

FCFA

Fédération des communautés
francophones
et acadienne
du Canada

FCFA Recommendations to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration Regarding the Recruitment and Acceptance Rates of Foreign Students

Background

On February 7, the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA) appeared before the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration to outline the impacts that the large number of visa denials for French-speaking students from Africa planning to study at a minority francophone post-secondary institution have on Canada's francophone communities. Further to its testimony, the FCFA would like to convey to the Committee the following recommendations.

Recommendations

That the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship (IRCC)

1. Conduct a formal review of the eligibility criteria for student visas and of the Chinook assessment support system using a francophone and continental lens in order to identify and correct any systemic discrimination against French-speaking students from Africa.
2. Revise its eligibility criteria for student visas in order to suspend the obligation for students to prove that they will return to their country, especially if they wish to study and settle in francophone or Acadian communities.
3. Significantly increase visa processing capacity in French-speaking African countries.
4. Issue a directive to all Canadian visa offices reminding them of the federal government's francophone immigration targets and of the goal of keeping French-speaking students in Canada after they earn their diplomas. IRCC should also inform its visa officers about the opportunities to study and work in French in Canada's francophone minority communities.
5. Make permanent the temporary pathway between temporary and permanent residence for French speakers outside Quebec that was created in 2021.

6. Provide post-secondary institutions with a summary of the main reasons for student visa denials, broken down by country of origin, so that these institutions can better orient their support services for future applicants.
7. Foster cooperation between post-secondary institutions and Canadian visa offices in French-speaking countries in order to increase the sharing of information that helps validate applications that meet the Government of Canada's entry criteria (for example, additional information on applicants' financial capacity, the scholarships that candidates have secured, further details on the post-secondary institution's admission offers and the planned academic path).
8. Develop a comprehensive and coherent francophone immigration policy that includes the creation of a separate program to promote francophone immigration to Canada (outside Quebec), which should encompass all the options for immigrating to Canada and specific measures to streamline the transition from temporary to permanent residence for francophone international students.