

# International Education Strategic Plan University of Victoria

Prepared for the Ministry of  
Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills

March 31, 2025



University  
of Victoria



# President's accountability statement

March 31, 2025

On behalf of the University of Victoria (UVic), I am pleased to submit our International Education Strategic Plan.

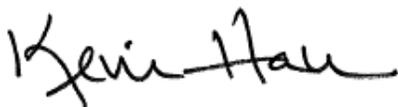
Our plan responds to the priorities outlined in the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (PSFS)'s Guidelines, presenting a balanced approach to international education that delivers positive education outcomes for international students and global opportunities for domestic students, grounded in a commitment to quality education. This plan supports provincial priorities by driving economic growth, reducing costs, strengthening healthcare, and enhancing community safety. By producing skilled graduates, UVic contributes to key sectors that sustain and advance the provincial economy.

UVic's reputation as a leader in sustainability, research excellence, and experiential learning attracts students from around the world, and we are a destination of choice for a diverse student population. We remain committed to high-quality, research-enriched education, providing a vibrant and engaging learning community that supports both the academic and individual success of all our students. Central to this commitment is a comprehensive range of tailored supports and services for our international students.

Through our ongoing efforts, we will continue to contribute meaningfully to British Columbia's international education landscape. As a university that strengthens the post-secondary sector, UVic's graduates are prepared to make an impact wherever their careers take them—whether they stay in British Columbia, enriching the province's economy and knowledge sectors, or become global ambassadors of high-quality BC and UVic education.

As President, I accept accountability for this plan and look forward to its implementation.

Sincerely,



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Dr. Kevin Hall  
President and Vice-Chancellor

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## About UVic

UVic is a leading research university recognized for its strengths in experiential learning, sustainability, research and innovation, and commitment to ʔetalnəwəl | ÁTOL,NEUEL | Respecting the rights of one another and being in right relationship with all things. We are a community of 22,000 students and 5,000 employees, with more than 160,000 alumni worldwide. UVic is consistently ranked among Canada’s top comprehensive research universities, with more than 280 undergraduate and graduate degree programs, as well as a range of diplomas and certificate programs. Over 70% of students come from outside of the Greater Victoria region. Located in BC’s Capital Regional District, UVic benefits from close ties to government, which provide unique and mutually beneficial opportunities.

Guided by our [Strategic Plan](#), UVic’s institutional priorities reflect a dedication to building a more sustainable and inclusive future, where people, place and planet are in harmony. Our values emphasize the importance of respect, collaboration, and transformative change, and these principles extend to our approach to international education.

As a globally engaged institution, UVic has a long-standing commitment to international education and welcomes a diverse community of students every year. UVic has extensive programs to support international learners, foster global collaboration, and enhance intercultural understanding. International students comprise approximately 13% of UVic’s total student population, representing 127 countries, spread out across our academic faculties and degree programs. We also have a vibrant community of learners in our Division of Continuing Studies, including through our award-winning English Language Centre and variety of adult education options for international students and professionals. Together, these students contribute to our dynamic and globally minded campus environment and are a vital part of our campus community.

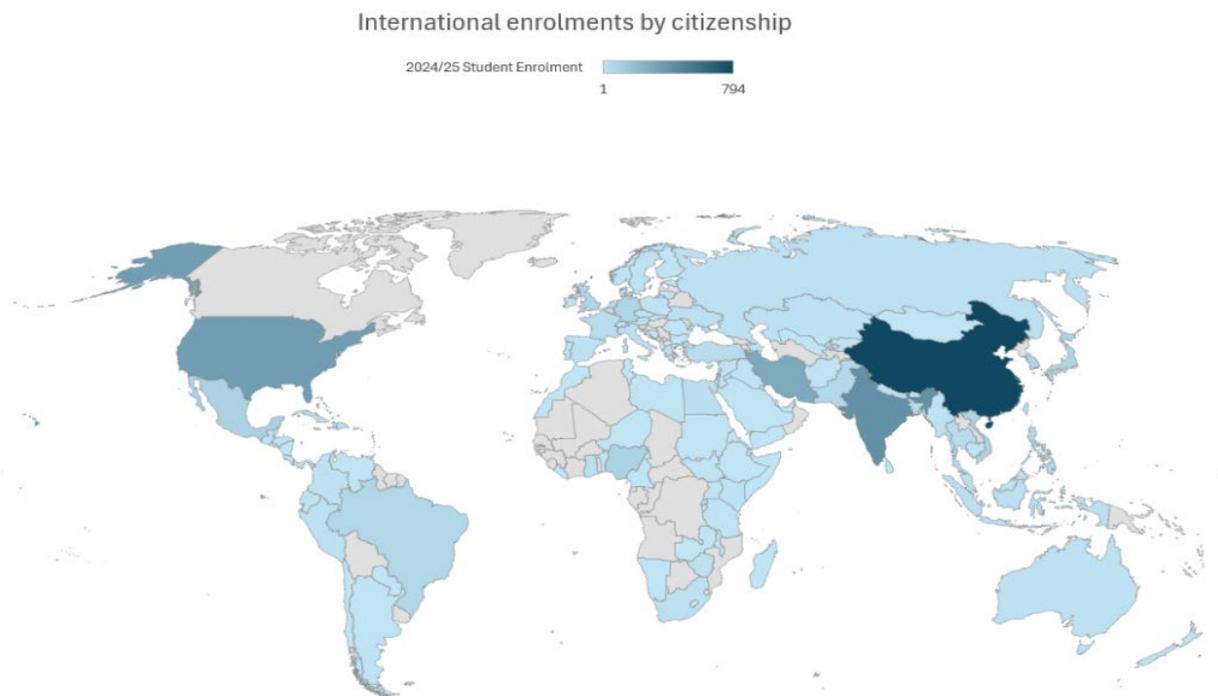


Figure 1. In 2024/25, UVic enrolled about 2,700 international students from 127 countries.

UVic’s commitment to international education is guided by multiple institutional plans, including our Strategic Enrolment Plan, Equity Action Plan, Accessibility Plan, Global Engagement Strategy, Indigenous Plan, and Climate and Sustainability Action Plan. These frameworks collectively advance our goal of providing a world-class education to both domestic and international students, while also fostering collaborations and partnerships that align with the evolving needs of the global workforce and local communities.

A key component of this commitment is our engagement with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through which UVic actively contributes to global sustainability, equity and innovation. We are ranked in the top 1% of universities worldwide for our contributions to the UN SDGs, underscoring our dedication to creating positive global impact through education, research and action.

Through the International Training Centre for Authorities and Leaders (known by the French acronym CIFAL), UVic further advances the SDGs by fostering collaboration and providing training to global leaders. CIFAL Victoria engages students, staff and faculty, as well as government agencies, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations, creating a dynamic network for knowledge exchange and capacity building. This initiative enhances our capacity to drive sustainable development and enriches the educational experience of our students, preparing them to lead in a rapidly changing world.

## Key programs enrolling international students

UVic offers a range of academic programs that attract international undergraduate students, including in high-demand fields that align with global workforce trends. Our engineering, computer science, business and economics programs in particular have strong international appeal due to their reputation for preparing career-ready students in an increasingly globalized job market. Our academic and research excellence, co-operative education and other experiential learning opportunities, and business, industry and community connections also make us a destination of choice.

Top 15 undergraduate programs by international enrolment				Top 15 graduate programs by international enrolment			
Degree	Program	2024/25 Enrolment	Percent	Degree	Program	2024/25 Enrolment	Percent
BSc	Computer Science	235	15%	MEng	Electrical & Computer Engineering	106	7%
BA, BSc	Social Sciences (general)	216	13%	PhD	Electrical & Computer Engineering	55	3%
BCom	Business	180	11%	MSc	Computer Science	43	3%
BA, BSc	Economics	158	10%	MASc	Electrical & Computer Engineering	38	2%
BEng	Engineering & Computer Science	113	7%	MEd	Educ Psychology & Leadership	36	2%
BA, BSc	Psychology	100	6%	MEng	Mechanical Engineering	64	4%
BEng	Electrical & Computer Engineering	43	3%	PhD	Mechanical Engineering	34	2%
BSc	Science (general)	41	3%	MGB	Business	74	5%
BSc	Mathematics & Statistics	40	2%	MASc	Mechanical Engineering	31	2%
BEng	Mechanical Engineering	36	2%	MBA	Business	44	3%
BSc	Biology	36	2%	MA	Economics	29	2%
BA, BSc	Sociology	30	2%	MEd	Curriculum and Instruction	28	2%
BSc	Health Information Science	26	2%	PhD	Computer Science	28	2%
BSc	Biochemistry & Microbiology	26	2%	MASc	Civil Engineering	24	1%
BA	Humanities (general)	25	2%	PhD	Curriculum and Instruction	23	1%
Various	Other programs	308	19%	Various	Other programs	505	31%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,613</b>		<b>Total</b>		<b>1,162</b>	

Figure 2. UVic’s international students enrolled across a range of programs.

Popular graduate programs for international students include electrical and computer engineering, mechanical engineering, and computer science. UVic also provides specialized, career-oriented professional graduate

programs designed to meet the demands of business and industry and equip students for leadership roles. High enrolling programs for international graduate students include the Master of Engineering in Applied Data Science and Master of Engineering in Telecommunications and Information Security.

## Career-ready graduates

A key feature of UVic's international education strategy is our commitment to preparing career-ready graduates through our work-integrated learning opportunities. *Times Higher Education* consistently ranks UVic among the top Canadian universities for preparing career-ready students.

As the largest co-op program in Western Canada and one of the most successful in the country, UVic partners with 1,256 employers across various industries, facilitating over 4,000 co-op placements annually. Co-op is available in nearly all our academic programs, providing students with practical, career-relevant experience both locally and internationally. Notably, 69% of co-op students receive job offers before graduation.

In the most recent reporting year, UVic facilitated 175 international co-op placements, enabling both domestic and international students to gain professional experience abroad. Of the total annual placements, 573 were filled by international students. According to a recent graduating survey, 55% of international students were either already employed or had secured a job to start in the near future.

Within BC, UVic plays a key role in public workforce development, as 23.1% of UVic's public sector co-op employers are provincial government and its agencies. These mutually beneficial partnerships provide students from all disciplines with workplace experience, train future employees of the region, fill short-term vacancies, and promote economic growth. Students graduate with the skills needed to be effective global citizens while also strengthening connections between university, industry and government, driving economic sustainability and growth in BC and beyond.

Co-op graduates are career-ready, capable of making immediate positive impacts for BC through applied knowledge, workplace skills, and innovative thinking. Other experiential learning opportunities for students include practicum placements, international exchanges, field schools, laboratory and studio learning, water- and land-based studies, research centre internships, community-engaged projects, volunteering, and more.

UVic students, including international students, contribute greatly to BC's economic and cultural prosperity. Based on a [2019/20 study](#), the total annual economic impact of international student spending in Greater Victoria was \$34.2 million in added income. International students also play a major role in strengthening BC's workforce and knowledge economy. Many international students choose to remain in BC following graduation, with approximately 65% continuing to live and work in the province. The presence of international graduates supports local industries, fills labour market needs, and enriches BC's economic and cultural landscape.

UVic continues to shape a future where economic prosperity aligns with environmental and social responsibility and global cooperation. By leveraging its strengths in research, education, and partnerships, UVic remains a key driver of economic sustainability and growth in the province and beyond.

## Opportunities and challenges

UVic continues to innovate and adapt in response to the evolving post-secondary landscape, building on our strengths and reaffirming our value proposition to students. Shifting national immigration policies, international recruitment trends, and rising costs of living present challenges, with UVic responding by creating avenues for enhanced pathways, partnerships, outreach and collaborations as well as housing and food security.

## International enrolment over time

In recent years, we have been graduating more international students than we have been able to recruit. Several factors have contributed to UVic’s overall decline in international enrolment—from 2,577 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) students in 2019/20 to 1,587 FTE in 2023/24.

The decline began during the COVID-19 pandemic, which introduced travel restrictions and lockdowns. Further, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) experienced a significant backlog of study-permit applications in 2022 and delays in 2023, leaving many students without study permits before the start of their fall term. Some students deferred, while others chose institutions outside of Canada.

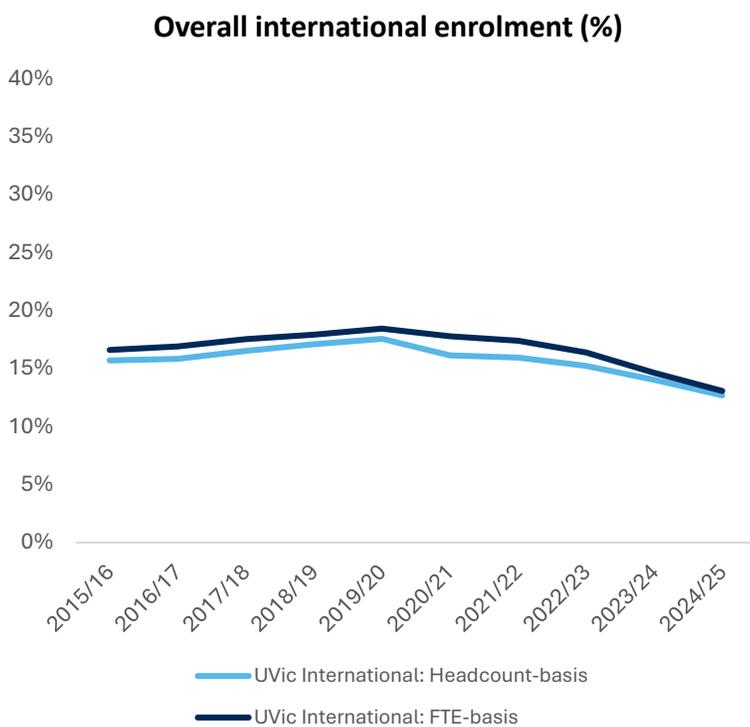


Figure 3. Covid-19 and IRCC regulations have affected international enrolment at UVic, which accounts for approximately 13% of our student population.

Following this, the federal government announced several changes to study-permit requirements, including new financial requirements, limits to hours worked in a week, and limits to online studying. On January 22, 2024, IRCC paused the processing of study permits for undergraduate students, reduced the number of study permits available by 35% and required that a Provincial Attestation Letter (PAL) process be put in place.

While the Province of British Columbia worked quickly to put the PAL system in place, IRCC’s changes continue to create uncertainty for prospective international students, and challenge Canada’s reputation as a welcoming country for international students. Undergraduate applications from our three largest recruitment countries were all down for 2024/25: China (-13%), the USA (-7%), and India (-45%).

The further capacity changes and expansion of the study permit cap to include graduate students in 2025 presents an even greater challenge for post-secondary institutions. International graduate students are vital contributors to critical research, securing grants and innovation, including in BC’s health, life sciences and technology sectors. The loss of international graduate students would affect both UVic’s research capacity and BC’s ability to remain at the forefront of emerging industries.

Beyond shifting immigration policies, the sector is also facing increased global competition. The United Kingdom and United States remain top destination for Chinese students, with countries such as Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore becoming increasingly popular as they increase both national and onshore opportunities for students. Additionally, geopolitical tensions and diplomatic disputes, particularly with India, have further impacted student interest in Canada. These factors, combined with domestic policy changes, have contributed to enrolment shortfalls at UVic and across the sector since 2022/23, a trend that is likely to persist into 2025/26.

The decline in international enrolment has serious financial implications at UVic and elsewhere. Starting in 2022/23, UVic has taken several steps to respond to the financial impacts of declining international enrolment, including a hiring pause and review and drawdowns of contingency funds. Base budget reductions and some staffing layoffs were necessary in 2022/23 and again in 2023/24, although priority areas such as student financial support, health and wellness supports, and Indigenous initiatives were protected.

Despite these challenges, UVic continues to demonstrate resilience, and we are grateful for the provincial government’s efficient response to these ongoing challenges. The BC government has been proactive in adapting to IRCC’s evolving policies, including the issuance of PALs, and has worked efficiently to ensure that institutions like UVic can continue to navigate these complexities. This responsiveness has been instrumental in supporting the recruitment and retention of international students during a period of uncertainty. UVic remains committed to working closely with our government and post-secondary partners to navigate these changes effectively.

Through these shifts, UVic has further diversified its recruitment strategy and strengthened its recruiting network. Prior to the recent IRCC changes, UVic had already begun diversifying its international student markets, providing resiliency in the face of emerging challenges. UVic is further diversifying with recruitment efforts in new regions such as Bangladesh, United Arab Emirates, Türkiye, Kazakhstan and Indonesia, while continuing to nurture relationships in historic markets like China, India and the USA. Our recruiters and leaders are actively visiting countries to build connections, enhance our global reputation, and ensure UVic remains a preferred destination for international students.

### Proactive supports for international student success

In response to the challenges posed by lower international student enrolment, UVic proactively enhanced supports for both prospective and current international students, helping them navigate the evolving landscape of immigration policies and institutional requirements. Notably, we have streamlined our application process, significantly reducing processing times and offering international undergraduate admission decisions in an average of 6.8 days as of January 2025—well ahead of peer institutions.

UVic remains highly responsive to evolving government policies with respect to our international student supports and services. For example, we have been issuing PALs within 1-2 working days and consistently maintaining verification of letters of acceptance within the 10-day limit. To further support international

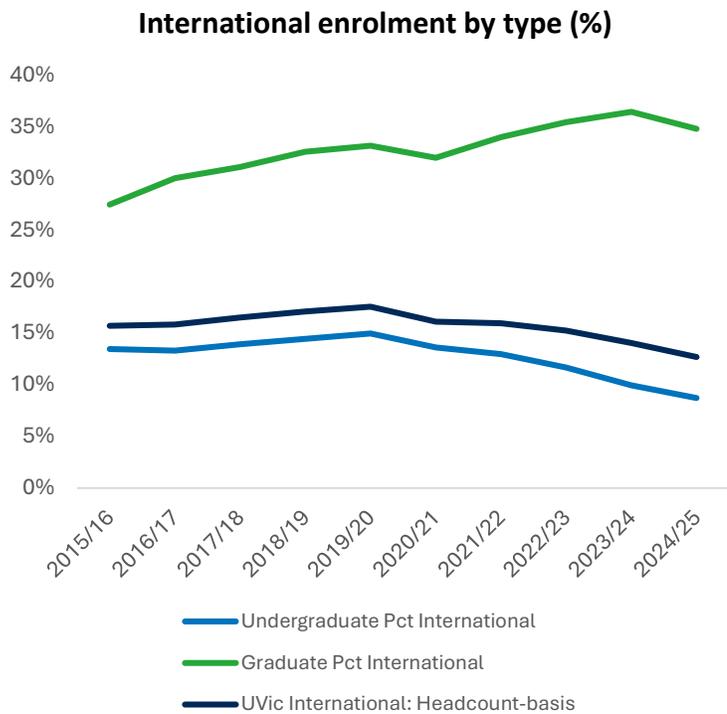


Figure 4. Approximately 35% of UVic graduate students and 9% of undergraduate students are international students. Undergraduate international students pay full tuition and fees.

students during these uncertain times, we have also increased our capacity for immigration advising, resulting in a 20% increase in individual interactions from 2023 to 2024.

The recent launch of the UVic Bound Program has played a pivotal role in fostering early connections and a strong sense of belonging among incoming international students. This pre-arrival program offers online activities, peer-to-peer engagement, and connections with Global Community Advisers, helping students prepare for their arrival. With 96% of participants reporting that the program provided essential information, the UVic Bound Program has significantly improved enrolment outcomes, with 83% of participants successfully registering for classes for fall term 2024.

These initiatives helped us meet our international undergraduate enrolment target for September 2024.

## Partnerships and pathway programs

Beyond traditional recruitment efforts, partnerships and pathways provide opportunities for international recruitment and retention. The BC Transfer System, a hallmark of BC's post-secondary ecosystem, allows for students to enrol in any of the province's post-secondary institutions and then transfer into UVic. Approximately 4,100 of our students are transfers from other post-secondary institutions in BC, making up 32% of our student population, and of those 333 are international. This system provides students with flexibility, choice and multiple routes to complete their degree at UVic, though additional PAL requirements may constrain these pathways.

Our comprehensive recruitment network is helping to build a brand for BC, positioning the province as a welcoming destination and inspiring location for international students interested in high-quality education with positive career outcomes. By leveraging the collective strengths of the BC post-secondary system, UVic is showcasing the province's unique advantages, setting it apart as a top destination for international students.

Prospective students and their parents view Victoria as having big-city amenities while also offering a close-knit, safe and inclusive community. UVic's location and recreation opportunities are also a major draw for students, as is being part of the Capital Regional District (CRD). With the CRD serving as a hub for government, technology, clean energy and entrepreneurship, UVic students receive high-quality education while also gaining access to meaningful experiential learning and career opportunities in one of Canada's most dynamic regions.

Through established agreements with Camosun College and North Island College, UVic is already providing students with smooth transitions to higher education. We are actively strengthening these relationships while also exploring new agreements with Langara College and Victoria Island University.

UVic is also actively collaborating with, or exploring partnerships with, esteemed international institutions such as the University of York in the UK, Soochow University in China, the Birla Institute of Technology and Science in India, and the Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology. Through these partnerships, students can either complete their degree at UVic and earn a UVic credential or fulfill the academic requirements of both institutions to graduate with dual degrees. These international transfer programs contribute to a diverse and dynamic learning environment at UVic, complementing our direct international student recruitment efforts and strengthening our global connections.

Through partnerships with industry, government, and institutions across the province and overseas, UVic is expanding its capacity to innovate while reinforcing BC's reputation for world-class education and research.

## Division of Continuing Studies

To reach more learners, we have enhanced our Pathways Program through our Division of Continuing Studies, which enrolls international students who qualify for admission in all respects other than English language proficiency. Pathways Program students receive intensive English language instruction while gradually integrating academic coursework during their first year. If they achieve the required English proficiency by the end of the year, the students become eligible to continue in their degree programs at UVic. Work is currently underway to expand this program to include mathematics.

The Division welcomes international students from a diverse range of countries and institutions into a variety of [international programs](#). It offers a diverse portfolio of continuing and professional education programs, including micro-credentials and laddering programs that help students gain targeted qualifications that can be applied directly toward their academic or professional goals. These flexible learning pathways enable students to earn credentials that can be built upon, providing a smoother transition into degree programs.

To support global recruitment, the Division maintains a dedicated team of international recruiters who travel abroad and oversee a network of approved agents. These agents undergo a [rigorous selection process](#) to ensure they have proven experience, business stability, and a strong commitment to ethical practices. Before being authorized to represent UVic, agents must complete a comprehensive nine-step training program to ensure they can accurately communicate UVic's offerings and the value of Continuing Studies programming to prospective students. References are thoroughly checked, and each agent undergoes a detailed review before approval. Once accepted, agents sign an agreement outlining recruitment targets and responsibilities, and performance is assessed annually to determine contract renewals.

Through the Division and with our faculties, UVic is developing a framework for transnational education in the Asia-Pacific region. This initiative aims to expand our global engagement and increase our presence in key international markets.

## Housing and affordability

Housing remains one of the most pressing challenges for students in Victoria, where rising rental costs and limited availability create barriers to post-secondary education. As a key institution in the CRD, UVic plays a critical role in supporting students and contributing to broader housing solutions. Although affordability pressures persist, UVic offers a housing guarantee for all first-year undergraduate students—including international students—and continues to work towards ensuring all students have access to safe, stable and affordable living options.

UVic has made significant expansions to on-campus housing in recent years, directly increasing affordability for students while also helping to alleviate pressure on the wider rental market in Greater Victoria. The completion of Čeqʷəŋín ʔéʔləŋ House in 2022 and Sŋéqə ʔéʔləŋ House in 2023 added nearly 800 new beds, reducing reliance on private rentals and ensuring more students can live in a supportive, on-campus environment. Building on this success, UVic has a proposal for a new 500-bed residence project underway to provide dedicated housing for upper-year undergraduate and graduate students who do not qualify for the first-year guarantee. We also continue to develop a long-term real estate strategy that prioritizes student needs while exploring opportunities to contribute to broader housing solutions. Recognizing the complexity of this work, we are taking a thoughtful and strategic approach to ensure it aligns with evolving priorities and benefits both students and the wider community.

UVic's comprehensive approach to affordability also includes scholarships, bursaries, merit-based awards and sponsored research. All types of financial aid received by undergraduate and graduate students totalled \$57 million in 2023/24. In May 2023, UVic committed to a significant additional investment of \$2.5 million in base budget funding for the undergraduate scholarship program, including \$1 million to help attract and support international students. The UVic International Entrance Scholarship awards \$10,000 to international students based on admission averages.

UVic also offers bursaries for students who have unforeseen circumstances during their studies, including international students. As well, UVic's Work Study program—which provides on-campus work experience for students who require financial assistance—is well subscribed by international students, with 120 international students hired in 2023/24.

Other affordability initiatives include adopting more open educational resources to reduce the cost of learning materials, value menu food options and low-cost meal plans, an on-campus food bank and free store, a community garden, and a day care program that qualifies for the government's \$10-a-day program.

## Strategic direction and planning

UVic's direction for international education over the next three to five years is to rebuild international enrolments to pre-pandemic levels while diversifying our international student population across faculties and within programs. Our ongoing approach will be shaped by evolving international markets as well as domestic policies and priorities. We remain committed to maintaining high-quality education for all students while managing risks related to system integrity and market conduct, promoting source country diversification, and implementing multiple recruitment and retention strategies.

### Enrolment management

Strategic planning for UVic is grounded in our value proposition to all students, which is high-quality, research-enriched education with experiential learning opportunities. Our commitment to diversity, inclusion, equity and Indigenization is also fundamental to our value proposition and enrolment goals.

UVic's Strategic Enrolment Plan is an essential framework for ensuring that our enrolment strategy aligns with our strategic plans, long-term institutional goals and government priorities more generally. Our enrolment plan reflects our commitment to fostering a diverse, inclusive and globally engaged student population while maintaining our focus on our local community and Indigenous priorities.

We aim to create a globally engaged, diverse student population while ensuring a high-quality educational experience for all. A central component of our strategy is to stabilize and then rebuild international enrolment levels while ensuring that growth aligns with institutional priorities, student demand and societal needs.

The percentage and number of international students at UVic reached its all-time high in 2018/19, at 17% of our overall student population, or approximately 3,700 of our 22,000 students—well below the provincial limit of 30%. Currently, due to the challenges outlined earlier, international students comprise 13% of UVic's population.

In the short-term, UVic aims to stabilize international enrolment. Once we have done so, we will look to rebuild international enrolment to approximately, first to 17% to 18% of our student population on a headcount or FTE basis across the full range of programs that UVic offers. We will continue to revisit our targets to ensure a balanced and sustainable international enrolment level.

### International enrolment by faculty (headcount)

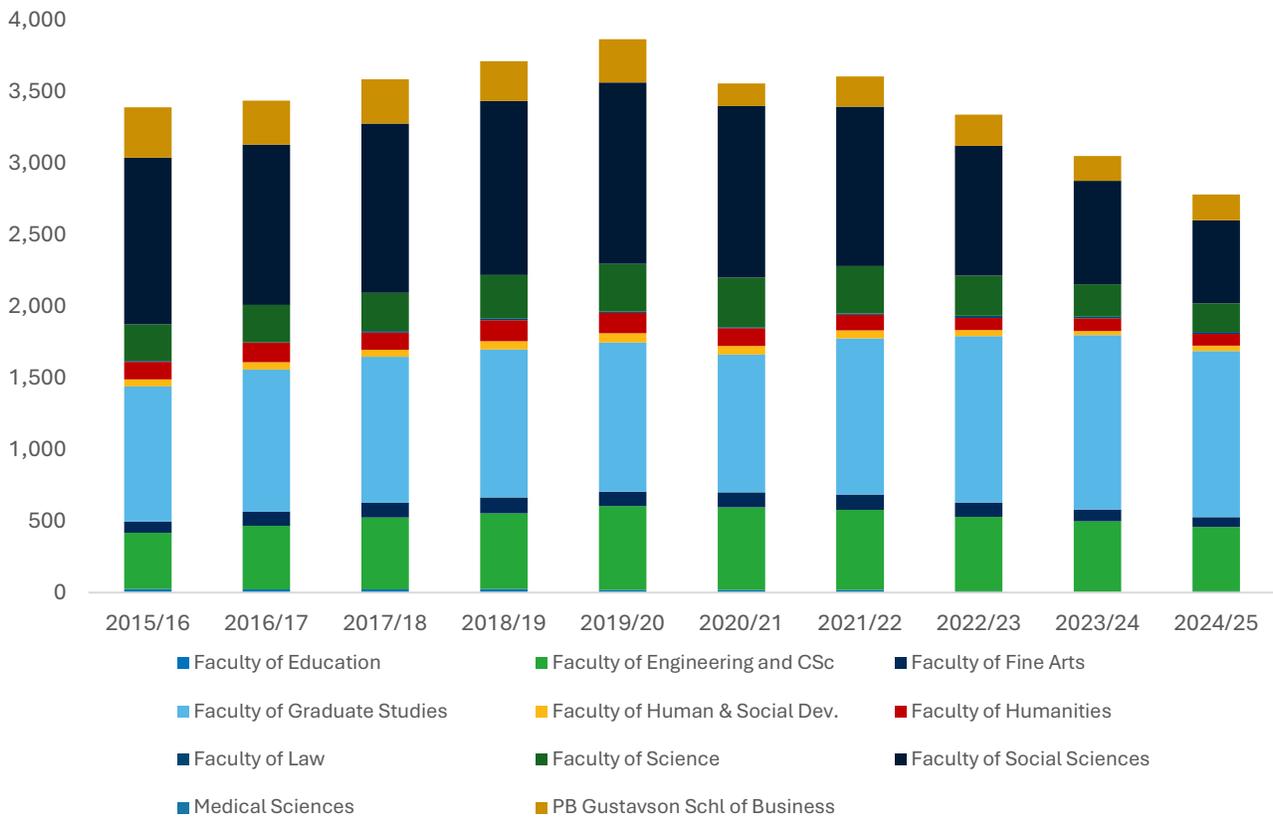


Figure 5. International students are registered in all our faculties, with 580 international undergraduate students registered in the Faculty of Social Sciences (which is also our largest faculty overall) and 449 in the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science. The Faculty of Graduate Studies represents 1,162 international students.

As a research university, a key area of focus in our enrolment plan is to increase our number of graduate students, both domestic and international. Currently, international students make up about 30% of UVic’s graduate enrolments, although there is significant variation by program area. Graduate students also play a crucial role in driving economic development and innovation, contributing to research breakthroughs while also strengthening the Canadian workforce.

UVic also aims to diversify international student enrolment across faculties and programs. By offering a broader range of programs to international students, our student population remains diverse in terms of geographic origin and academic focus. This strategic diversification benefits both the students and the institution, creating a multifaceted academic community that reflects the range of skills, perspectives, and disciplines that UVic is known for.

We are well-positioned to continue expanding programs in fields that align with BC’s labour market needs, including in high-demand sectors such as health, technology and engineering. UVic’s new Faculty of Health, which becomes operational in May 2025, will enhance our health profile by highlighting our strengths in health education, training and research and providing a stronger external profile to attract students, faculty, research chairs and partners. Through the Faculty of Health, we can expand academic offerings and help to address workforce needs in the health care sector. With the increasing global demand for skilled professionals in health

care, UVic expects to attract international students seeking high-quality education in health sciences, public health, and related disciplines.

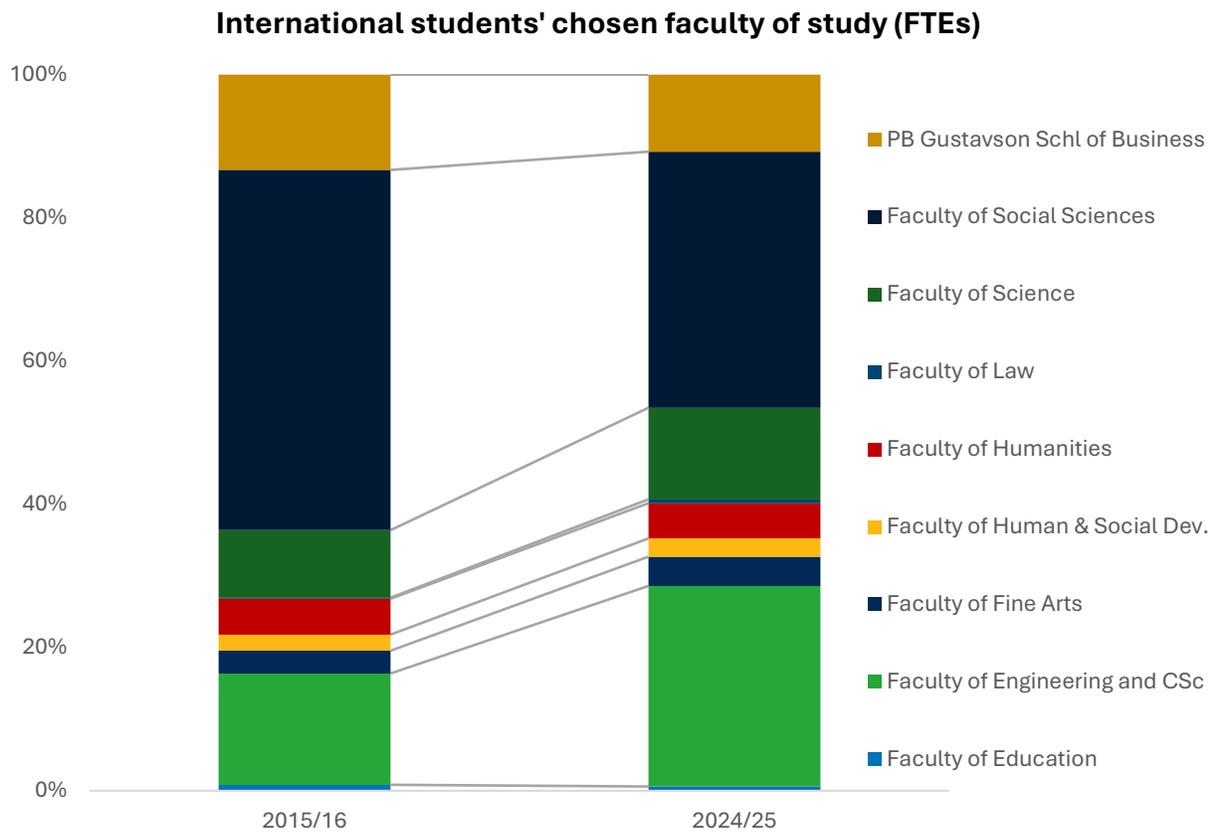


Figure 6. Distribution of international undergraduate enrolment across faculties of study over the years. The Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science is the only Faculty that has experienced growth during this timeframe, from 347 to 409 FTEs.

### Diversification (of origin)

Our student recruitment strategies are evolving to meet the shifting global landscape. Our revised international tiering strategy prioritizes new regions for recruitment, ensuring a diversified international student population and reducing reliance on any single country. In addition to diversifying our student population, we expect these efforts to strengthen UVic’s global reputation as an inclusive and internationally connected research university.

To support these efforts, we expanded and strengthened our recruitment network, both through direct recruitment and in partnership with Kaplan International, an international agency with an expansive network of recruiters and agents in countries all over the world. We are also offering earlier admission decisions and scholarship offers to provide prospective undergraduate students with more time to plan their studies in Canada.

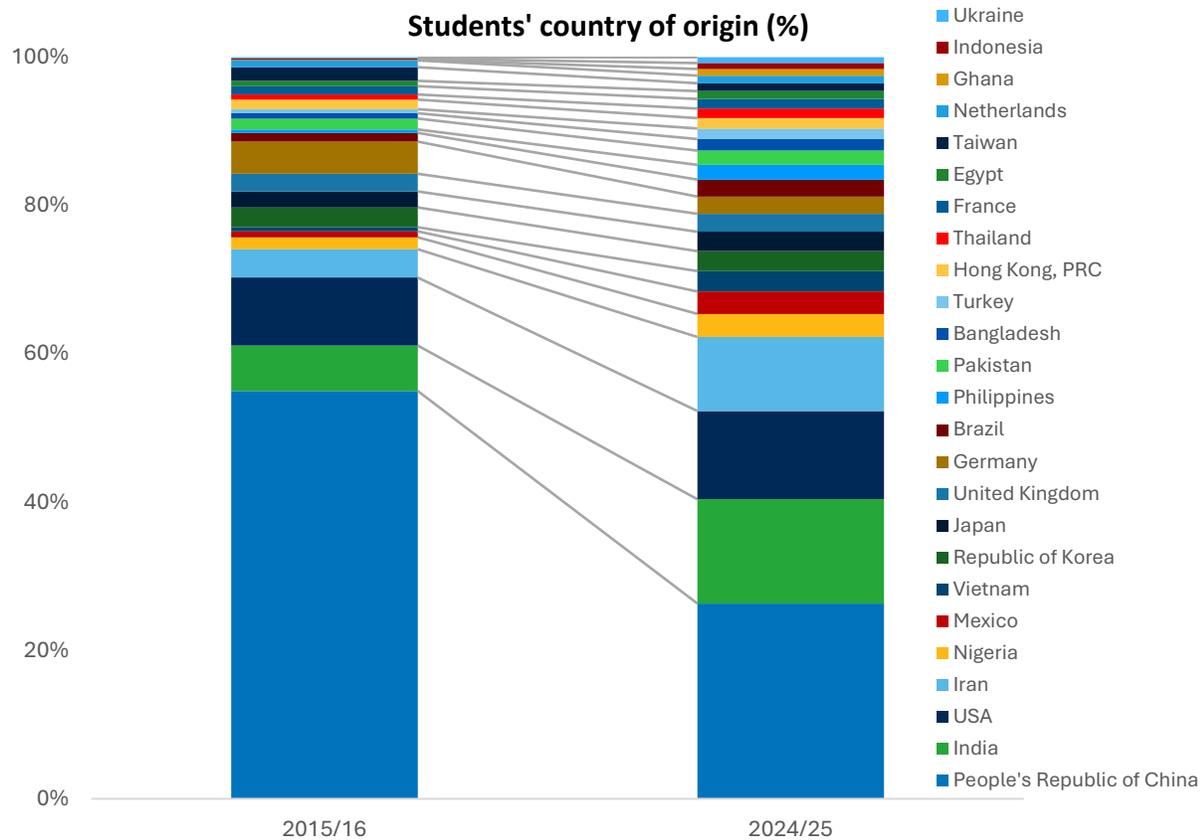


Figure 7. There has been a significant decline in students from China in the past decade, from 1,914 students in 2015/16 to 794 students in 2024/25. In the same timeframe, we have seen increased interest from students in Iran, Nigeria and Mexico, and we continue efforts to diversify further.

## Inclusion and reconciliation

Our recruitment efforts reflect our pledge and broader commitments to inclusion and reconciliation, including through valuing and sharing Indigenous ways of knowing and scholarship. Guided by our Indigenous Plan, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA), and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action, our efforts aim to integrate Indigenous rights and knowledge across all programming.

For example, UVic offers domestic tuition to Indigenous students living in the USA whose traditional territories overlap with Canada. In addition, UVic’s student orientation program includes a component on Indigenous culture, history and rights. Many programs and courses include curriculum that supports students’ understanding of Indigenous peoples’ history and culture, and the impact of colonization. Throughout their studies, UVic students are introduced to local Indigenous traditions and knowledge systems, with opportunities for land- and water-based learning and engagement with Indigenous leaders and knowledge keepers.

UVic continues to build an inclusive, world-class institution that is responsive to the diverse needs of our students, communities and the global workforce. By maintaining a strategic balance in enrolment management, embracing opportunities for international recruitment and academic diversification, and staying true to our values, we continue to remain a dynamic and welcoming university.

## Student supports and services

UVic provides a comprehensive range of supports and services for students at every stage of their journey—from prospective students and pre-arrival preparation to post-graduation transitions. We are dedicated to fostering a vibrant and engaging learning community that supports students' personal, academic, and career development and success. Many of our services, programs and resources are designed specifically for international students, ensuring they feel welcomed, supported, and empowered to succeed.

The International Centre for Students (ICS) plays a key role in this support, offering tailored resources and guidance to help international students navigate life at UVic and in Canada. UVic's ICS facilitates intercultural learning and global engagement, providing opportunities for all students, both domestic and international, to gain international experience through exchange programs, co-ops and internships, research placements, field schools, and more.

Beyond direct student support, ICS and other campus offices strengthen university-wide initiatives, fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment where international students can thrive. This collaborative approach ensures that all UVic students are equipped to succeed in an increasingly interconnected world.

## Pre-arrival and orientation support

To ensure a smooth transition to UVic, we provide international students with comprehensive support in navigating key aspects of immigration, settlement and community integration. This includes guidance on IRCC study permits, work eligibility and PAL processes. ICS also manages UVic Bound, a pre-arrival program that connects new international students with current UVic students, offers interactive workshops, and answers important questions for international students prior to their arrival in Victoria.

In addition to these pre-arrival programs and resources, UVic hosts a series of virtual events for international students and their families. These sessions offer valuable insights into academic programs, the course registration process, and opportunities to engage with faculty and staff.

Once on campus, students are welcomed through the International Student Welcome Week, a series of initiatives designed to introduce them to campus and community life, foster meaningful connections and support their academic and career development.

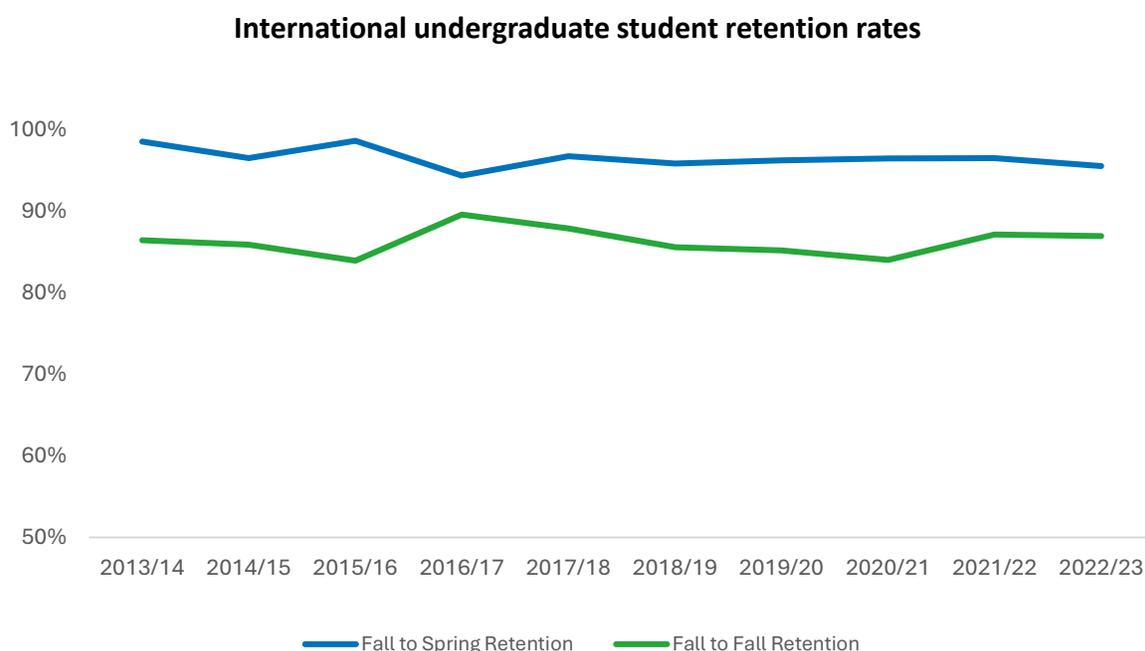
Beyond orientation, UVic provides ongoing programs to help international students navigate university life and connect with the campus community. The UVic Global Community provides opportunities for students, staff and faculty to share perspectives, celebrate diversity and develop intercultural connections. As part of this initiative, students who speak English as an additional language are matched with a conversation partner to practice their language skills. In addition, the Peer Connect Program pairs new students with upper-year mentors who provide guidance on campus and available resources, with additional support for international students.

## Academic supports

UVic offers a variety of academic services that help students navigate their studies and enhance their skills, improving student retention. Students receive the guidance and support they need to excel both academically and personally.

- **Student academic advising** offers guidance on academic planning, course selection and program navigation.

- **The Centre for Academic Communication** helps students develop their writing, research and communication skills.
- **The Math and Stats Assistance Centre** provides a collaborative study space, free tutoring, workshops and self-paced study materials.
- **UVic Libraries** offers a range of workshops, online tutorials and guides to assist students with their assignments and research, including tutoring and support with study skills, time management, research projects, planning assignments, citing sources, and more.



*Figure 8. International undergraduate retention rates (both in-year and year 1 to 2) are high and equivalent to domestic students, at 96% through to the spring term and 87% fall-to-fall term.*

## Student wellness and mental health support

Recognizing the critical role of mental health and well-being in student success, UVic has established a comprehensive framework to support international students. The Student Wellness Centre provides:

- Integrated health and counseling services tailored to diverse student needs.
- Crisis intervention and mental health counseling services.
- Workshops on stress management, cultural adjustment, and self-care strategies.
- Medical services provided by doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners.
- A proactive approach to monitoring student wellness needs, ensuring that support services align with the needs of a diverse student population.

UVic also offers a range of facilities, services and programs to support students' spiritual and physical well-being. These supports include athletics and recreation services as well as a multifaith centre that ensures faith-based supports and community building for all students, including international.

## Housing and community integration

Housing is a significant factor in the international student experience. UVic is committed to assisting students in securing stable and affordable accommodation through:

- On-campus residence options and our Global Citizenship Community, which provides a living space for international and domestic students to learn from one another and deepen their understanding of what it means to be a global citizen.
- The Division of Continuing Studies' Homestay Program, which offers international students the opportunity to live with local families, enriching their cultural experience.
- Off-campus housing resources, including advising to help students navigate the local rental market, tenant rights education, and housing workshops.

UVic also collaborates with local stakeholders to assess and address housing challenges, recognizing the broader community's role in supporting student accommodation needs.

## Financial support and tuition transparency

UVic has taken steps to improve tuition transparency and predictability for international students, including undergraduate students who pay for the full cost of tuition. In 2024, UVic implemented a revised approach to international undergraduate tuition fees, which provides cost certainty to international students for the entirety of their four-year undergraduate degree, including annual increases. Tuition fees for incoming undergraduate students are now set in advance for the first year of their program, with annual increases capped at inflation or 4%, whichever is less. This change helps students plan and budget more effectively for their entire degree program, promoting financial stability and predictability. Additionally, international tuition rates are determined earlier in the recruitment cycle, ensuring students have clear financial information when making enrolment decisions. To further support financial accessibility, UVic offers:

- Entrance and in-course scholarships, awards and bursaries to assist students with tuition costs.
- Work Study and Co-operative Education programs, which provide employment opportunities.
- Financial literacy workshops to help students manage expenses and explore funding options.

## Post-graduation and career transition support

To support students in their transition to professional life, UVic offers an array of career development and post-graduation resources, including:

- Career Services, which provides job search assistance, networking events, and employer connections.
- Guidance on the Post-Graduation Work Permit and other immigration pathways.
- Alumni initiatives, offering continued professional development and networking opportunities.

UVic also offers a range of community engagement initiatives aimed at promoting intercultural connections and fostering a sense of belonging. The UVic Global Community brings together students, staff and faculty from diverse backgrounds to share perspectives, celebrate diversity and engage in meaningful intercultural dialogue. Conversation Partners and Mentorship Programs provide students with opportunities to build connections, strengthen their networks, and create lifelong friendships. Other initiatives like the UVic Libraries International

Commons provide a welcoming space for students to study, access academic resources, and connect with peers in a supportive, inclusive environment.

Together, these initiatives provide a comprehensive support network that goes beyond basic services, with UVic offering a full spectrum of resources designed to help international students thrive in every aspect of their lives, from academic and career development to personal well-being and community engagement. This holistic approach to student support is what makes UVic stand out as an institution that prioritizes the success of all students, and it underscores our commitment to fostering an inclusive, globally engaged learning environment that prepares students for success on campus and beyond.

## Recruiting network

UVic has a comprehensive recruitment network across local and international markets, connecting with high school and transfer students from regions around the world. This network is responsive to the evolving challenges of the international education landscape, ensuring that we can engage with students across a broad spectrum of regions. Our direct recruitment efforts target key areas in the Americas, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

In 2023, UVic signed a contract with Kaplan International, a global leader in international education recruitment, and UVic was Kaplan's first Canadian partner. This partnership has become an important part of our international recruiting network, allowing us to leverage strategic partnerships, expand our reach, and access new markets. Kaplan is one of the largest and most reputable international education organizations in the world—partnering with top-ranking universities in the UK, US, and Australia—and with a long-standing record of successfully recruiting high-caliber students from diverse regions. Kaplan's services include direct recruitment and the management of third-party recruitment channels such as agent networks, sponsor relationships, and other similar channels.

Kaplan's vast global network provides access to markets where UVic previously had limited visibility, allowing us to enhance our recruitment efforts and further diversify our student population. UVic's primary goal in working with Kaplan is to rebuild our international enrolment. Our longer-term objective is to diversify our international student population further by country, ensuring a broader representation across faculties. This collaboration aligns with UVic's Strategic Enrolment Plan, which aims to strengthen our international undergraduate student population to approximately 17% of our total undergraduate cohort. By continuing to strengthen UVic's in-house recruitment services and leveraging Kaplan's network and resources, we can attract a broader range of students, supporting the university's financial sustainability and ability to pursue excellence in education.

For 2024/25, 28% of new international undergraduate students who enrolled at UVic were recruited via Kaplan. UVic's commitment to maintaining academic excellence is reflected in our clear process for assessing all international applicants, regardless of their recruitment source. The admissions process at UVic ensures that students are evaluated based on their academic records, English proficiency, and other criteria relevant to their chosen programs. This structured approach guarantees that, while Kaplan is helping to expand our recruitment pool, only students who demonstrate the qualifications and potential to succeed at UVic will be admitted.

As part of our commitment to ethical recruitment practices, UVic maintains a rigorous oversight process of Kaplan's recruitment activities. This includes their comprehensive agent verification system, regular reviews of written contracts, and ongoing training and information sharing to ensure that Kaplan and its agents adhere to the highest ethical standards. UVic also maintains a robust monitoring process to assess the effectiveness of the

recruitment efforts, with a clear mechanism in place to address any concerns or issues related to agent conduct. Our partnership with Kaplan is set to be reviewed every two years, with progress measured against the goals outlined in the contract.

## Continuing Studies' recruitment

UVic's Division of Continuing Studies offers a range of non-credit programs, including Certificates and Diplomas, and for-credit programs in collaboration with academic faculties. Almost 100 programs are offered across disciplines including business, leadership, language revitalization, border management, population health, and many others.

The Division attracts international students from a broad range of countries and partners with a select group of agents to support their recruitment activities. Agents must pass a rigorous process to partner with Continuing Studies including proven experience, business continuity, and a commitment to ethical practices. In addition, the Division requires agents to complete a nine-step training practice to ensure they understand and communicate to prospective students about UVic and the value proposition of programs offered through the Division. Continuing Studies checks references and conducts a thorough review before agents are authorized to act as recruiters for the university.

## Performance

The goals and performance indicators identified in this International Education Strategic Plan are informed by and aligned with the goals and objectives of UVic's Strategic Enrolment Plan to ensure that our internationalization efforts are supported by a robust system of performance measurement and accountability already in place.

UVic's Strategic Enrolment Plan includes a comprehensive set of key performance indicators that are essential to tracking our success in areas such as recruitment, diversity, retention, student success and international engagement. These metrics are monitored and reported on annually through the UVic Institutional Accountability Plan (IAPR). The integration of our International Education Strategic Plan and IAPR ensures that we are consistently evaluating our international education efforts within the broader context of our institutional goals, while also providing transparency and ongoing assessment of our progress.

This document is an extension of the work that we are already doing as a part of our broader internationalization strategy. We will continue to track and report on the performance indicators that reflect the effectiveness of our international recruitment, retention and student success initiatives as we work towards ensuring the conditions for the academic and personal success of all UVic students.

## Appendix A: Partnerships and MOUs

UVic has active partnership agreements with over 200 post-secondary institutions located worldwide. These partnerships enable students, staff and faculty to collaborate internationally and travel abroad for study, co-op, service learning, professional development and research opportunities.



Figure 9. A map depicting some of our key global partnerships and MOUs.

### Research partnerships

The University of Victoria is linked to partners working in oceans and lands around the globe. As a result, we are well placed and connected to advance the UN SDGs, helping to protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. Our strong research reputation ensures that we consistently place in the top 250 in global rankings. According to the Leiden Rankings, UVic is consistently the leading North American university for published research based on international collaborations.

 <b>#1</b> IN CANADA FOR MAKING RESEARCH ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC	 <b>#5</b> UNIVERSITY IN THE WORLD FOR CLIMATE ACTION <small>2024 THE Impact Rankings</small>	 <b>37</b> CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS ACROSS A VARIETY OF DISCIPLINES	 <b>#4</b> FOR CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES IN CITATION IMPACT PER FACULTY MEMBER <small>QS rankings, 2024</small>
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UVic is consistently the leading North American university for published research based on international collaborations.  
 Leiden Rankings, 2011-2023

UVic's thriving research partnerships with top global universities and active participation in international networks, consortia, and associations reinforce our reputation for research excellence and impact. Recognized worldwide for the strength of our research, we are a destination of choice for international scholars, conferences, and workshops that address complex global challenges through interdisciplinary collaboration. Beyond academia, we engage with our alumni and broader communities to foster new research opportunities and partnerships, further extending our global reach and impact.

UVic's Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives offers training programs, internships and field schools, with funding opportunities and research partnerships available to both faculty and students. These offerings include cultural visits and immersion programs, international youth leadership programs and specialized partnerships such as legal training for government entities in Vietnam and Thailand.

## Appendix B: Outgoing mobility opportunities

UVic partners with post-secondary institutions around the world, enabling students to participate in exchange programs in various countries. We offer a diverse range of outbound mobility opportunities, including international exchange programs, field schools, internships, and department-specific programs, allowing students to expand their global perspectives. To support these experiences, students can also access various grants and awards for funding opportunities.

### International exchange

Our exchange program enables UVic students to study at a partner institution while earning academic credit toward their UVic degree. The program serves students in the Faculties of Humanities, Science, Social Sciences, Fine Arts, Business and Law. Key aspects of the program include intercultural student development, international partner relations, faculty engagement, data management, and program assessment. Of UVic's 219 partner universities worldwide, 161 focus on student mobility and these agreements have resulted in almost 900 UVic students going out on exchange to 40 countries over the last five years.

### Other international learning opportunities

UVic offers a variety of international learning opportunities designed to expand students' global perspectives and provide valuable hands-on experiences. These opportunities include international field schools, which are experiential, intercultural, short-term courses that take students out of the classroom to engage in research and study in diverse locations across Canada and worldwide.

Additionally, UVic provides international practicums and internships, which are work-integrated learning experiences that allow students to gain professional skills while immersing themselves in different cultures and building community connections. Students can also take advantage of international co-op programs, where they can complete a work term abroad, develop intercultural competencies, and earn money while traveling. Our international co-op program engages with more than 1400 employers in 90 countries to place our students.

Academic departments at UVic also offer specialized study-abroad programs, providing tailored opportunities for students to deepen their academic knowledge and gain international experience in their field of study. For example, the Faculty of Humanities offers the I-witness field school, designed to explore ways in which the Holocaust is memorialized at various central European historical sites. There are also international field schools

offered in Japan, China, Greece, Spain, France and elsewhere in Europe through the Faculties of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education. These programs collectively enrich students' educational journeys, build cultural competencies and prepare them to thrive in an interconnected world.

## Global Indigenous connections

The Indigenous International Work Integrated Learning Education Program, launched in 2015, is an award-winning initiative and the first known exchange of its kind. The program is designed to connect Indigenous students with work and learning opportunities within Indigenous communities across Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Through these international collaborations, the program fosters meaningful cultural exchange and provides valuable experiential learning, contributing to the global recognition of Indigenous perspectives and practices.