

**Brief to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration  
Re: Study of Recruitment and Acceptance Rates of Foreign Students**

**March 2022**

We thank the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration for the opportunity to provide the following recommendations for consideration in the above study.

**1. Racial equity and transparency**

A 2019 study of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) data found that 75% of African students' applications were rejected compared to the global rejection average of 39%. Francophone African students faced some of the highest refusal rates.

A 2021 study conducted for IRCC<sup>1</sup> revealed the presence of a culture of systemic anti-Black racism, racism and anti-African bias within the department. Focus group participants expressed concern that it likely impacts case processing.

IRCC's use of the Chinook system for processing applications has increased the rate of refusals for applicants from global south countries. The cases are reportedly settled quickly in federal court. But this is an expensive option, and not affordable for most applicants.

**Recommendation 1:** Ensure racial equity and transparency in recruitment and acceptance of foreign students through disaggregated data collection; and through independent oversight and assessment of the use of technology such as Chinook in decision-making.

**2. Settlement and integration services**

Foreign students reportedly face isolation, loneliness and racism in Canada, and struggle with precarious work, insecure and inadequate housing, and high cost of living. For many, their relative youth and lack of personal networks here can leave them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Existing mental health impacts were made worse during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Access to settlement and integration services will allow students to access basic information and assistance as well as supportive programs and networks that can help alleviate psycho-social impacts.

**Recommendation 2:** Allow foreign students to access federally funded newcomer settlement and integration services.

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<sup>1</sup> "IRCC Anti-Racism Employee Focus Groups - Final Report". Prepared for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada by Pollara Strategic Insights. June 2021.

### 3. Educational consultants and recruiters

Education agents and consultants play a significant and growing role in recruiting foreign students to Canada. The lack of regulation in this area leaves foreign students vulnerable to exploitation and abuse<sup>2</sup>.

The province of Manitoba has attempted to regulate educational agents through legislation.

**Recommendation 3:** In collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, regulate educational consultants and recruiters, including those operating abroad to recruit foreign students.

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<sup>2</sup> “The shadowy business of international education” by Nicholas Hune-Brown. The Walrus September/October 2021. <https://thewalrus.ca/the-shadowy-business-of-international-education/>