmental funding, it is evident that these funds are not sufficient and not accessible by all students.

### Lesson Learned:

Increased funding opportunities to support education abroad participation need to be implemented and effectively marketed.

## Diversity in education abroad

Given the personal and professional enrichment associated with education abroad, it is important to benchmark which students are and are not going abroad, with a focus on efforts to facilitate accessibility and equitable participation. In terms of diversity among education abroad participants, foreign-born Canadians and domestic students who identify as a visible minority went abroad less than their counterparts. Students who identified as aboriginal were also underrepresented. Students with dependents and those with a disability were also less likely to go abroad.

LGBTQ students had a slightly higher participation rate than their non-LGBTQ peers. Considering the potential risk of discrimination that LGBTQ students face in certain countries, it is promising that these concerns have not resulted in decreased participation.

### Lesson Learned:

Previous research on outbound mobility in the US has identified a number of barriers affecting visible minority participation, including finances, student perceptions of who should participate in education abroad, lack of role models, lack of family support, fear of discrimination, and institutional barriers such as lack of information and curricular constraints.<sup>89</sup> Additional research is recommended to identify unique barriers affecting diverse groups in the Canadian context and outreach efforts should be tailored to target underrepresented groups in order to increase participation.

<sup>89</sup> Susan B. Twombly, Mark H. Salisbury, and Shannon D. Tumanut. *Study Abroad in a New Global Century: Renewing the Promise, Refining the Purpose* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012).

## Other barriers

Other barriers reflecting indirect financial costs were reported, including concerns about delayed graduation, the need to work during the school year, that jobs would not be held while abroad, or that going abroad would not be required to obtain a job. Institutional barriers around receiving course credit, limiting academic program schedules, and the absence of education abroad opportunities offered for a particular program were also reported. To a lesser extent, students reported not wanting to leave their friends or loved ones, and/or having family commitments that make going abroad more complicated.

### Lesson Learned:

In addition to allocating additional funding for students, addressing institutional barriers by expanding credit granting for experiences abroad, offering options to a wider range of programs of study, and developing opportunities for short-term and cost-effective programs is recommended.

## Concluding remarks: Creating a culture of mobility

With 86% of respondents interested in having an education abroad experience if they could do so, findings confirm that there is strong and wide interest in participating. However, with only half of respondents indicating that they are very or somewhat likely to go abroad during their current studies, it is evident that there are real or perceived barriers in place. These trends are consistent with the findings of CBIE's 2009 education abroad study.

Although financial barriers are a real impediment for many students, the role of social networks should not be underestimated. Studies suggest that when students are surrounded by others who have gone abroad, a culture of mobility is created, and going abroad becomes the “right” way to have a post-secondary experience.<sup>90, 91</sup> It is not surprising that respondents with a parent who had completed an education abroad experience reported being much more likely to participate than students who did not grow up within an education abroad culture. International students, for whom mobility is normalized and reinforced by peers, also reported being much more likely to participate in further education abroad than domestic students. This suggests that, in addition to increased financial support and the effective marketing of these funding opportunities, efforts should be concentrated on outreach to parents, linking students who have and have not gone abroad, and on other efforts to promote a culture of mobility on Canadian campuses and beyond.

As interest in education abroad grows, data has become increasingly important to expand the capacity of the sector to develop even stronger policies and programs. This comprehensive survey builds upon previous CBIE education abroad research, yet draws on data from a significantly larger representative sample, offering new insights and analyses. CBIE will continue to conduct detailed research on education abroad, supporting institutions, organizations, governments and other stakeholders in the sector.

90 Suzanne E. Beech, "International student mobility: the role of social networks," *Social & Cultural Geography* 16(3) (2014): 332-350, accessed July 6, 2016, DOI:10.1080/14649365.2014.983961.

91 Anna Wells, "International Student Mobility: Approaches, Challenges and Suggestions For Further Research," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 143(14) (2014): 19-24, accessed July 6, 2016 doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.350.

# Education Abroad: **Innovative Practices from CBIE Members**









## Assessing Students' Intercultural Competence in an International Field School

**Submitted by:**

Lynne Mitchell, Director, Centre for International Programs, and Andrea Paras, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Guelph

**Implementation Timeline:**

- January –April 2015: Pre-departure course (0.5 credits) on “The Ethics of International Voluntourism.” Students and instructor met for three hours/week for twelve weeks.
- May 2015: One-month field school (0.5 credits) in Dharamsala, India. Students had full-time placements with local organizations, met with local community leaders, and visited a number of cultural sites.



## Research Problem:

Is international, community-engaged learning a pathway to improved intercultural competence in students? Previous research suggests that, without guided intercultural learning, students can return from a program abroad with, at best, very little increase in intercultural sensitivity or, at worst, reinforced negative stereotypes and strengthened ethnocentrism (Bateman, 2002; Jackson, 2008; Vande Berg and Paige, 2012). Our study investigated how students understood culture before their experience abroad and how their thoughts changed as a result of extensive pre-departure intercultural preparation.

## Our Approach:

This unique program combined research and active teaching to provide insights into the thinking and processing students go through when trying to acquire intercultural competency. During the pre-departure course, students examined the ethics of international voluntourism within the context of broader critiques of

international development. A significant portion of the pre-departure course was also devoted to understanding the concept of intercultural competence and providing students with a toolkit of reflection skills. During their time in India, students worked in full-time volunteer positions at a variety of Tibetan and Indian NGOs in Dharamsala which included a range of human rights and development organisations. The students also had the opportunity to interact with a number of guest speakers and visit numerous cultural sites.

Our research employed a mixed quantitative and qualitative methodology that analysed students' Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) survey results alongside approximately 17 written reflections from each student. The IDI is a 50-question psychometric instrument that measures intercultural competence along a development continuum. It measures an individual's own perception of how interculturally competent they perceive themselves to be, as well as their actual level of intercultural competence. All students were required to take the IDI survey prior to and after the program, as well as submit written reflections as part of their coursework.



## Summary of Results:

- **Educators should not assume that intercultural competence will improve as a result of student participation in study abroad programs, even with extensive pre-departure preparation.** Seven out of thirteen students experienced a statistically significant improvement in their intercultural competence, two experienced a decline, and the remaining four did not change at all. Interestingly, five students also experienced a statistically significant increase in their perception of their intercultural competence, which suggests that participation in a study abroad might actually augment the tendency of some students to over-estimate their intercultural skills.
- **While the IDI measures intercultural competence and perceived competence, it doesn't necessarily reveal intercultural learning.** Because the program design featured extensive teaching about intercultural theory which helped to demystify

the IDI, even students whose IDI scores dropped developed insights as to why. One student reflected on the fact that when the intercultural situation in India became overwhelming she tended to look for similarities in the cultures instead of critically examining differences. She postulates that perhaps this protection mechanism resulted in her lower IDI scores at the end of the program.

Along with the novelty and excitement of new experiences comes a plethora of disorienting emotions which are compounded by situations where students' expectations are unmet, or where communication is a challenge as they try to navigate a new cultural landscape. It should be no surprise that students revert to comfortable but less sophisticated notions of culture to reduce their psychological stress. In these situations success is not measured by the IDI scores but by ensuring through reflections that the student knows what happened and why.

- **An individual's initial IDI score is not necessarily a predictor of their ability to engage in intercultural learning.** Students participate in intercultural learning at various starting points. Some students with lower initial IDI scores had the greatest intercultural learning. Therefore, course instructors should be equipped with appropriate tools and supports to maximise the opportunity for learning no matter where students are beginning along the IDI continuum.
- **Using IDI survey results in combination with written reflections provides an effective way of assessing intercultural learning.** From a pedagogical perspective, using written reflections throughout the course made it possible for the course instructor to make timely interventions that would assist with student development. From a research perspective, written reflections help educators and researchers to learn more about how and why students' intercultural competence increases or decreases during study abroad programs, and can even link student learning to specific events or challenges.<sup>92,93</sup>

92 For more information, see the student blog from the India Field School: <https://indiafieldschool.wordpress.com/> and the Intercultural Development Inventory: <https://idiinventory.com/>

93 References:

Bateman, B. E. (2002). "Promoting Openness toward Culture Learning: Ethnographic Interviews for Students of Spanish." *The Modern Language Journal*, 86(3), 318-331.  
Jackson, J. (2008). "Globalization, internationalization, and short-term stays abroad." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32(4), 349-358.  
Vande Berg, M., & Paige, R. M. (2012). "Why Students Are and Are Not Learning Abroad: A Review of Recent Research." In M. Vande Berg, R. M. Paige, & K. H. Lou (Eds.), *Student learning abroad: what our students are learning, what they're not, and what we can do about it*. Sterling, Virginia: Stylus.







CÁC NƯỚC TRÊN THẾ GIỚI

Agenda  
1) Special Topic  
2) Vocab  
3) Rules for tomorrow

Show your Halloween costume





# UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

## Innovations at the University of Calgary

### Submitted by:

Ron Hugo, Associate Dean (Teaching & Learning), Schulich School of Engineering; Roswita Dressler, Instructor and Director, Teaching Across Borders, Werklund School of Education; Colleen Kawalilak, Associate Dean (International), Werklund School of Education; and Colleen Packer, Manager International Learning Programs, University of Calgary International

Students in highly structured programs such as Education and Engineering are often limited in their opportunities to study abroad. The University of Calgary offers innovative programs in both areas, allowing undergraduate students to engage in immersive short-term education abroad that focuses not only on significant discipline-specific learning but on impactful intercultural experiences.

## Teaching Across Borders

Teaching Across Borders (TAB) is an optional opportunity for Bachelor of Education (BEd) students to go abroad for approximately 10 weeks in the third semester of their program. TAB students volunteer in schools, experience a new culture, receive knowledge regarding teacher education in another country, and share knowledge pertaining to teaching in Canada. This is not a formal practicum; rather, it is a co-curricular service activity providing students with the opportunity to step beyond the comfortable and engage in a culture vastly different from their own in order to inform their teaching practice here in Canada. This fall, students will be placed in Australia, Brazil, Germany, Japan, Spain, and Vietnam, but they will also come together in an online community, participating in reflective activities, processing common experiences, and sharing the unique perspectives they are gaining.

Several challenges emerged in the design of this program:

1. The BEd has a fixed sequence of courses and a required number of practicum weeks. To allow students time to immerse themselves in the target culture, two courses are offered in the summer prior to their placement, and two online during their time abroad. As well, special arrangements have been made to provide a debriefing week upon return, prior to entry into their Canadian school practicum.
2. Host countries differ with regards to resourcing, timetabling, and experience with education abroad programs. With six host countries, the TAB director must negotiate local understandings of the TAB program through communication, understanding, and sensitivity to intercultural communication.
3. This program is scheduled for growth. Student numbers this year (27) are almost double the participation in 2015 (15) and TAB 2016 includes two new partner countries, Australia and Germany. We plan to increase participation significantly in the coming years which presents the challenge of planning for growth through research-informed practice. One way that this has been addressed is by complementing individual applications with a group interview, involving observation of students tackling problem-solving activities as a team.

4. We take very seriously the ethical considerations and our responsibilities in preparing students to step beyond the comfortable into a culture of difference, and providing them with support both while abroad and upon return. Pre and post travel sessions are an integral part of our process, planning, and preparation, as are the online activities undertaken while abroad, allowing students to process and reflect on their experience.

Growing the TAB program with students in mind involves preparing them for life in a host country by engaging them in workshops and activities prior to and during their travel, and again upon their return. This includes cultural sensitivity training, ESL teaching strategies and reflective writing sessions that will help them make sense of their learning and apply it to their practice as teachers, sharing the knowledge they gain both while abroad and upon return.

## Shantou Group Study Program

The Shantou Group Study Program is an international collaboration between the University of Calgary (UCalgary) and Shantou University (STU) in Guangdong Province, China. It is best described as a hybrid of international enrolment, international project and international field trip. Each May, 20 third year UCalgary students travel to STU where they take two courses in collaboration with 20 STU students: Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Renewable Energy, and the Renewable Energy Practicum. Both courses can be applied towards degree completion. The program is delivered in English primarily by the UCalgary Li Ka Shing (Canada) Foundation Chair in Engineering Education Innovation and includes a number of off-campus field trips to academically relevant locations. This course coupling has been very successful, resulting in the completion of course projects in five weeks that are equivalent in complexity to eight-month long final-year engineering capstone design projects.

Several challenges have been addressed during the evolution of this program:

1. The scheduling and length of the program posed an initial challenge. The program began as an eleven-day, non-credit, group travel program. The success of the week-long, project-based learning collaboration led to both universities embarking on an initiative to pursue a formal, for-credit collaboration. Through the support of the Li Ka Shing (Canada) Foundation in partnership with UCalgary's Schulich School of Engineering, the program became a four-week intensive study of two engineering technical-elective courses. Additional time was added in the third year when it was determined that the four weeks were too compressed. The program continues to take place in May, after UCalgary students have completed their Winter Session exams and prior to the STU students starting their Winter Session exams.
2. At the end of the third year of the program, while evaluating the students' completed paper-based design projects, it was noted that the projects lacked rigor and that some of the students were unable to answer fundamental questions pertaining to their designs. The Innovation and Entrepreneurship course was subsequently restructured, requiring students to build and test their design concepts. This was found to significantly improve learning outcomes.
3. Students initially perceived the program as an international field trip rather than a valuable academic experience. Restructuring the field trips to coincide more appropriately with the projects bolstered student interest and facilitated greater understanding of the concepts being explored. In addition, the introduction of experimental measurement equipment allowed students to conduct more comprehensive testing. These changes also fostered increased collaboration and teamwork with their STU counterparts, along with a focus on a common constructive goal. Overall, the balance between a course-based program and cultural immersion remains delicate and under constant review.

4. Ensuring all students interacted on an equal footing presented a fourth challenge. To better prepare Calgary students, a pre-departure workshop in Mandarin and cultural etiquette was provided. Calgary students were then asked to offer their expertise in English to Chinese students in STU's English Language Lounge. While in China, cultural activities were sponsored by students from both universities, promoting the development of mutually supportive relationships. During the courses, students were also organized into carefully structured working groups.

The above examples illustrate how we can provide opportunities for students to internationalize their degrees in meaningful academic and intercultural ways, despite the limitations of highly structured degree programs, allowing them to contribute to the communities they are in while abroad and informing their continued learning in Canada upon return.











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## Reworking Global Engagement Experiences: Lessons Learned from Haiti and El Salvador

**Submitted by:**

Robert Feagan, Associate Professor, Society, Culture and Environment, and Steven Sider, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Wilfrid Laurier University

This case study outlines the key issues and challenges, and the approaches developed and implemented to address them, associated with two broadly similar global experiential engagements—GEE, conducted from Wilfrid Laurier University. The author Feagan’s work involves a partnership between Laurier International and Habitat for Humanity’s Global Village—HFH-GV program in El Salvador and the author Sider’s work involves English as a Second Language classes for high school and university students in Haiti. Both initiatives were created with context-specific educational and community development outcomes in mind, with early iterations witnessing specific pedagogical challenges and opportunities. In this case study, we summarize these two ongoing global initiatives, looking at issues associated with each, and at the approaches being developed to work towards strengthening and deepening the experience for both the host community and the student participants.

## Early Learning and Challenges

Both the El Salvador and Haitian GEE initiatives began in 2013. In the ensuing two years they were able to begin the development of positive working relationships with their host-countries while also perceiving opportunities for strengthening the community and learning outcomes for their various participants. In the El Salvador case, student-participants gained initial exposure to ideas of cultural difference and competency by developing skills in relating to, and working with, home-recipient families, on-site workers, and host-country HDH-GV partners. For those in the Haitian initiative, this first foray provided the university students with their first educational experiences in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in an international context. Both of these first forays provided GEE facilitated by Laurier faculty willing to observe and learn on the ground, and host-country partners working to create a stable and secure entry-point for these initiatives.

Differences between these two Laurier GEE initiatives are instructive. The El Salvadoran initiative might be most closely defined as a humanitarian and relationship-building effort with no specific 'skills-transfer' goals, while the Haitian partnership was initially oriented towards an English education objective for Haitian students. For the Haitian initiative, this also included new partnerships with educators and government officials from Canada outside of the academe looking to create longer-term relationships with the host-country. While the El Salvadoran Habitat partners had been in-country for a long period of time prior to this initiative, the first two years were only tentative steps by Laurier towards a longer-term partnership. For both however, the first two years of these efforts suggested a number of areas from which to build deeper and more inclusive partnerships and outcomes.

## Shifts In GEE

From 2015-16, the facilitators of these Laurier GEE initiatives found ways to enhance them through the participants, their GEE goals, and their in-country engagement pursuits. For the Haitian effort, this saw an increasingly diverse cohort of students from beyond the Education program, such as Business and Arts, and an expansion of educational initiatives, including the production of films, and a new educational focus termed STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. During the same time period in El Salvador, student participation rates increased, and means to enhance preparation for this GEE were created through the development of a course-credit option. This meant increased potential for understanding north-south issues of equity and power and more critical awareness of concerns around them, the steps towards real cultural competency, and the largely one-way flow of such north-south GEE relationships. Importantly, both Laurier efforts aspired to 'global citizenship' skills and dispositions, and while recognizing the difficult reality of such objectives, efforts have been recently put in place to enhance these





long-term aspirations.<sup>94</sup> Early challenges of creating real and durable relationships between the north and south in these initiatives are now more clearly understood, with paths to work towards such aspirations being created so as to deepen the learnings and partnership outcomes. For the Haitian efforts this meant developing relationships that move towards a more sustainable and collaborative long-term framework (Sider, 2014), and Feagan drawing on his own research there (Feagan & Boylan, 2016).

Borrowing from the Haitian efforts, the authors and facilitators of these GEEs both envision ‘reciprocity’ as a key concept towards which to orient their ongoing endeavours, and the cumulative outcomes from doing so—“**recipwosite**” in Haitian creole. For Sider’s work, this includes the development of a five-year professional development plan for teachers and principals, determined in collaboration with partners from Haiti and Ontario, that include a ‘summer-institute’ and online learning.

94 Sider cites Morais and Ogden (2013) as a potential framework for measurement of these kinds of global citizenship attributes, with Feagan noting works like Cameron (2013), Benham Rennick and Desjardins (2013), and Plum and Jorgensen (2012) as useful for insights into aspirations around achieving global citizenship goals for participants in these kinds of efforts.

For Feagan’s work this includes building stronger relations with the host-country affiliate offices of HFH-GV, enhancing the curricular-based participant preparation activities prior to departure, building on in-country facilitated exercises, and on employing graduate-student research that more intimately connects with El Salvadoran communities and the family-recipients of the homes built with the help of the northern participants. Both examples see future foci as desiring collaboration that is more meaningful and reciprocal for all partners and participants.<sup>95</sup>

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## Active Involvement of Study Abroad Returnees on Campus: The Role Returnees and International Offices Can Play to Complement the University's Academic Plan

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As the 2012–2017 Academic Plan articulates, Saint Mary's University is committed to “provid[ing] greater opportunities for students to develop ways of linking theoretical learning to real world experience by studying abroad” ([www.smu.ca/webfiles/AcademicPlan2012-2017.pdf](http://www.smu.ca/webfiles/AcademicPlan2012-2017.pdf)). To fulfill this commitment, focus was placed on promoting study abroad opportunities and preparing outgoing exchange students prior to departure and during sojourns overseas. However, re-entry transition was left to individual students' own devices, in the hope that they were able to obtain intercultural skills and perspectives.



Thorough preparation, monitoring, and reflection are integral to successfully transforming one's experience into life-long skills. The acquisition of such skills is hardly an automatic process, and Medina-López-Portillo & Salonen have shown that an approach that incorporates guided learning outcomes and monitoring students' intercultural development "helped them substantially increase their deeper understanding of cultural differences and commonalities" (2012, p.375). This suggests that a lack of guided reflection in the post-return phase could easily shortchange study abroad participants' hard work before and during the study abroad program, and the cost of inaction is far too impactful for all involved.

This case study introduces two forms of engagement, open-ended dialogues and introspection, used by the Saint Mary's University International Activities Office (IAO). The primary objectives of these post-return programs are to help study abroad returnees reflect on their experience in a guided manner so that their solidified skills will enable them to lead others in creating meaningful social change. Some of the other benefits to the University community include heightened awareness of international learning opportunities and enhanced intercultural competencies.

## Open-ended dialogues:

Examples of dialogues include a series of "Meet and Greets" where former, current and prospective study abroad students meet to discuss topics surrounding their exchange. As well, returnees are invited to give short presentations on their experience to the University community at an annual "Stories from Overseas" event. These events create spaces to share knowledge and enable students to meet one another and begin peer-to-peer relationships, allowing students to form their own support groups. A peer-based program is often a safe, organic way to affect positive change because "A healthy community is one in which peers look out for each other and provide support, referrals and advocacy." (Towards a Mental Health Strategy for Queens: A Discussion Paper [www.queensu.ca/sites/default/files/assets/pages/principal/docs/CMH-discussionpaper-June2012.pdf](http://www.queensu.ca/sites/default/files/assets/pages/principal/docs/CMH-discussionpaper-June2012.pdf)).

Those events also create mutual value for the study abroad returnees and the University community. Many returnees arrive home with enthusiasm for intercultural issues, and their engagement in peer groups alone is not only a good reflective tool but also a way to "help them make their role more fulfilling" (Fisher & Shapiro, 2005, p.125) resulting in their emotional commitment to





generating intercultural dialogues and creating a culture of study abroad on campus.

### Introspection:

REEL Careers (Reflecting and Engaging through Experiential Learning) was developed to help students articulate how influential their study abroad experience was to employers who might otherwise view it as a vacation. Beginning in the pre-study abroad phase, students reflect on their reasons for studying abroad. Halfway through their exchange they write a mid-term reflection report, answering questions focusing on changes they have gone through, skills learned and adjustments they might consider making. Upon return, they complete two activities, a final reflection in a medium of their choice (e.g., written report, photo essay, and panel discussion on specific guiding questions) and a session with a Career and Employment Coach to capture their learnings and experiences and learn how to channel those into their career planning. Students who have undertaken REEL Careers responded positively to the introspective exercises.

Those two forms of guided reflection demonstrate the IAOs practice of “situational leadership”, an approach theorized by Paul Hersey (1984). In this model the leader diagnoses the needs of the followers and adapts their leadership style to the followers’ needs. The IAO recognizes returnees have diverse experiences, personalities and reintegration difficulties. The fact that there is no one right approach for all is the essence of why a variety of opportunities for engagement are constantly developed and offered.

Regardless of the method of reflection, “the deeper [they] dig in, the richer [their] takeaway will be” (REEL Careers Handbook, November 2015) and the returnees’ engagement, especially in the post-return phase, benefits all. Returnees broaden their horizons and support systems while engaging with the University community about the value of international learning. The next step is to measure the level of study abroad students’ engagement so that the international mobility programs can better meet the letter and spirit of the Academic Plan.<sup>96</sup>



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# University of Victoria

## International Indigenous Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Exchange

### Submitted by:

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### Implementing institutions:

University of Victoria, Canada (Co-operative Education Program and Office of Indigenous Affairs) and University of Newcastle (Wollotuka Institute), Australia

### Introduction:

The University of Victoria (UVic) has a long history in Indigenous education, including the LE,NONET program providing academic, socio-cultural and financial supports to Indigenous students. LE,NONET students engage with local Indigenous communities, but have not previously had the opportunity to participate in international exchanges and gain experience and exposure to Indigenous communities outside of Canada. Filling this gap, an innovative international Indigenous exchange program was made possible by collaboration between the offices of Co-operative Education (Co-op) and Indigenous Affairs (INAF), as part of UVic's Canada Commonwealth Co-op Program (CANCOM-COOP), funded by the Canadian Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarship Program (QES Scholars). The Canadian QES program is a joint initiative of the Rideau Hall Foundation, Community Foundations of Canada and Universities Canada. It was created through unique contributions from the Government of Canada, provincial governments, the private sector and individuals worldwide.



The International Indigenous WIL Exchange Program UVic's existing partnership with University of Newcastle (UoN) was expanded to include the Wollotuka Institute. The Wollotuka Institute offers programming and support to Indigenous students at UoN, and similar to INAF, has extensive relationships with local Indigenous communities. The exchange began in September 2015 when the Indigenous Australian student travelled to Canada for an academic term, including the LE,NONET Preparation Seminar. The student then completed a community internship at the WSÁNE School Board, an Indigenous-operated organization providing education from the pre-school to adult upgrading on the Tsarlip Nation in Brentwood Bay, BC. In exchange, the Indigenous Canadian student went to Wollotuka for a co-op work term, where she worked with Australia's leading Indigenous historian.

Programming was developed to facilitate a meaningful experience for the students in terms of developing their professional and intercultural competencies. As this was an Indigenous international exchange, key principles and best practices for supporting Indigenous student success, developed through the LE,NONET Project by Hunt and colleagues, were also adhered to when designing the programming at UVic (2010, p. 106). These principles include reciprocal learning, supporting Indigenous identity development, culturally relevant programming, community building, relationship building and individualized programming.

### Programming and Lessons Learned:

Programming included traditional welcome and farewell ceremonies led by Indigenous Elders, support systems for students during their international experience, competency assessments to assess their learning during the WIL experience, and opportunities to debrief their experiences.

Several lessons were learned that will be used to enhance future programming:

1. Involvement of the Elders to provide guidance and support is paramount in an Indigenous exchange program, as they play a critical role in providing a cultural orientation to their country and territory of origin, along with cross-cultural teachings.
2. While it was anticipated that the LE,NONET instructors and Elders would be the main sources of support for the Australian student at UVic, it was in fact the Campus Cousins, a network of Indigenous student leaders, who had the most impact not only for the visiting student but also the hosting students. It therefore became clear that in addition to faculty, staff and Elder support, peer mentorship is a key element in building community connections at the host institution.
3. In addition to a pre-departure orientation and intercultural competency curriculum, an orientation to each country's Indigenous culture, history of colonization and contemporary issues would be beneficial. Students should also be introduced to academic, social, emotional and cultural supports that they can access during their exchange. The LE,NONET Preparation Seminar course will now be mandatory for UVic students wishing to participate in this exchange. They will also have the opportunity to participate in a preparation course on Australian Indigenous history, customs and culture prior to departure. Australian students will participate in the LE,NONET Preparation Seminar while at UVic.
4. UVic deploys an intercultural competency assessment framework based on Earley and Ang's cultural intelligence model (2003; McRae & Ramji, 2011). This framework provided significant insights into the relevance of cultural intelligence within Indigenous contexts. While participants in international exchanges or WIL placements have to develop their understanding of their host culture, in this case they also had to enhance their understanding of the Indigenous culture within that country. A culturally-appropriate assessment model needs to be developed not only to capture the core competencies and the intercultural competencies students gain, but also the specifically indigenous aspects of the exchange, such as similarities and differences of Indigenous epistemologies and the impact on bringing that knowledge back. These measures will help set the conditions for students to develop their intercultural competence within the indigenous context, in an international setting.

The creation of an Indigenous international WIL exchange has provided an opportunity to explore issues not contemplated by standard international opportunities. The next exchange will include two students travelling together to each institution which will allow for increased peer companionship, mentorship and support.<sup>97</sup>

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