



Canada's foreign student enrolment took another big jump in 2018

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Short on time? Here are the highlights:

- *There were more than 572,000 foreign students in Canada last year*
- *India is driving much of the country's recent double-digit enrolment growth, with Bangladesh, Colombia, Vietnam, and Iran among the other leading growth markets*

The latest student data from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) describes another year of very strong growth in Canada's international student enrolment.

The number of foreign students studying in the country rose 16.25% last year, marking a third consecutive year of double-digit growth and an overall increase of 73% in the five years since 2014.

The number of international students holding Canadian study permits (as of 31 December) reached 572,415 in 2018, up from [492,545 the year before](#). This compares to the 690,468 foreign students in Australia as of November 2018, and the 458,490 EU and non-EU students in the UK during the 2017/18 academic year.

The [last time](#) we took a close look at the enrolment composition of each country, the UK was the second-ranked study destination in the world (after only the US), followed by Australia in third, and Canada in fourth. Based on the continued rapid growth of foreign student numbers in both Australia and Canada, it seems likely that there is further change afoot in that global table of leading study destinations.

Major growth markets

India continues to be the big story in Canada's international education sector. The number of Indian students grew by another 40% in 2018, for total overall growth of just under 350% since 2014. This amounts to more than 172,600 Indian students in Canada last year, a benchmark that means that India will now surpass China as the leading sending market for Canada. Chinese numbers rose 2% last year to reach just under 143,000.

While they are showing contrasting trends in recent years – China is flattening out as India surges – the two countries together accounted for 55% of all visiting students in Canada.

More broadly, the top 20 source markets, as reflected in the table below, sent nearly 86% of Canada's foreign students in 2018.

	ENROLMENT	% OF TOTAL
India	172,625	30.16%
China	142,985	24.98%
South Korea	24,195	4.23%
France	22,745	3.97%
Vietnam	20,330	3.55%
United States	14,620	2.55%
Brazil	13,835	2.42%
Nigeria	11,290	1.97%
Iran	10,885	1.90%
Japan	8,365	1.46%
Mexico	7,835	1.37%
Bangladesh	6,520	1.14%
Saudi Arabia	5,100	0.89%
Philippines	5,070	0.89%
Taiwan	4,700	0.82%
Turkey	4,385	0.77%
Hong Kong	4,045	0.71%
Colombia	4,035	0.70%
Pakistan	3,965	0.69%
United Kingdom	3,415	0.60%

The top 20 sending markets for Canada, 2018. Enrolment and percentage of total. Source: IRCC
 Aside from India, the fastest-growing markets for Canada in 2018 included Bangladesh (+53%), Iran (+48%), Vietnam (+46%), Colombia (+41%), Philippines (+29%), Kenya (+29%), and Brazil (+17%).

In terms of level of study, 13.5% of Canada's international students were in secondary schools, 76.5% in post-secondary programmes, and 10% in "other studies", including exchange programmes and language studies of six months' duration or more.

For additional background, please see:

- ["Canada: student group calls for improved supports for international students"](#)
- ["Canadian language programmes hit double-digit growth"](#)
- ["Canada books 20% growth in 2017"](#)

<https://monitor.icef.com/2019/02/canadas-foreign-student-enrolment-took-another-big-jump-2018/>