

SAFE AND SECURE

A PROPOSAL TO WELCOME NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO IN AUGUST 2020

Presented to: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

BOUNDLESS

1 | INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, Canada has benefited greatly from its dynamic rise as an international education destination, with hundreds of thousands of students contributing to the country's economy during their studies.

After graduation, students become private- and public-sector leaders and employees — important connections to new and diversified global markets.ⁱ A third have settled here after graduation, the highest percentage in the world to make the country they chose for their education their new home.ⁱⁱ Many of these students will start families, helping Canada balance the demographic pressures of an aging population.

At the University of Toronto, the number of international undergraduate and graduate students grew from 7,866 in 2008-2009 to 20,930 in 2018-2019.ⁱⁱⁱ

The University is preparing to welcome a new cohort of international students in August 2020, coordinating the reopening of our campuses with provincial and municipal health authorities. U of T has the capacity and resources to ensure all students — new and returning — will be safely integrated into campus and academic life. We are working to implement a secure pathway to arrival and settlement in Canada for new international students, including guidelines and measures that support compliance with the *Quarantine Act* and comprehensive hygiene practices. These measures can serve as a model for other universities to welcome their own international students for on-campus learning.

Enabling international students' arrival in Canada makes economic sense. The federal government recently recognized that international students contribute \$21.6 billion a year to the economy and create 170,000 jobs annually. As public funding for university operations has declined on a per-student basis over the past decade, international student fees have become a significant revenue source, contributing several billion dollars a year to Canada's universities.

Post-pandemic, international students will continue to be an important talent pipeline for Canadian industry, particularly the burgeoning tech sector. Their cross-cultural fluency and global networks will help Canada reach new markets and recover from the pandemic's economic downturn. And as other immigration streams are expected to decrease, the continued arrival of international students is even more critical.

U of T is a truly global university, one in which all students and faculty can engage in a broad spectrum of challenges, ideas, cultures and bodies of knowledge.

– *Global Engagement:
U of T in the World*

Our outlook is now decidedly international. It is driven by our desire to help our students develop the global fluency and cross-cultural perspectives they'll need to lead us forward.

– *President Meric Gertler,
University of Toronto*

International education fuels the people-to-people ties crucial to international trade in an increasingly interconnected global economy.

– *Building on Success,
Government of Canada,
International Education
Strategy, 2019 - 2024*

2 | INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT U OF T

Demand from international students for a world-class U of T education continues to be strong and the University is committed to continuing to be a welcoming, global institution.^{iv}

The University of Toronto continues to be the highest ranked Canadian university and one of the world's top-ranked public universities in the five principal international rankings: THE, QS, Shanghai Ranking Consultancy, U.S. News Best Global Universities, and National Taiwan University. In 2019, U of T rose three spots to be in the top 20 of the world's leading academic institutions and now places 19th. Among public universities, U of T is now ranked second in North America, preceded only by the University of Michigan Ann Arbor (QS Rankings 2021).

International students strengthen our excellence. They bring invaluable perspectives and knowledge to our research enterprise. They form a vital part of the University's community, contributing diverse perspectives and experiences, part of the world-class education experience that prepares all students to co-operate and compete internationally. Through initiatives such as the Mastercard Foundation Scholars program and the Lester B. Pearson International Scholarships, U of T is removing economic barriers facing top international students who otherwise lack the means to attend.

Acceptances by new international undergraduate students are up more than 20 per cent compared to last year, and 82 per cent of undergraduate students have paid a deposit to guarantee their place. This year, we expect 2300 new students from China, 800 from India, 350 from the United States, as well as students from Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Europe, Japan, and South Korea, among others.

The University welcomes recent government policies that recognize online courses as part of a student's Canadian experience. At the same time, overall, students have expressed a strong preference for on-campus study and engagement.^v In the face of uncertainty as to when Canadian border restrictions may be lifted, these students will choose to study in the U.K. or Australia if Canada does not rapidly provide a clear path to arrival.

The University of Toronto has the commitment and resources to safeguard, vigilantly, the health of our communities and welcome a new class of international students.

We will:

- Commit to a safe on-campus experience
- Invest in infection prevention and control
- Partner with provincial and local public health authorities
- Support students' arrival and quarantine, providing daily outreach and monitoring
- Offer ongoing support for students as they are integrated into the broader community

Each of these commitments is further discussed below.



Huazhong University of Science and Technology and U of T alumni at Peking University and donated over 53,000 medical masks and 1,600 N95 masks to Toronto's hospital partners.

3 | CANADA: A GLOBAL EDUCATION LEADER

Canada is among the world's top four destinations for international students, with the U.S., the U.K. and China.^{vi} Between 2014 and 2018, the number of international students increased by 68 per cent — a remarkable demonstration of how Canada's appeal has grown.

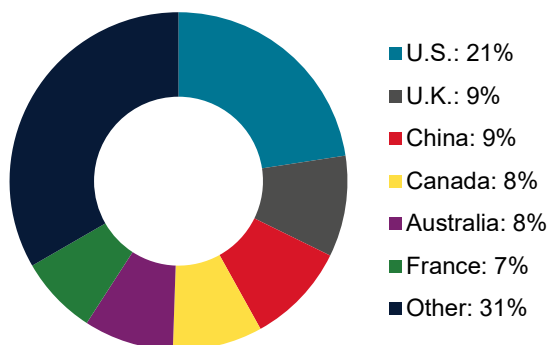
This standing is a shared achievement between universities and federal and provincial governments.^{vii} Canada provides high-quality academic experiences, inclusive campus environments, avenues to gain work experience in the Canadian labour market, and defined pathways to residency. Few other countries have been able to consistently offer all four elements.

For international students, the pandemic has not diminished Canada's appeal. Survey data from the International Prospective Student Study reveals that fewer than a quarter of international students are reconsidering their plans to study in Canada as a result of the pandemic. Students have extremely positive perceptions about Canada's actions during the pandemic and rate Canada's economic stability and treatment of international students above those of any other country.^{viii} However, the international education environment continues to be competitive: Australia has announced that a number of its universities will be able to welcome international students back on campus in July 2020, with an eye to a wider opening in coming months.^{ix}

A severe decrease in international enrollment would cause significant long-lasting harm to the university: U of T does not have the infrastructure to accept a significant number of deferrals, so a decline would (at a minimum) extend over a generation of students. Decreases in international enrollment will also translate into a substantial loss of talent to Canada in the immediate and long-term future.

CANADA: TOP 5 DESTINATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Competing for the International Education Market



4 | U OF T: FACILITATING SECURE ARRIVAL AND INTEGRATION

The University seeks to partner with the federal government to maintain the social and economic benefits that international students contribute to Canada, and build the country's reputation as a leading destination for international education.

We request the prioritization and timely processing of new student visas.

To prepare for the return of all students to campus, the University has developed a suite of measures and supports that safeguard the health of our communities. Designed for these exceptional times, our measures meet the University's longstanding commitment to direct student-faculty interaction and active learning.

The goal of these measures is to enable full participation by international students in the University's academic, research and campus activities in fall, while ensuring compliance with the Quarantine Act.

The University has already gained experience managing physical distancing requirements during the pandemic. To accommodate students who were unable to return home, U of T residences continued to house students, operating with reduced numbers, and changes to the way food service was delivered. We expect this new normal to continue through the 2020-2021 academic year. As a result, hotel spaces are expected to supplement our available residence spots. The University is currently in discussions with several hotels to ensure it has sufficient space to safely quarantine arriving international students and provide socially distanced housing.

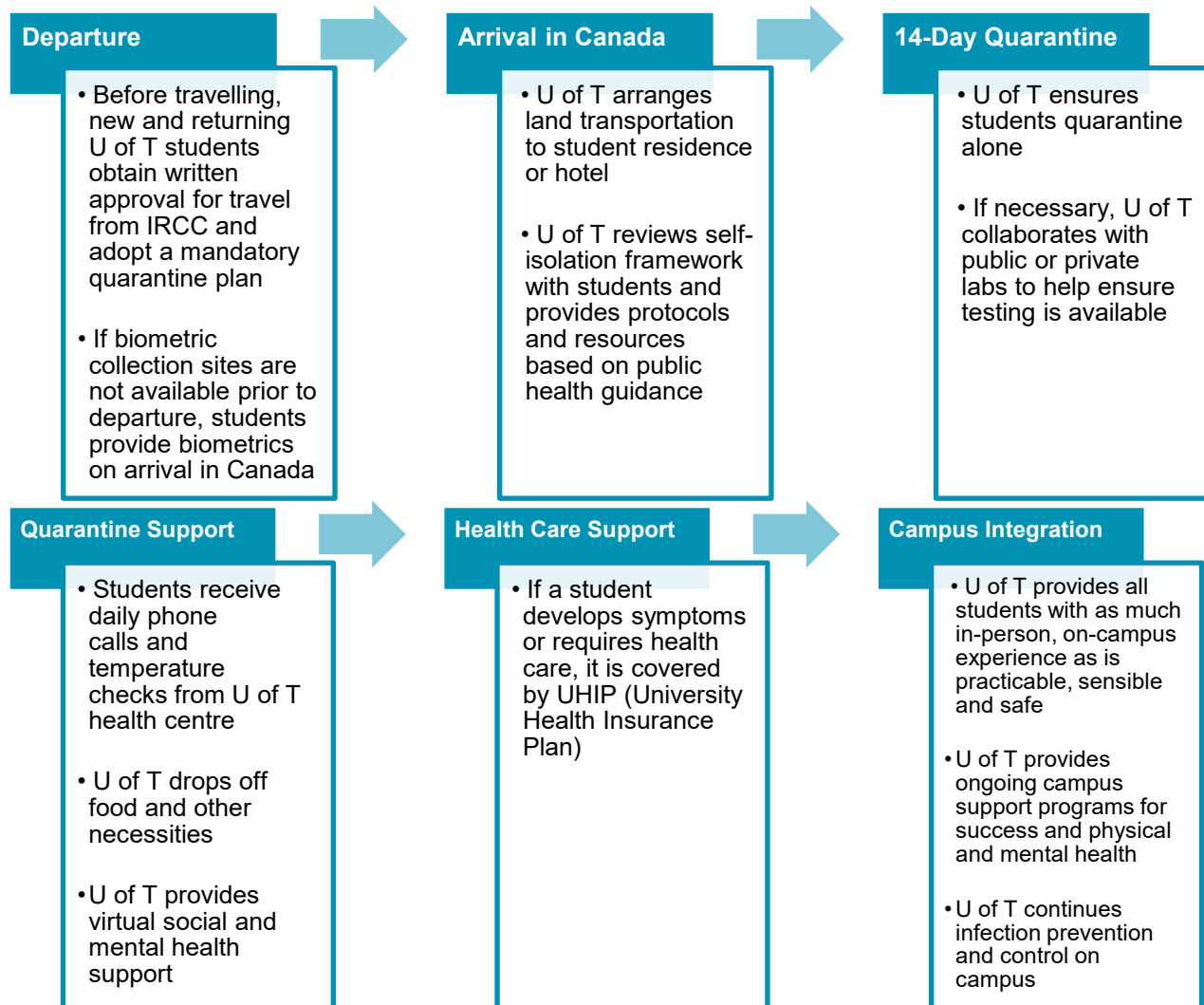
U of T has developed the following principles to guide our response:

PRINCIPLES OF U OF T'S QUARANTINE RESPONSE

- Facilitate access to mandatory quarantine spaces in residence or alternative spaces for returning and new students from outside of Canada. This includes providing food and other related amenities/services at cost;
- Ensure quarantined students have the appropriate information and supports, including daily physical and mental health check-ins;
- Provide opportunities for students to engage safely with other students, using online means, while in mandatory quarantine;
- Continue to implement measures related to infection prevention and control, hygiene and cleaning, case detection, and outbreak management. U of T is making additional investments in areas such as environmental health and safety, and custodial services;

- We continue to work with public health authorities in identifying criteria for screening of students with viral or antibody tests. The University is prepared to collaborate with public or private labs to help ensure necessary testing is available to international students upon arrival in Canada and at the end of their 14-day quarantine.

STAGES IN U OF T'S SECURE ARRIVAL AND INTEGRATION PLAN



5 | CONCLUSION

When the federal government launched *Building on Success*, its new International Education Strategy, Canada had experienced a decade of unprecedented growth in the number of international students who wanted to call the country home for a few years, and perhaps to eventually settle here.

With our international students came new cultural and economic ties, mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue, and new opportunities to develop strong international academic, trade and people-to-people relationships.

In the words of *Building on Success*, Canada has become an ideal study destination because the country recognized that international “education is an essential pillar of Canada’s long-term competitiveness.” Canada has “upped [its] game” to become a model of international education and student integration.

Canada’s hard-won gains in this area are threatened by the pandemic — but we can choose to safely and responsibly retain and build on success in this area. Working together, the government and U of T can continue to develop Canada’s education brand during a period of national challenge. Welcoming the talent, ambition and energy of the world’s best international students, we will continue to contribute to the country’s long-term prosperity and global leadership.

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ⁱ <https://www.international.gc.ca/education/assets/pdfs/ies-sei/Building-on-Success-International-Education-Strategy-2019-2024.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.centuryinitiative.ca/2020/01/07/report-scaling-for-international-education/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.planningandbudget.utoronto.ca/enrolment/enrolrpts.htm>

^{iv} <https://global.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/U-of-T-International-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

^v <https://thepienews.com/news/most-international-applicants-determined-to-study-abroad/>

^{vi} <https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Project-Atlas/Explore-Data/Infographics/2019-Project-Atlas-Infographics>

^{vii} <https://cbie.ca/another-record-year-for-canadian-international-education/>

^{viii} https://resources.idp-connect.com/hubfs/IDP-Connect_Student-Survey_2020_infographic_FINAL.pdf

^{ix} <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/international-students-could-return-july-morrison>