Labour Market Data Is Hard to Find

Part 4 of the Trust Through Information series

World Education Services

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Labour Market Information Is Not Widely Available to Prospective International Students

Introduction

This paper is part of a research series designed to support cross-sector dialogue on strengthening integrity and accountability in the ecosystem of information provided to international students.

The research reveals critical shortcomings in the information that reaches international students. Official sources, defined as government (federal, provincial, and territorial) and post-secondary institutions (PSIs), provide inadequate guidance, leaving students reliant on intermediaries (people or organizations that provide education services in exchange for payment) and content creators. Artificial intelligence technologies draw from vast bodies of outdated or inaccurate information. These dynamics enable widespread circulation of misinformation, creating a damaging gap between what students expect, what they experience in Canada, and what policymakers intend. The consequences include harm to international students, erosion of global trust in Canada's post-secondary education sector, and reduced policy effectiveness.

The series consists of an introductory paper, *Trust Through Information*, that summarizes all the challenges our research uncovered, followed by individual reports that go into depth on each one.

Each paper in the series elaborates on a single systemic challenge WES has identified, presenting the current state, desired outcomes, accountability mechanisms, and examples of good practice.

To read the full series, please visit the **WES website**.

Information provision on employment outcomes and labour market needs is weak

For most international students, employment outcomes are a top factor in choosing where to study[1]—yet Canada provides almost no accessible data to help them make this critical decision.

1 https://choosing-canada.ca; https://partners.idp.com/usa/articles/international-market-trends/new-research-career-goals-take-precedence-over-soft-skills-for-international-students-us

IDP's *Emerging Futures 7, Voice of the International Student,* based on responses from 6,000 students from 106 countries, found that more than half of international students agreed that "clearer information about post-graduation work opportunities" would increase their interest in Canada as a study destination.[2] Unsurprisingly, international education experts also reported that greater transparency in regard to post-graduate employment would be key to rebuilding student confidence in their ability to meet their goals in Canada.[3]

Despite this clear need, the employment and labour market information available to international students is inadequate. A significant amount of data exists, but it is not shared in a way that suits the needs of prospective international students.

Key challenges that international students face include:

- **Labour market and employment outcomes data are scattered across numerous sources and websites.** The data are collected and published by many different actors, including both government and civil society, but international students are unlikely to know where to look for what they need.
- **Available data are not designed for student users.** Even when located, the data are often highly technical and more suitable for economic analysis, not to support informed decision-making of early-career individuals.
- **Graduate employment data, where it exists, do not distinguish between domestic and international students.** Some post-secondary institutions (PSIs) and provinces publish graduate employment rates (see below for examples), and in some cases that information is broken down by field of study and whether a person's employment relates closely to their field of study. However, we did not find any instances in which the data published by provinces or PSIs were disaggregated by international student status, so the information does not adequately portray international graduate experience in the Canadian labour market.
- **Misleading, false claims fill the information vacuum.** In the absence of clear, easily accessible information from reputable sources, prospective international students are more likely to believe claims about the Canadian labour market and about the employment prospects of graduates that are either misleading or false (see Figures 1-4). Our ecosystem mapping exercise found that many different types of information providers make vague, overly optimistic statements about economic outcomes. A number of agents provide synthetic data—numbers that look like actual data but are, in fact, invented.

2 https://partners.idp.com/usa/articles/international-market-trends/new-research-career-goals-take-precedence-over-soft-skills-for-international-students-us

3 https://resources.idp-connect.com/canada-deep-dive

Figure 1

> “PGWP holders are paid more than other immigrants in Canada.”

Example of a false claim with no credible data to back up the claim. This screenshot was captured on the website of an intermediary in March 2025 but is no longer online.

Figure 2

> “7.7 million job openings expected between 2022-2031.”
> —EduCanada website

Example of a claim made on the EduCanada website that is based on credible data but could be misleading. In this case, absent greater context, the data point could create unrealistic expectations about international students’ employment prospects.

Figure 3

Top companies offering employment for the course

The table below showcases the list of top companies that offer jobs to students after completing the courses and the annual salary offered to them in Canada:

Top Course	Name of the company	Annual average salary
Business Management	Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), Deloitte, Accenture, BMO Financial Group , Ernst & Young (EY)	$60,000-$70,000
Information Technology & Computer science	Amazon, Google, Microsoft, IBM, Apple	$55,000-$90,000
Media and Journalism	Bell Media, Global News, CTV News, Torstar, CBC/Radio-Canada	$50,000-$60,000
Human Resources	Bank of Montreal (BMO), Canadian National Railway, Canadian Tire Corporation, Deloitte, Hydro One	$50,000-$110,000
Engineering	Bombardier Inc., WSP Global Inc., Canadian National Railway, Suncor Energy, AECOM	$50,000-$150,000
Health & Medicine	Health Authorities, Hospitals and Private Clinics	$50,000-$300,000
Project Management	Deloitte, Hatch, IBM, WSP and SNC Lavalin	$27.50-$75 per hr
Accounting & Finance	KPMG, TD Bank, RBC, Scotiabank, PwC	$50,000-$60,000
Psychology	Clinical / Counselling / school / Research Psychologist	$40,000-$100,000
Agriculture & Forestry	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Forest Products Association of Canada, Food Processors Association of Canada, NGOs like Nature Conservancy Canada	$45,000-$90,000

Example of content published by an intermediary which claims that this is a list of companies that offer employment to graduates and their average salaries. The information is difficult to verify. Even if the average salaries are correct, the data are general and do not accurately portray the employment prospects of recent graduates.

Figure 4

Here's how much you can expect to earn in different provinces in 2025:

Province	Average Salary (CAD/Year)
Northwest Territories	CAD 103,404 (**₹62.1L**)
Nunavut	CAD 91,712 (**₹55.1L**)
Alberta	CAD 69,912 (**₹42L**)
Ontario	CAD 69,130 (**₹41.5L**)
British Columbia	CAD 67,100 (**₹40.3L**)
Quebec	CAD 63,917 (**₹38.4L**)
Saskatchewan	CAD 64,090 (**₹38.5L**)
Manitoba	CAD 59,882 (**₹35.9L**)
Nova Scotia	CAD 59,869 (**₹35.9L**)
New Brunswick	CAD 60,441 (**₹36.3L**)
Prince Edward Island	CAD 56,887 (**₹34.1L**)

Example of content published by an intermediary. The information is difficult to verify and likely does not refer to salaries of recent graduates or of international graduates specifically.

Recommendations for Discussion

Providing labour market information and outcomes can strengthen the ability of the post-secondary sector to meet local, regional, and national labour market needs, while reducing international student reliance on information from unscrupulous actors. For international students to make informed decisions, they need greater access to labour market data and better alignment between available data and student needs.

We offer these proposed outcomes and actions as a starting place for cross-sectoral conversation:

Proposed Outcomes

- International students are able to find labour market information that can be used to support decisions about fields of study.
- Graduate outcome data are regularly collected and disaggregated by international student status.
- International students are able to find information about recent graduate employment outcomes for international students.
- Marketing and recruitment materials used by PSIs and agents provide realistic, evidence-based information about employment prospects.

Proposed Actions

- PSIs and governments establish standardized approaches to collecting and reporting graduate employment outcomes.
- Government and PSIs present employment data in clear, user-friendly formats designed for prospective students.
- PSIs and provincial governments disaggregate graduate employment data by international student status.
- Information providers include clear source attribution and dates for all labour market and employment statistics.
- Websites aimed at international students include employment outcome data with verification information or they link to sites where this information is available.

Proposed Accountability Mechanisms

- Requirement that PSIs provide data, or links to external data, on local or provincial labour market.
- Requirement that education agents do not publish or circulate misleading information about employment outcomes.
- International students are regularly asked for feedback on whether they can access and understand employment outcome information and whether they encountered misleading employment claims or false data.

Examples of good practice in data provision and accountability

Regulatory requirements for career information

The BC Code of Practice includes a requirement to provide information about career prospects:

> "The institution must ensure that the marketing and promotion ... includes clear, sufficient, and accurate information regarding ... the student's career prospects after program completion... This information is key to enabling students to make informed choices about the services provided and potential access to the British Columbia labour market in the future."[4]

These measures could be strengthened by requiring provision of actual graduate employment outcome data disaggregated by international student status.

Labour market information platforms

Partnerships can enhance the ability of post-secondary institutions to provide either clear information or links to information so that students—both domestic and international—can obtain data about local labour market trends. Regional economic development corporations, workforce development boards, and career platforms often have data and dashboards that are specific to a particular region and clearly display workforce trends. Collaboration with these groups could advance an information ecosystem in which students have the data they need to make informed academic and professional decisions.

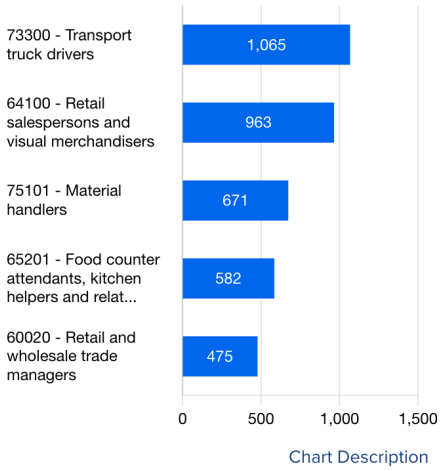
4 https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/eqa/eqa_code_of_practice.pdf

Figure 5

Top Occupations

Show ☑

Top in-demand occupations based on posting count.



MORE OCCUPATIONS INSIGHTS >

Top Skills

Show ☑

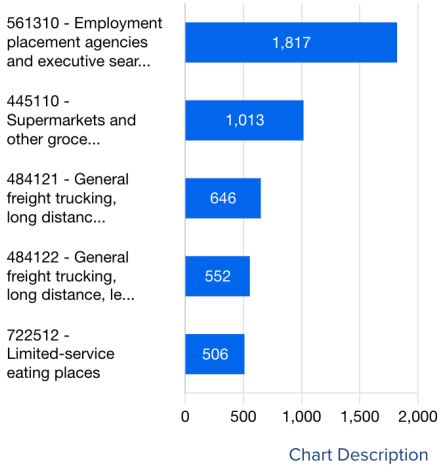
Top in-demand skills based on posting count.

MORE SKILLS & EXPERIENCE INSIGHTS >

Top Sectors

Show ☑

Top in-demand sectors based on posting count.

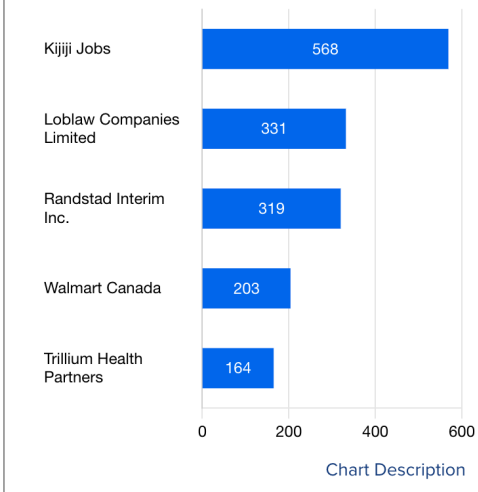


MORE SECTORS INSIGHTS >

Top Hiring Employers

Show ☑

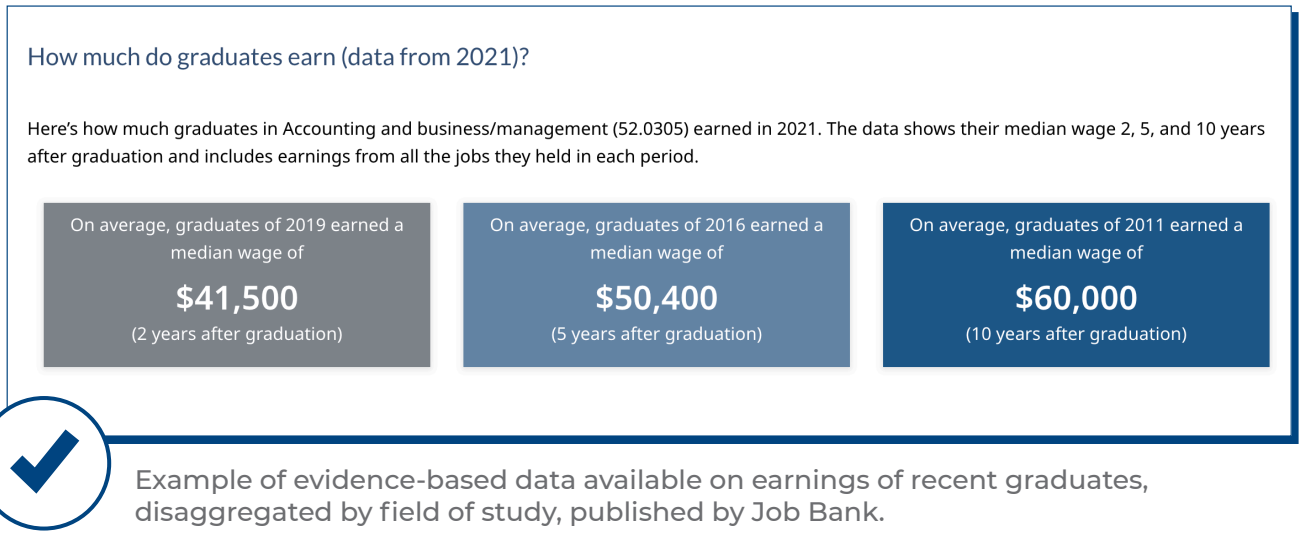
Top employers based on hiring activity.



MORE EMPLOYER INSIGHTS >

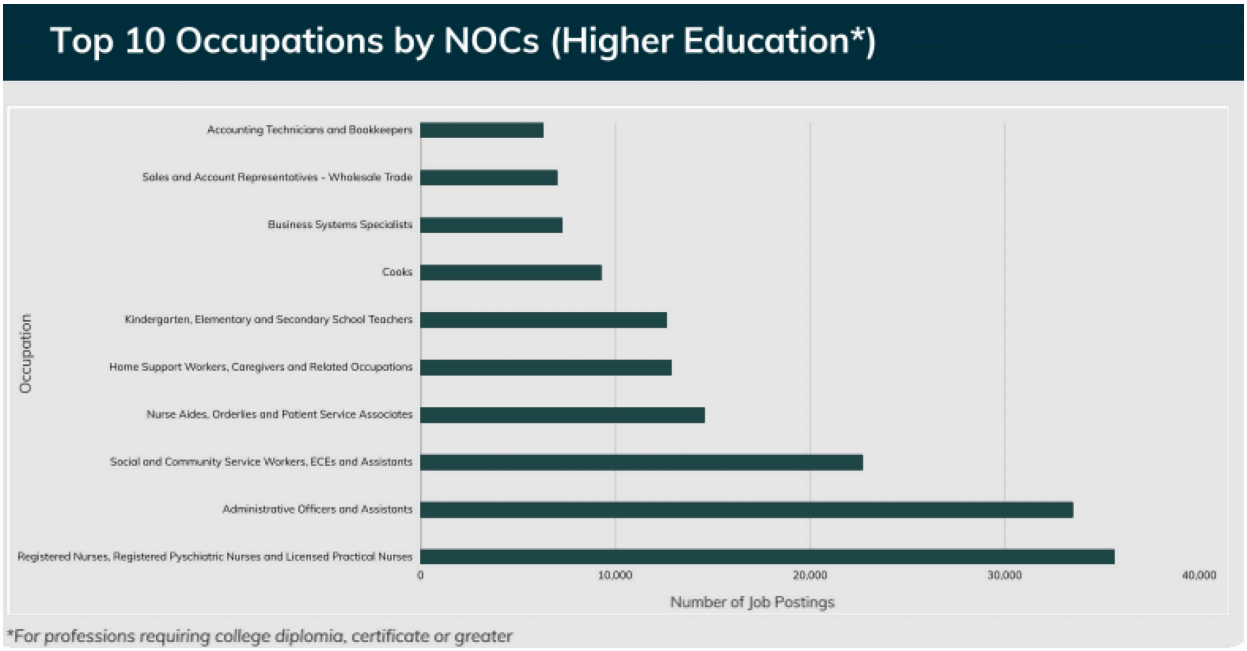
Example of local labour market data provided by a regional development corporation.

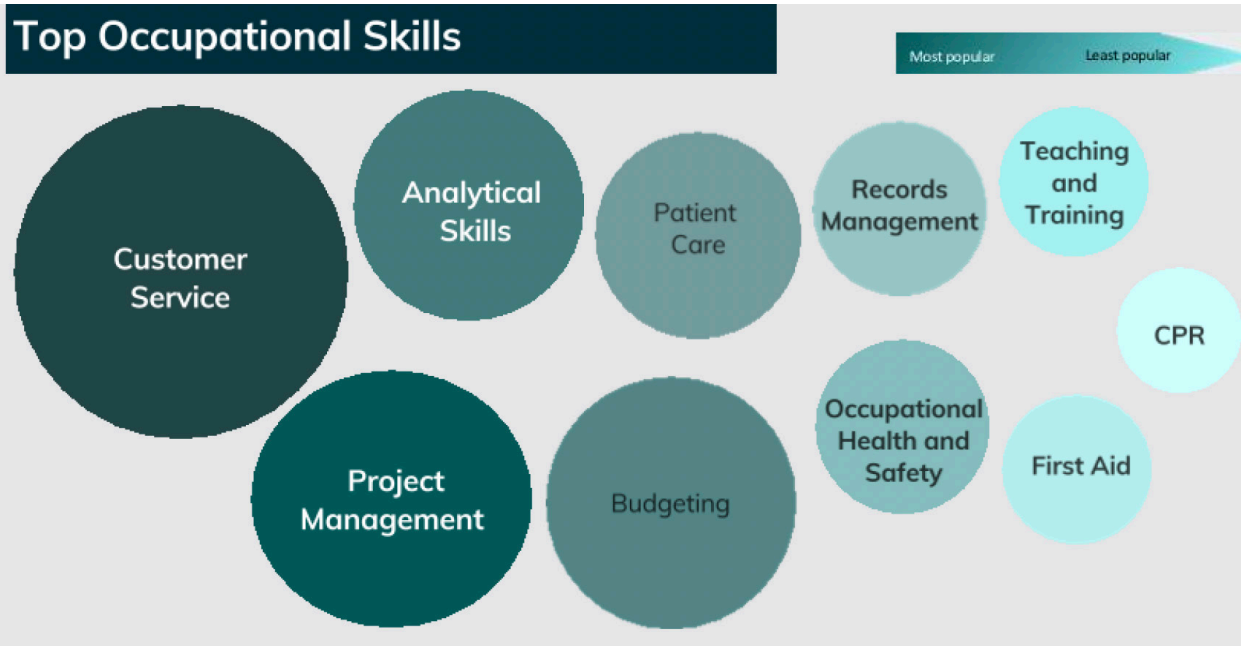
Figure 6



Example of evidence-based data available on earnings of recent graduates, disaggregated by field of study, published by Job Bank.

Figure 7





Example of labour market trends depicted for a student audience, a service available to participating PSIs.

Post-Graduation Surveys

Surveys of recent graduates allow provinces or post-secondary institutions to find out how graduates are doing and to share those outcomes with future students. Multiple jurisdictions conduct graduate surveys, but currently the data may be difficult for prospective students to locate.

The Ontario government publishes college performance based on key performance indicators, including employment rate six months after graduation, graduate satisfaction, and employer satisfaction.[5]

Similarly, the 2022-23 Ontario University Graduate Survey includes questions about salary and whether employment is related to skills developed in university.[6]

Figure 8

How closely was your work related to the subject matter of the program of study?					
8/23.	How closely was your work related to the subject matter of the program of study?	6 Months		2 Years	
		n	%	n	%
	Closely related	9,834	45%	12,006	48%
	Somewhat related	6,379	29%	7,714	31%
	Not related at all	5,534	25%	5,464	22%
	Do not know	96	0%	80	0%
	Total responses	21,843		25,264	

Example of data captured from the Ontario University Graduate Survey.

5 https://www.collegesontario.org/en/resources/2022-23-key-performance-indicators
6 https://open.canada.ca/data/dataset/c8835c55-47ad-46b7-ab82-2e64e05679ed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