

Canada slow in attracting international workforce: CBIE

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A study released by the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) has revealed that Canada needs to work harder to successfully retain international students in the country's workforce. Stiff competition from countries such as United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, coupled with problematic internal policies and practices are posing as setbacks to the success of the country's post-graduation work program for foreign students. As a result, Canada has dropped out of the top five preferred study destinations and now ranks 14th in the OECD in terms of percentage of foreign students studying at its institutions.

The report, entitled *Northern Lights: International Graduates of Canadian Institutions and the National Workforce* has indicated that only a third of international students graduating from Canadian post-secondary institutions plan to stay in Canada to live and work as they anticipate difficulties in getting employment. Another third plan to go home: students from countries such as India and China say they will get better employment in their own country.

Finally, a third plan to study or work in a different country, most frequently the United States. To help regain its position in the education exports market, and for the employment program to succeed, communication channels need to be opened between stakeholders, including employers, officials, institutions and students themselves. According to Jennifer Humphries, Vice-President, Membership and Scholarships, CBIE: "It is also important to stress that Canada is well positioned to succeed in popularizing the post-graduation work program (PGWP) for a couple of reasons: because it is essentially a good program though it needs improvement and refinement, and because international students and graduates generally like living in Canada - and so would be keen to enter the PGWP with the improvements they recommend!"