
While the number of students from this region has steadily increased and continues to represent a majority of all international students in Canada, there has been a change in the consumption patterns of these students. Though the number of students coming to Canada for an undergraduate university education has remained fairly consistent since the early 1980s, there has been a significant increase in the number coming to Canada at the college and trade school level, as well as a lesser yet still significant increase in the number studying at the graduate level (Chart 1.24). The number of college and trade school students increased by 58 percent between 1989 and 1990, and declined slightly (a 17-percent decrease) in 1991.

In 1991-92, 6 of the 10 top source countries for international students were Asia Pacific nations. The major Asia Pacific source countries of international students in Canada are identified on Chart 1.25.

2. INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION—ISSUES OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND

2.1 Domestic and External Factors

Although specific factors influencing the demand for international education vary from country to country, there are some key factors that tend to influence international student mobility.

Domestic factors include the availability of higher education, the perceived value of an international education, the relative wealth of the population, the relevancy of the knowledge gained in a host country to the job market at home, and government policies that affect the freedom of the population to pursue education overseas (such as mandatory military service). Factors specific to each target country are highlighted in Section 5.

External factors also influence the demand for international education. These include the reputation of the host country and of its educational institutions, the living environment, its perceived openness to foreign cultures, the cost of education in the host country, its capacity to accept international students in specific programs of study, the availability of information on educational institutions and programs, climate and the relative ease of obtaining a student visa and permission to work. External factors specific to the host countries are highlighted in Sections 3 and 4.

Factors influencing the decision of students to study abroad are summarized in Table 2.11.