

## destination analysis

# Canada on the rise

Canadian universities reported a good year last year, with international numbers boosted by the relatively easy visa application process compared with the USA.

The outlook for Canada's international education industry looked bright last year, with many universities reporting increased numbers of international students enrolling on their programmes. "We have seen a 10 per cent increase in overall international enrolment [in 2003/2004 compared with the previous year]," says Mike Farrell from Brock University in St Catharines, ON. "This is a result of active recruitment by the faculties, the Office of Graduate Studies and the Recruitment Office."

Nikki Croft from the University of Calgary in Calgary, AB, echoes this trend. "Our international student numbers have steadily increased in recent years due to continued recruitment efforts," she affirms. "We also think that 9/11 has resulted in more international students looking to come to Canada over the USA."

In the immediate aftermath of September 11, 2001, students viewed Canada as a safer alternative to its traditionally more popular neighbour (see *Education Travel Magazine*, April 2002, pages 6-7) and now, three years on, this trend looks to be continuing as a result of stringent visa measures introduced in the USA. Farrell says, "visa processing has a definite impact on enrolment". Croft adds, "Increased efficiencies in visa processing [have had a positive impact], particularly from China and India."

In terms of student nationalities, many universities agree that the traditional Asian student markets of Korea, China and Japan have been holding firm, while India, the USA and Hong Kong are also doing well.

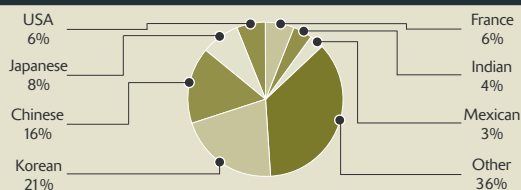
Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, SK, says, "Our major source countries are China, India, Hong Kong, Nigeria, Iran, Bangladesh, the USA and Malaysia. There has not been much of a shift over the last five years."

Mark Herringer from Malaspina University-College and International High School in Nanaimo, BC, adds that Chinese student enrolments have been actively managed at their university so that they now represent a smaller portion of the international student body compared with a few years ago. "This situation has also been aided by the drop in applications for study permits in China for study in Canada," he says. "So we have a healthier mix of nationalities in our classes."

Most universities agree that increased international promotion on their part has yielded positive results and many have plans to develop their strategy in the future. Herringer says that they plan to target the new student markets of Russia and Africa, and adds, "Our marketing approach has become tighter. We will rely increasingly on alumni to support our marketing and will utilise the web as a key marketing tool."

According to Tischler, the University of Saskatchewan has ambitious plans for the future. The university has previously not done any international marketing and aims to change this. "We will finally be developing a recruitment strategy, some money has been allocated and we are looking at using agents," he confirms. "We are convinced that if we provide good service to international students [then] the word will spread and students will come."

## Nationality breakdown of international students applying for a student visa in Canada in 2003



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada