



August 23, 2022

The Honourable Sean Fraser
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
235 Queen Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H5

Dear Minister Fraser,

We wish to express our continuing concern about wait times facing post-secondary students looking to receive visas to study in Canada. Many international students face waiting times of over three months to receive visas, which is over [twice as long](#) as in 2019. This delay is making a timely return for the upcoming school year untenable for many students.

The Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities (UCRU) is a coalition of student associations from U15 universities that represents over 225,000 students, 75,000 of which are international students. Many of those students will face the inability to study this year, delaying their degree, or may be forced to access education virtually while their Canadian colleagues are able to access in-person learning. Unless carefully designed and delivered, online learning can penalize students relative to in-person delivery. Many international students have already delayed for years the critical in-person learning activities, such as in-person labs, which build necessary skills for future success.

International students are not second-class because of where they come from; they pay substantially more for the ability to study in Canada alongside domestic students. They support Canada's entire post-secondary ecosystem, enrich the quality of our institutions and contribute almost [\\$30 billion](#) to our economy each year. Your government is responsible for study visas, and the failure to process them in a timely fashion threatens Canada's reputation as a desirable place to study and harms international students directly.



Work on this file aligns with the goals included within your mandate. The goals of shortening wait times and driving economic recovery by welcoming newcomers within Canada are admirable, and we hope to see expedient work on achieving them by addressing this issue.

To address this backlog, your department may need to better resource its administrative capacity, or implement temporary regulatory change to the Student Direct Stream or entry requirements. UCRU welcomes the opportunity to consult with your department on potential ways to resolve this obstacle to accessible and high-quality international education in Canada.

We ask that you and your colleagues take immediate action to remedy this backlog.

Our students deserve nothing less.

Yours sincerely,

Erin Co, Chair

Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities (UCRU)

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cc:

Marie-France Lalonde, MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of immigration, Refugees and Citizenship