



Colleges and Institutes Canada
**Submission to the Expert Panel
on Youth Employment**

February 2017



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Colleges and Institutes Canada is the national and international voice of Canada's publicly supported colleges, institutes, cégeps and polytechnics. We work with industry and social sectors to train 1.5 million learners of all ages and backgrounds at campuses serving over 3,000 urban, rural and remote communities in Canada. The Association operates in 29 countries via 13 offices around the world.

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Submission to the Expert Panel on Youth Employment

Canada has one of the highest participation rates in post-secondary education in the industrialized world, yet it is failing to produce graduates with the skills needed for the jobs that exist. The “skills mismatch” can be defined as “growing labour shortages in some occupations, alongside growing unemployment in others”.¹ A 2015 study from the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) found that 4 in 10 recent Canadian university graduates are now overqualified for their jobs.² This untapped, under-utilised talent impacts Canada’s capacity to innovate, which in turn impacts its ability to compete globally as an innovation nation.

However, the story for colleges paints a brighter picture. The same PBO report found that the rate of overqualification for recent college graduates declined from 37% in 2006 to 34% in 2014. Colleges and institutes provide hands-on applied learning that equips graduates with the skills they need to find employment. Indeed 85% of college graduates find employment in their field within six months.

Canada’s colleges and institutes have become major drivers of human capital development thanks to a model of education that is internationally recognized for enabling multiple pathways to employment. They offer more than 8,000 career-oriented programs based on applied learning approaches that enable graduates to transition to the workforce quickly and successfully. All college and institute

programs are developed and updated with input from private and public sector employers to ensure graduates have the skills employers seek. This is achieved through employer representation on college and institute Program Advisory Committees (PACs). CICan has recently completed a study on PACs which provides perspectives on the current state of PAC use at colleges and institutes across the country. We would be pleased to share the results of this study with the Panel in early 2017.

Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) welcomes the Expert Panel’s Study on Youth Employment. As the national voice of Canada’s publicly supported colleges, institutes, polytechnics and cégeps, CICan represents 130 members, who work with industry and social sectors to train 1.5 million learners of all ages and backgrounds at campuses serving over 3,000 urban, rural and remote communities. Our recommendations focus on six targeted measures for underrepresented and underemployed youth, enhanced employability through Work Integrated Learning and essential skills development, improved labour market information, entrepreneurship skills development and increased international mobility opportunities for college and institute students.

¹Tal, Benjamin. (2012). The Haves and Have Nots of Canada’s Labour Market. In Focus, December 3, 2012. CIBC. http://research.cibcwm.com/economic_public/download/if_2012-1203.pdf

²http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/en/blog/news/Labour_Market_Assessment_2015

1. Make post-secondary education more accessible for youth from underrepresented groups, in particular, Indigenous youth, students with disabilities and newcomers

Colleges, institutes, cégeps and polytechnics work with community organizations, governments and businesses to provide tailored language training, adult upgrading, career, literacy and essential skills programs to close skill gaps for underrepresented groups and enhance their capacity to participate more fully in the economy. Colleges are the entry point to post-secondary education for the majority of the marginalized, the unemployed or under-employed, those who may not have completed high school or who are under-prepared for post-secondary level programs at colleges and institutes. They are also innovating through partnerships with school boards to offer dual credit programs that provide at-risk secondary students with exposure to potential post-secondary programs and career options.

Colleges and institutes offer wrap-around support services which are key to supporting underrepresented groups to facilitate transitions to and persistence in college/institute education and training programs, as well as transitions into employment. These support services include:

- Academic advising and counselling;
- Peer tutoring and mentorships;
- Accommodations for students with disabilities;
- Financial assistance;
- Indigenous-specific support services through counselling from Elders and ensuring indigenous cultures are reflected on campuses;
- Targeted support services for international students and immigrant students, including second language supports and intercultural training;
- Personal supports such as access to transportation, housing and daycare; and
- Career and employment counselling, and job search support.

Underrepresented youth is a diverse group and includes:

- the nearly one in ten young Canadians aged 20 to 24 who are neither employed nor in education;
- Indigenous youth – projections indicate that 400,000 will reach working age within the next decade, however they experience a higher unemployment rate – over 20% compared to 14%;
- Youth with disabilities – the employment rate of youth with disabilities aged 16 to 24 is 46% compared to 56% for those without disabilities.

Specifically, CIGan recommends the following targeted measures to increase the employment opportunities of underrepresented youth:

- Increased support for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, administered through Indigenous and Northern Development Canada, to ensure all eligible First Nations and Inuit students have access to funding;
- Increased financial assistance through the Canada Student Loans Program targeted for youth from low-income families, youth with disabilities and for Non-Status and Métis youth, including more flexibility to access part-time and short programs;
- Support upgrading and science and math bridging programs for youth who have not completed high school or who lack the skills and prerequisites for post-secondary programs. Science and math are the foundation of many occupations in key sectors such as construction, IT, health and environment. Canada must do more to encourage a science culture in youth.

2. Increase work-integrated learning opportunities

Colleges and institutes have a strong track record in training people for employability. They offer students a diverse range of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) opportunities that are an integral part of most programs, allowing them to gain experience in real-world environments. However, for many employers, particularly SMEs, the cost of offering a WIL opportunity to a student or graduate is prohibitive. When experiential learning is offered to recent graduates in the form of internships, it facilitates their transition to full-time work. Internship subsidies help employers cover the costs of workplace specific training and give employees the chance to enhance the soft skills that prepare them for a successful career. Internships and capstone projects designed around applied research help employers address specific innovation opportunities with the support of faculty and students' expertise and facilities of the institution. Students and graduates gain not only employment experience but a chance to hone the innovation skills they will need throughout their careers. To better promote labour mobility across Canada, internship programs should also provide opportunities for students to work in another province or territory.

Recognizing the importance of demand-driven education and training, budget 2016 announced \$73 million over four years to launch the Post-Secondary Industry Partnership and Cooperative Placement Initiative. The Initiative will support partnerships between employers and willing post-secondary educational institutions to better align what is taught with the needs of employers. The Initiative will also support new co-op placements and work-integrated

learning opportunities for young Canadians, with a focus on STEM and business. CIGan members welcome this investment and look forward to working with employers to increase WIL opportunities for students.

Specifically, the government should:

- Introduce financial incentives to help employers, particularly SMEs, reduce and offset the costs of hiring co-op students and interns by allowing them to recoup a portion of the students' wages.
- Support an applied research internship program that includes in-Canada mobility opportunities for young Canadians similar to the programs available for university students.

3. Improve access to labour market information that facilitates decision-making about careers

Lack of timely, reliable, supply and demand labour market information (LMI) negatively impacts Canada's economic growth. Business, industry and post-secondary institutions all agree that this cross-cutting measure is a priority.

The misalignment of skills development and demands across Canada has consequences for employers, recent graduates and unemployed or displaced workers. Impacts vary across the country as well as across and within sectors. Access to improved labour market information would enable colleges and institutes to provide training programs that better respond to labour market needs. As the LMI Council begins its work, it would be important that one of the goals of this effort be to ensure that user-friendly LMI be available for youth and their parents as they make decisions about post-secondary education programs and potential future careers.

There is also a critical need to address the gaps in supply-side data, in particular for colleges and institutes. The federal government must improve data collected on public colleges and institutes to capture data for all students and graduates from upgrading, diploma, certificate, bachelor, post-graduate and apprenticeship programs. There is also

a need to collect data on college and institute tuition rates and faculty and staff, to standardize data points across post-secondary education.

Specifically, the government should:

- Ensure that resources made available through the LMI Council provide youth with user-friendly data and information to support decision-making about post-secondary education and future careers.
- Improve Statistics Canada data collection on all public colleges and institutes to ensure availability of enrolment and graduation data for the full range of education programs, as well as data on tuition rates and faculty and staff at colleges and institutes.

4. Strengthen workplace essential skills training by supporting training partnerships between colleges and institutes and employers.

Essential skills development is key to improving access and employability, particularly since business and industry groups such as the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business confirm that employers see a need to improve the essential skills of their employees. Forty-six percent of youth aged 16-24 lack basic literacy skills and 53% lack the numeracy skills, to perform in today's labour market.³

Investment in essential skills development is important to improve employability of youth particularly those from vulnerable communities. The federal government should address the high demand for essential skills training, including literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, digital technology, teamwork and continuous learning. The advent of disruptive technologies that challenge the status quo, require a re-thinking and re-tooling of the skills required for the jobs of today and tomorrow, and provide both challenge

and opportunity. As leaders in essential skills development, colleges and institutes can contribute significantly to addressing these skills challenges, in partnership with employers.

Specifically, the government should:

- Fund a program to support the training and certification of essential skills trainers at colleges and institutes, in particular to improve their capacity to provide targeted outreach to disadvantaged youth.
- Invest in funding for essential skills training partnerships between colleges and institutes and employers, to improve the skills and competencies of working-age Canadians.

5. Support youth entrepreneurship

While teamwork, communication, and problem solving remain critical as essential skills for employees and new graduates, the changing world demands new essential skills and competencies - such as innovation and entrepreneurship. Creating an entrepreneurial mindset in youth increases the employability of young people by building knowledge and skills required to start, grow and manage a small business, develop the personal skills needed for success as an entrepreneur and help drive the economy forward.

Colleges and institutes are developing and embedding innovation and entrepreneurial learning outcomes within and across programs in collaboration with community and industry partners. In 2014-15, 84% of colleges and institutes supported student entrepreneurship and over 10,000 students received support to pursue an entrepreneurial idea - 31% more than the previous year.

Specifically, the government should:

- Create a pilot project to enhance the development and delivery of innovative approaches for entrepreneurship training offered by post-secondary institutions. This would support the sharing of models and exemplary practices across Canada, foster a culture of entrepreneurship and encourage youth to become entrepreneurs.

³<http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/315/Canadian-PIAAC-Report.EN.pdf> September 2013.

6. Provide international student mobility opportunities

Currently, only 1% of Canadian college and institute students go abroad as part of their program of studies. International academic mobility programs enable students to develop a global outlook, become global citizens and contribute to Canada's economic success. A more integrated approach to international mobility is required to ensure young Canadians have the skills to compete in the global marketplace. The June 2016 agreement between CIGan and our Mexican partner, ANUIES, is an example of establishing a framework for collaboration on applied research in higher education, which recognizes the importance of international mobility to grow skilled, innovative, globally connected citizens.

International student mobility programs allow participants to travel, study and work overseas to fully appreciate the globalized world, to bring back international and intercultural experiences that will benefit their career and the employers, and to make an impact on their community and the Canadian society as a whole. Cost is a major

barrier as shown in a 2016 Academica Group survey of 1,400 students on *Why don't more Canadian students study abroad?*⁴ Seventy percent of students surveyed say that they would study abroad if it was more affordable and part of their study program. The same numbers are reflected in the 2015 CIGan Survey of its membership on this issue. Offering scholarships for student mobility will encourage and support more students to go overseas, preparing them for a globalized world.

Specifically, the government should:

- Fund an international academic and applied research mobility program for college and institute students to grow a skilled, innovative, globally connected and competitive workforce.

⁴<https://forum.academica.ca/forum/why-dont-more-canadian-students-study-abroad> - April 2016

Conclusion

CICan commends the Expert Panel for undertaking this study on Youth Employment to identify ways to improve employment opportunities for youth. Our recommendations reflect the broad range of education programs colleges and institutes offer, the diversity of learners they serve, and their close partnerships with industry and community organizations. CICan looks forward to engaging with the Panel on these issues to increase opportunities for disadvantaged and under-employed youth, improve employability through essential skills, promote a culture of entrepreneurship, and enhance internship and international mobility opportunities for youth.



Member Colleges and Institutes



Colleges and Institutes Canada
Collèges et instituts Canada

Yukon

- Yukon College

Northwest Territories

- Aurora College
- Collège Nordique Francophone*

Nunavut

- Nunavut Arctic College

British Columbia

- British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)
- Camosun College
- Capilano University
- Collège Éducentre*
- College of New Caledonia
- College of the Rockies
- Douglas College
- Emily Carr University of Art + Design
- Justice Institute of British Columbia
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University
- Langara College
- Native Education College**
- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) **
- North Island College
- Northern Lights College
- Northwest Community College
- Okanagan College
- Selkirk College
- Thompson Rivers University
- University of the Fraser Valley
- Vancouver Community College
- Vancouver Island University (VIU)

Alberta

- Alberta College of Art + Design
- Bow Valley College
- Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC)
- Keyano College
- Lakeland College
- Lethbridge College
- Medicine Hat College
- NorQuest College
- Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)
- Northern Lakes College
- Olds College
- Portage College
- Red Deer College
- SAIT Polytechnic: Southern Alberta Institute of Technology

Saskatchewan

- Carlton Trail College
- Collège Mathieu*
- Cumberland College
- Dumont Technical Institute**
- Great Plains College
- North West College
- Northlands College
- Parkland College
- Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies**
- Saskatchewan Polytechnic
- Southeast College

Manitoba

- Assiniboine Community College
- École technique et professionnelle, Université de Saint-Boniface*
- Red River College
- University College of the North
- Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology

Ontario

- Algonquin College
- Cambrian College
- Canadore College
- Centennial College
- Collège Boréal*
- Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
- Confederation College
- Durham College
- Fanshawe College
- First Nations Technical Institute**
- Fleming College
- George Brown College
- Georgian College
- Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning
- Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute (or KTEI)**
- La Cité*
- Lambton College
- Loyalist College
- The Michener Institute of Education at UHN
- Mohawk College
- Niagara College
- Northern College
- Sault College
- Seneca College
- Sheridan College
- St. Clair College
- St. Lawrence College

Quebec

- Cégep André-Laurendeau*
- Cégep de Chicoutimi*
- Cégep de Jonquière*
- Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue*
- Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles*
- Cégep de La Pocatière*
- Cégep de Sainte-Foy*
- Cégep de Saint-Félicien*
- Cégep de Saint-Laurent*
- Cégep de Sept-Îles*
- Cégep de Sherbrooke*
- Cégep de Trois-Rivières*
- Cégep de Victoriaville*
- Cégep Édouard-Montpetit*
- Cégep Garneau*
- Cégep Limoilou*
- Cégep Marie-Victorin*
- Cégep régional de Lanaudière*
- Cégep Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu*
- Champlain Regional College
- Collège André Grasset*
- Collège de Maisonneuve *
- Collège LaSalle*
- Collège Lionel-Groulx*
- Collège Montmorcency*
- Collège Shawinigan*
- Cégep Heritage College
- Cégep de Rimouski*
- Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec*
- John Abbott College
- TAV College*
- Vanier College

Newfoundland and Labrador

- Centre for Nursing Studies
- College of the North Atlantic
- Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland

New Brunswick

- Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (CCNB)*
- New Brunswick College of Craft and Design
- New Brunswick Community College (NBCC)

Prince Edward Island

- Collège de l'île*
- Holland College

Nova Scotia

- Université Sainte-Anne*
- Dalhousie Agricultural Campus, Dalhousie University
- Nova Scotia Community College

Associates

- Association des collèges privés du Québec*
- Association québécoise de pédagogie collégiale*
- Atlantic Provinces Community College Consortium (APCCC)
- BC Colleges (BCC)
- Canadian Association of Diploma in Agriculture Programs (CADAP)
- Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS)
- Colleges Ontario
- Fédération des cégeps*
- Forum for International Trade Training (FITT)

* *Francophone*

** *Indigenous*

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