

# Refugees and Canadian Postsecondary Education: Characteristics and Economic Outcomes in Comparison, 2013

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Many working-age adults who immigrate to Canada enroll in postsecondary education after their arrival to upgrade their educational credentials or improve their employment prospects. Overall, 28% of immigrants admitted from 2002 to 2005 (at the working ages of 25 to 54) enrolled in Canadian postsecondary educational institutions within the first seven years after admission to Canada.

Those who were admitted to Canada as refugees were less likely to participate in postsecondary education during their first seven years after admission compared with immigrants in other admission classes—such as economic immigrants or family class immigrants. Specifically, 19% of government-assisted refugees and 20% of privately-sponsored refugees reported studying. Despite the fact that nearly all economic immigrants already had postsecondary qualifications before being admitted to Canada, 42% reported returning to study in the seven years after admission. Among immigrants sponsored by family, 21% reported returning to study.

When refugees do attend postsecondary institutions in Canada, whether to upgrade skills or to acquire new credentials, they tend to wait longer before enrolling compared with immigrants in other admission classes. Among those who enrolled in postsecondary education, 19% of government-assisted refugees and 28% of privately-sponsored refugees began their studies in Canada in either the calendar year of admission or the following year, compared with 43% of economic immigrants and 36% of immigrants sponsored by family.

These findings are taken from a new study, "[Refugees and Canadian Post-Secondary Education: Characteristics and Economic Outcomes in Comparison](#)," released today as part of the *Ethnicity, Language and Immigration Thematic Series*.

## Canadian postsecondary education is associated with a higher rate of employment for immigrants in all admission classes

Those working-age immigrants who participated in postsecondary education in Canada had a greater likelihood of being employed eight years after their admission than immigrants who did not, regardless of admission class.

This difference was especially pronounced among refugees. In 2013, 84% of government-assisted refugees and 89% of privately-sponsored refugees who reported postsecondary education in Canada were employed, compared with 57% of government-assisted refugees and 66% of privately-sponsored refugees who did not report any postsecondary studies.

## Immigrants with Canadian higher education report higher earnings eight years after their admission

Within each admission category, immigrants who received Canadian postsecondary training had higher average employment earnings over time. Among refugees, average annual earnings were \$9,000 higher for those who reported Canadian postsecondary education compared with those without. In contrast, eight years after admission, economic immigrants with Canadian postsecondary education earned on average \$2,000 more than those without.



### Note to readers

The Longitudinal Immigration Database gathers immigration and tax data information in order to provide socioeconomic outcomes of immigrants, such as employment income. The database also provides information on pre-admission work or study experience in Canada, provincial mobility and family composition.

This release analyzes income on the basis of the average of wages and salaries, commissions from employment, training allowances, tips and gratuities and self-employment income (net income from business, profession, farming, fishing and commissions). All income estimates are expressed in 2013 constant dollars to factor in inflation and enable comparisons across time in real terms.

All proportions included in this analysis are based on rounded counts.

**Immigrant tax filers** are immigrants who filed taxes in a given year.

**Participation in any postsecondary training** is defined as claiming tuition credits, and full-time or part-time education deductions on the T1 Tax Return in any of the first seven years since admission.

**Refugee categories** include immigrants who were granted permanent resident status on the basis of a well-founded fear of returning to their home country. These include government-assisted refugees, privately-sponsored refugees, refugees landed in Canada, and their dependents.

**Economic immigrant admission categories** include immigrants who have been selected for their ability to contribute to Canada's economy through their ability to meet labour market needs, to own and manage or to build a business, to make a substantial investment, to create their own employment or to meet specific provincial or territorial labour market needs.

**Family class** immigration category includes any family members sponsored to come to Canada by a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.

For a more detailed description of immigrant admission categories, consult the [Help centre](#) page of the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada website.

### Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5057](#).

The article "[Refugees and Canadian Post-Secondary Education: Characteristics and Economic Outcomes in Comparison](#)" is now available as part of the *Ethnicity, Language and Immigration Thematic Series (89-657-X)*.

The Longitudinal Immigration Database is available upon request.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).