

Canadian postsecondary enrolments and graduates, 2016/2017

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Enrolments in Canadian public colleges and universities totalled 2,051,865 in 2016/2017, up 1.2% (+24,186) from the previous academic year. Enrolments of international students rose by 11.0% (+24,315), accounting for the increase in overall enrolments. Meanwhile, there was a slight decline in the number of Canadian students (-912).

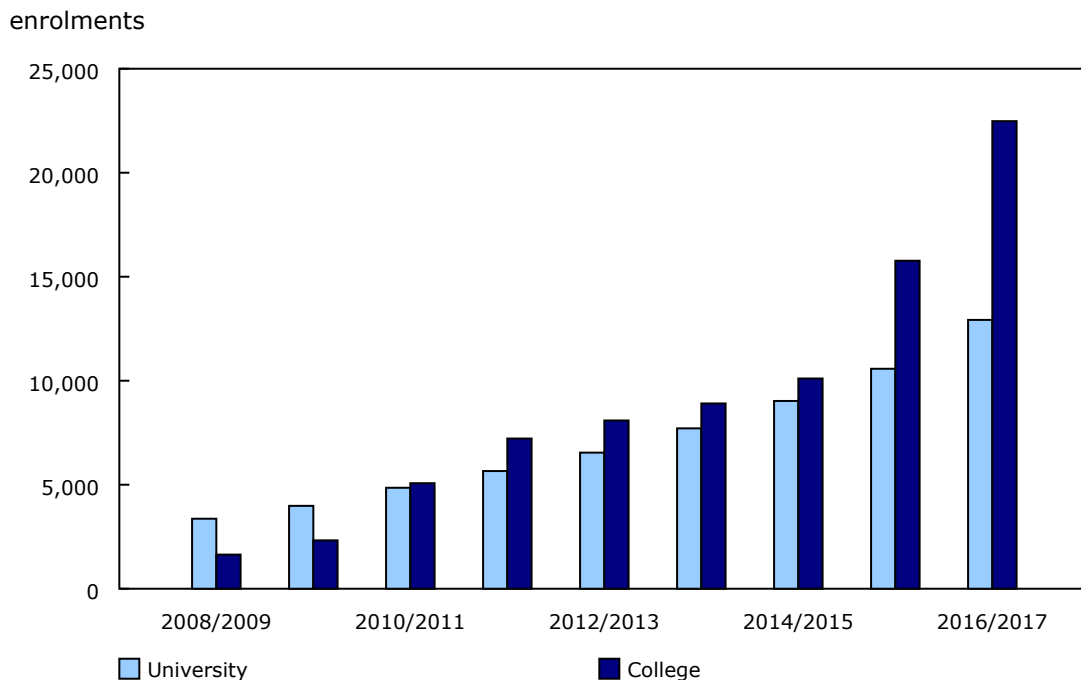
Number of international students increasing at a higher rate than that of Canadian students

The number of international students enrolled in Canadian postsecondary institutions has been on the rise for two decades, with their numbers increasing at a higher rate than that of Canadian students. International students totalled 245,895 in 2016/2017, representing 12.0% of overall enrolments.

Increases in international student enrolments in Canada are observed due to a variety of factors, including programs and policies put in place to increase their numbers, the quality of postsecondary education, and the appeal of Canada as a study destination.

While China remained the top country of citizenship for international students in 2016/2017, most of the gains in enrolments of international students from 2015/2016 to 2016/2017 were a result of the growing number of students from India, up 34.4% (+9,060).

Chart 1
Enrolments of international students from India in Canadian universities and colleges, 2008/2009 to 2016/2017



Source(s): Postsecondary Student Information System (5017).



International student enrolments in colleges increased by 13,119 from 2015/2016 to 2016/2017. International students from India led the increase in college enrolments, up 42.6% (or about 6,711). In 2008, the Student Partners Program was put in place to increase approval rates for study permit applications from India destined for Canadian colleges. Meanwhile, the number of international students from India enrolled in colleges increased more than tenfold, from 1,641 in 2008/2009 to 22,479 in 2016/2017.

In universities, international student enrolments increased by 11,196 from 2015/2016 to 2016/2017. This was led by higher numbers of international students from both China and India. International students from China increased by 5,211 (+8.9%) from 2015/2016 to 2016/2017. The number of international students with Indian citizenship studying in Canadian universities increased by 2,349 (+22.2%) over the same period.

Higher enrolments in universities and colleges

From 2015/2016 to 2016/2017, higher enrolments in both universities (+1.1%) and colleges (+1.3%), fed the rise in overall postsecondary numbers.

In 2016/2017, university enrolments were up by 14,484 compared with the previous year, and have been increasing for almost two decades. Higher numbers of university students enrolled in mathematics, computer and information sciences (+5,142) and architecture, engineering and related technologies (+4,149) led the increase in 2016/2017.

In colleges, enrolments rose by 9,702 from 2015/2016 to 2016/2017. Business, management and public administration (+5,796) posted the largest gain in college enrolments, followed by mathematics, computer and information sciences (+3,354).

Table 1
Enrolments in Canadian universities and colleges, by field of study, 2015/2016 and 2016/2017

	University			College		
	2015/2016	2016/2017	% change	2015/2016	2016/2017	% change
Total, field of study	1,306,251	1,320,735	1.1	721,428	731,130	1.3
Personal improvement and leisure	3,549	2,865	-19.3	19,269	18,312	-5.0
Education	76,962	77,337	0.5	12,669	12,279	-3.1
Visual and performing arts, and communications technologies	42,306	42,309	0.0	34,653	34,695	0.1
Humanities	169,074	164,268	-2.8	95,271	94,620	-0.7
Social and behavioural sciences, and law	227,691	227,409	-0.1	47,745	47,706	-0.1
Business, management and public administration	246,699	249,951	1.3	118,248	124,044	4.9
Physical and life sciences, and technologies	126,333	129,708	2.7	33,234	33,831	1.8
Mathematics, computer and information sciences	48,597	53,739	10.6	20,214	23,568	16.6
Architecture, engineering and related technologies	131,379	135,528	3.2	81,243	83,049	2.2
Agriculture, natural resources and conservation	22,389	23,064	3.0	7,401	7,977	7.8
Health and related fields	161,106	162,990	1.2	89,865	92,124	2.5
Personal, protective and transportation services	7,263	7,326	0.9	32,502	32,607	0.3
Other fields of study	42,903	44,244	3.1	129,120	126,312	-2.2

Source(s): Postsecondary Student Information System (5017).

Women continue to outnumber men in most fields of study

Women represented 56.2% of enrolments in 2016/2017 and continued to outnumber men in most fields of study. Education, and health and related fields represented the two fields of study with the highest proportion of women in 2016/2017. Women accounted for 77.0% of enrolments in education and 74.1%, in health and related fields. In contrast, men accounted for the majority of enrolments in architecture, engineering and related technologies (79.5%) and mathematics, computer and information sciences (73.0%).

Number of postsecondary graduates up for eight consecutive years

In 2016, 532,158 students received a credential, such as a certificate, diploma or degree, from a public postsecondary institution, up 1.9% from a year earlier. This represented the eighth consecutive annual increase.

The number of graduates from colleges rose by 4.9% from 2015 to 2016. In contrast, the number of university graduates declined slightly (-0.2%) over the same period.

Almost half of the 2016 graduates had successfully completed a degree at the bachelor level or above, with 35.4% receiving a bachelor's degree, 11.5% graduating with a master's degree, and 1.5% obtaining a doctorate.

The number of college students who completed a degree at the bachelor level or above more than doubled since 2010. As a proportion, these students represented 1.7% of all college graduates in 2010 and 2.9% in 2016.

In 2016, 21.2% of graduates received a diploma from a career, technical or professional training program.

Women represented 57.1% of all graduates in 2016. They comprised more than half of the graduates at all levels of education, except for the doctoral level, where they comprised 46.5% of graduates.

Table 2
Graduates from Canadian universities and colleges, 2015 and 2016

	2015	2016	% change
University	309,078	308,382	-0.2
College	213,240	223,776	4.9

Source(s): Postsecondary Student Information System (5017).

Note to readers

This is the first of three releases highlighting results on postsecondary students and apprentices, and their labour market outcomes. Results on labour market outcomes for postsecondary graduates as well as results on registered apprentices and outcomes of apprentice certificate holders will be released in early December.

Canadian postsecondary institution enrolment and graduate administrative data are obtained from public colleges and universities using the Postsecondary Student Information System (PSIS). The counts exclude students enrolled in apprenticeship programs. Enrolment and graduate counts for certain institutions are preliminary or are based on estimates.

The levels of enrolment presented are not meant to represent a complete enumeration of all students at postsecondary institutions during the 2016/2017 academic year. Rather, they are based on students enrolled in postsecondary institutions at the time of the fall snapshot date; that is, a single date chosen by the institution that falls between September 30 and December 1. Therefore, students who are not enrolled during this time period are excluded. This has a greater impact on colleges as they have a continuous intake of students and offer shorter programs.

Enrolments are based on program counts and not on student counts. If a student is enrolled in more than one program as of the snapshot date, then all of his/her programs are included in the count.

Graduate data are published based on the calendar year.

It should be noted that some programs at the bachelor level and above can be offered in colleges.

All numbers, including the totals, have been rounded; therefore, sums of the values may not match the total counts. Percentage changes were calculated using unrounded values. The data are subject to annual revisions. These revisions are applied to include new data submissions from 2004, any updates to classification standards and changes in concepts.

Correction

PSIS enrolment and graduate counts have been corrected for the reference years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 due to an error that occurred during data processing that impacted one Ontario college. This error impacts total enrolment and graduate counts for Ontario and Canada as well as college enrolment and graduate counts for Ontario and Canada.

Available tables: [37-10-0011-01](#), [37-10-0012-01](#), [37-10-0015-01](#), [37-10-0018-01](#), [37-10-0020-01](#), [37-10-0069-01](#), [37-10-0070-01](#), [37-10-0086-01](#), [37-10-0087-01](#) and [37-10-0090-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5017](#).

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) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).