

# **Creating Possibilities: An Examination of University Career Support Services for International Students in British Columbia**

by

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## Ethics Statement



The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

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## **Abstract**

Given the projected increase in the international student population, there is a need to understand the existing state of career support services on university campuses in British Columbia (BC) and whether these services meet their needs. Currently, the limited research in this area illustrates that international students intending to stay in the host country may not be adequately prepared to navigate the Canadian labour market. This study investigates the availability of career support services at two university campuses and their effectiveness in achieving the provincial government's labour market objectives. University expert interviews and a comparative analysis inform the analysis of potential options. This study recommends that universities integrate mandatory online English as Second Language (EAL) workshops to enhance existing career development programs. Further, it is recommended that universities and the provincial government collaborate in improving the data quality of career support services. Ultimately, enhanced data is necessary to implement evidence based policies.

**Keywords:** international students; international graduates, support services; effectiveness; labour force; British Columbia; transition

*To my parents, Vinod and Anita Kelkar. You taught me the importance of education and its role in helping others. The sacrifices you've made for us to attain a quality education will always be an inspiration for me. None of my accomplishments could have been possible without your unconditional love and support.*

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## List of Acronyms

BC AVED	British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education
BC	British Columbia
BCCAT	British Columbia Council on Admission and Transfer
BC Stats	British Columbia Statistics
BGS	Baccalaureate Graduates Survey
CBIE	Canadian Bureau of International Education
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
IRCC	Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada
MUN	Memorial University of Newfoundland
PGWP	Post-Graduation Work Program
RU	Ryerson University
SFU	Simon Fraser University
UBC	University of British Columbia
U of C	University of Calgary

## Glossary

Effectiveness	is defined as increasing international graduates' skills and capacity to succeed in the labour force.
Experiential learning	is an immersive process of "learning by doing". It can entail an experience such as volunteering in a community or working with an organization through which an individual develops and acquire new skills (Lewis and Williams, 1994, p. 5).
Integration	a process whereby an international graduate integrates into the workforce.
International Student	a person who is currently enrolled in an undergraduate program at a post-secondary institution.
International Graduate	a person who has graduated with an undergraduate degree.
Retention	a process whereby universities retain international students for the duration of their studies or academic program.
Support Services	an umbrella term referring to various types of career related services such as one on one advising, resume and cover letter workshop, and other programming.

## **Executive Summary**

International students are considered desirable candidates to address British Columbia's labour market needs. However, there are two major issues that undermine the integration and success of international students joining the workforce in BC. The first problem relates to the province's international education strategy which sets out the goals and objectives for attracting international students. One of their objectives is to facilitate international graduates' transition into the labour force to meet future labour market requirements and address demographic shifts in the workforce resulting from population aging. However, the strategy does not consider the unique career support service needs of international students to prepare for the local workforce. Herein lies the second policy problem: limited literature in this area demonstrates that international students are not adequately supported or prepared to transition into Canada's labour force because they may lack Canadian work experience, knowledge about the Canadian workplace culture and/or have inadequate proficiency in writing and speaking in English. Furthermore, the onus of preparing international students for BC's labour force has largely fallen on universities who have their own set of objectives for recruiting and retaining international students. Universities are attracting international students as part of their international engagement strategies, to address shortfalls in government funding, and to position their respective institutions as key research hubs. As a result, there are differing motivations for attracting these students.

In spite of the conflicting interests, this capstone examines the availability of career support services for international students at two BC university campuses and their effectiveness in achieving the provincial government's labour market objectives. Given the growing number of international students attending BC universities and the province's desire to recruit at least some of them to meet labour market needs, a comprehensive assessment of career support services is long overdue. Such an assessment would include cataloguing existing services as well as assessing their effectiveness in preparing international graduates for entry into the BC's labour force.

In order to examine the current state of career support services, I employ qualitative research methods to conduct university expert interviews at two universities in

BC: Simon Fraser University and University of British Columbia. In addition, a comparative analysis at different universities in Canada are explored to generate new knowledge, suggest policies, and highlight best practices. Next, I utilize the interview findings in designing potential options for consideration and develop a criteria and measures framework through which I assess each option. There are five assessment criteria used in my analysis. These include: effectiveness, human development, cost, and stakeholder acceptability and nine measures used to assess each policy option. My analysis demonstrates that integrating mandatory online English as Second Language (EAL) workshops in existing career development programs is the best option. In addition, I also recommend universities collaborate with the BC Advanced Ministry of Education to enhance the evaluation of their career support services to effectively determine how their services contribute to international graduates' success in the labour force and what additional resources may be needed. It is imperative to have comprehensive data to inform evidence based policies.

## Chapter 1. Introduction

The provincial government and post-secondary institutions in British Columbia (BC) have dedicated considerable resources to attracting international students from across the world.<sup>1</sup> However, universities and the BC government do not share the same set of objectives. Universities want to recruit and retain more international students as part of their international engagement strategies, to address shortfalls in government funding, and to position their respective institutions as key research hubs in an increasingly globalized world (UBC Strategic Plan 2011; SFU International Engagement Plan 2013).<sup>2</sup> The British Columbia government shares those objectives, but as articulated through its international education strategy, it also seeks to attract more international students to meet future labour market requirements and address demographic shifts in the workforce resulting from population aging. To address projected labour market shortfalls, the BC government aims to ease the transition of international graduates into the workforce (AVED, 2012). However, the strategy does not consider the unique career support service needs of international students to prepare for the local workforce.<sup>3</sup>

Several studies show that some international students are not adequately supported or prepared to navigate the local labour market because they may lack Canadian work experience, may lack knowledge about Canadian work environment, and may have inadequate proficiency in writing and speaking in English (Gates-Gasse 2012; Arthur & Flynn 2011; Nunes & Arthur, 2013; Scott et al., 2015). Furthermore, the onus of preparing international students for the workforce has fallen on universities in BC. At

<sup>1</sup> In this study, an international student is a person who is currently enrolled in an undergraduate program at a post-secondary institution. International students undertaking or completing graduate degrees or PhD's were not considered as they are unique groups that would require a separate study.

<sup>2</sup> Retention has various interpretations but for universities it means keeping them for the duration of their studies.

<sup>3</sup> An international graduate is a person who has graduated with an undergraduate degree.



universities, one of the problems identified by past research is the lack of adequate support services tailored to the unique needs of international students seeking to enter the Canadian workforce. Given that the number of international students enrolled in Canadian post-secondary institutions is expected to grow, it is clear that more efforts are needed to assess the effectiveness of existing support services for this diverse population of potential job-seekers. This capstone examines the availability of career support services for international students at two British Columbia university campuses and their effectiveness in achieving the provincial government's labour market objectives.<sup>4</sup>

Most of the Canadian literature on support services for international students concentrates on the Atlantic and Prairie Provinces (Gates-Gasse, 2012). In some of these provinces, several initiatives and projects have been developed with the support of the provincial government to tailor services for international students. This includes developing programming related to navigating the job market and instilling knowledge about Canadian workplace culture, as well as initiatives to connect with and educate prospective employers (Gates-Gasse, 2012). In other provinces like BC, research on support services is limited but emerging studies indicate that international students underutilize career support services as a strategy for employment in the host country (Popadiuk & Arthur, 2014; Bepple, 2014). Hence, further research is required to determine the current state of support services for international students at universities in BC.

In order to examine the current state of support services at BC universities, this capstone utilizes qualitative research methods to conduct university expert interviews. In addition, a comparative analysis is conducted with university experts at three different universities across Canadian provinces. The findings inform the design of policy options which are then evaluated with a set of criteria and measures framework. The evaluation of options is used to propose feasible recommendations.

The subsequent chapters are organized as follows: Chapter 2 provides an overview of international students in Canada and BC; Chapter 3 outlines the existing

<sup>4</sup> In this capstone, career support and support services are used synonymously. It is also important to note that international students undertaking undergraduate degrees are the target group for this study.

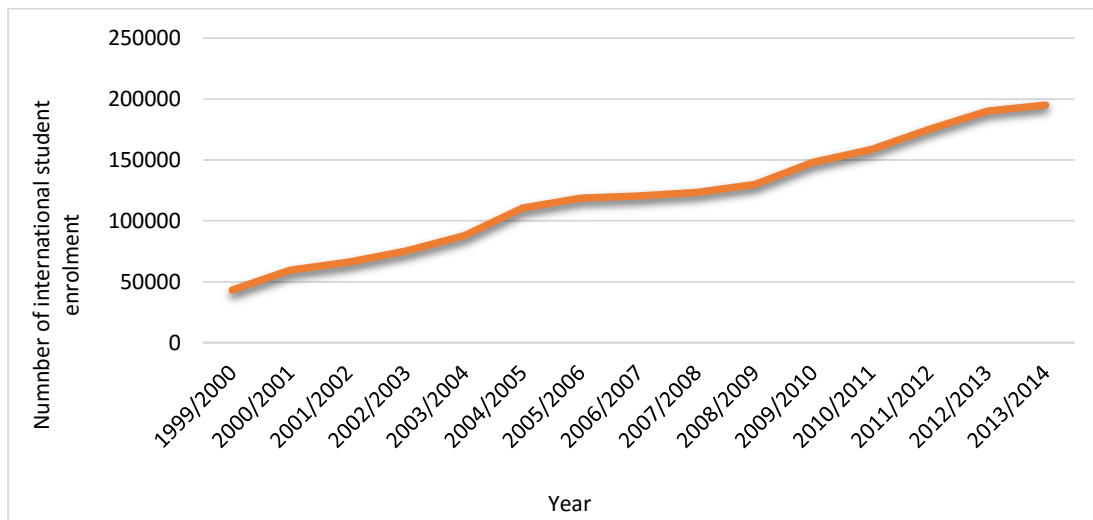
literature on this topic; Chapter 4 discusses the research methodology which includes university expert interviews, comparative analysis and the limitations of the research; Chapter 5 provides an in-depth analysis of the interview findings at two universities in BC; Chapter 6 provides a comparative analysis from other jurisdictions; Chapter 7 describes the rationale for each policy option and chapter 8 sets out the policy objective, criteria and measures framework; Chapter 9 provides an assessment of each policy option. Finally, chapter 10 outlines the policy recommendations and chapter 11 provides future research considerations.

## **Chapter 2. Background**

This section provides an overview of the international student population in Canada and their presence in the labour force. In addition, the research emphasizes the issue within British Columbia and focuses on the undergraduate international student population. Finally, this section illustrates the importance of understanding international students' transitional experiences in the host country.

### **2.1. International Students in Canada**

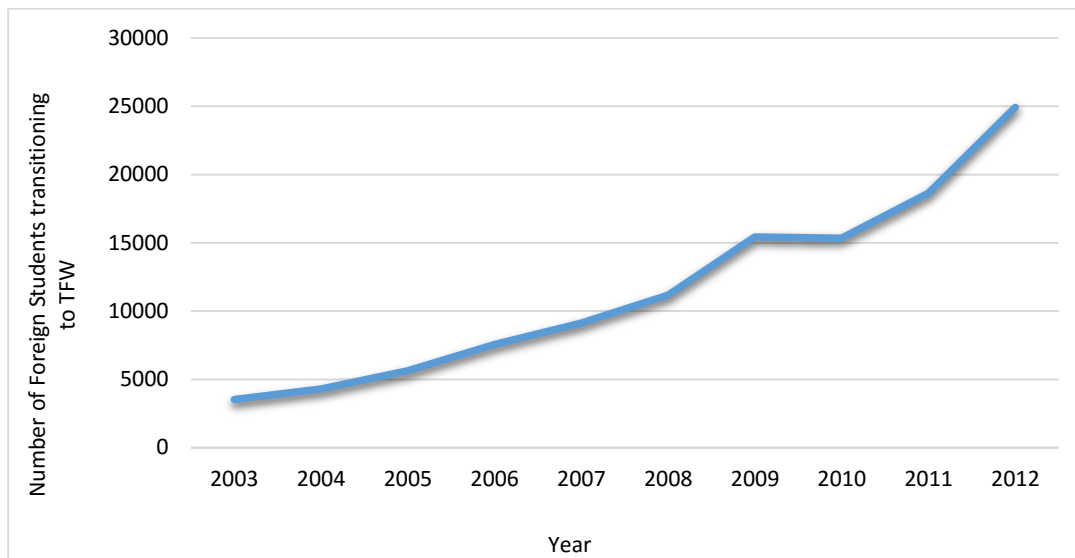
Many Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries like Canada are utilizing the “two-step” student migration process to attract and retain skilled immigrants (Hawthorne, 2010, p. 10). This process initially involves universities attracting and retaining international students. Upon graduation, governments intervene and seek to facilitate international graduates' transition into the labour force through post-graduation work programs. Governments also use regulated immigration pathways to keep graduates permanently in host country. As a result of this migration process, the level of international student enrolment in Canadian postsecondary institutions has grown rapidly over the past few years. Between 1999 and 2014, the international student population increased by 350.30 percent (See Figure 1). In other words, the international student population grew at an annual average rate of 23.35 percent in the same time period. Consequently, the presence of international students in Canada's labour force has also grown.



**Figure 1: International Student Enrolment at Postsecondary Institutions in Canada**

Source: Statistics Canada, Postsecondary Student Information System (2015)

After completing a postsecondary education in Canada, the “two-step migration” process allows international graduates to transition into the host country’s labour force (Hawthorne, 2010, p. 10). International graduates are eligible to apply for the Post-Graduation Work Program (PGWP) which is dependent on the number of years of study in Canada. The PGWP permit can range from 8 months to 3 years. Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s data shows that the number of students who took advantage of the PWGP doubled “from 15,434 in 2009 to 31,177 in 2013” (2015, p.18). As a result of this program, more international graduates are transitioning into Canada’s labour force. Between 2003 and 2012, international graduates transitioning to temporary foreign workers increased by six fold (See Figure 2). Further acceleration of international graduates into the labour force occurred due to 2008 regulatory reforms of the PGWP which removed constraints on graduates to find a job to be eligible for a work permit (van Huystee, 2011). International graduates changing to temporary foreign worker status grew at an average annual rate of 24.63 percent between 2008 and 2012 (See Figure 2). In summary, the heavy reliance on the “two-step migration” process and the dramatic increase of international graduates in Canada’s labour force warrants attention to understand their experiences and labour market outcomes (Hawthorne, 2010, p. 10). However, this capstone primarily focuses on British Columbia due to limited literature and an increasing international student population at universities.

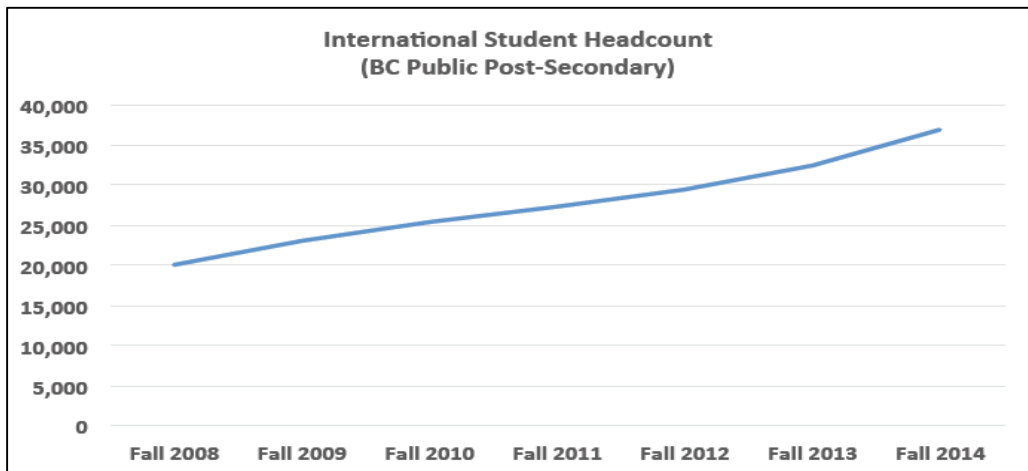


**Figure 2: International Students Transition to Temporary Foreign Workers in Canada**

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2012)

## 2.2. International Students in British Columbia

In BC, the international student population at post-secondary institutions has increased significantly over time. Figure 3 below demonstrates that number of international students at BC public post-secondary increased to over 35,000 in the fall of 2014. According to British Columbia Council on Admission and Transfer (BCCAT), the international student population increased by 85 percent between fall of 2008 and fall of 2014 (Adamoski, 2015, p. 15).



**Figure 3: International Student Headcount at BC Public Postsecondary Institutions**

Source: *Reprinted* from British Columbia Council on Admission and Transfer (Adamoski, 2015, p. 16)

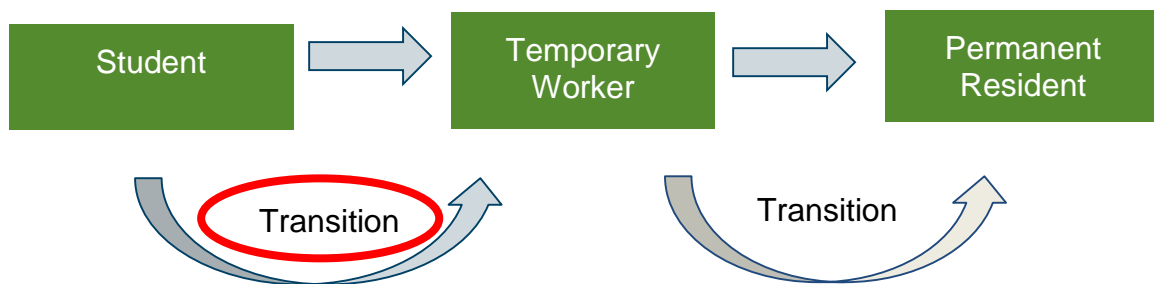
Existing data also demonstrates that many international students are enrolling in undergraduate programs. Based on 2012-2013 data 62% of all international students were enrolled in undergraduate programs, while only 17% were enrolled in graduate programs with another 14% in development programs. Thus, international students undertaking undergraduate degrees are the target group for this study. Predominately, undergraduate international students are interested in the following fields: Arts and Sciences, Business and Management, Developmental and Engineering/Applied Sciences (Heslop, 2014). Other groups of international students were not considered because they would have different experiences and challenges. In fact, previous researchers found that international students enrolled in Master’s or PhD programs had differing needs and experiences (Arthur & Flynn, 2013, p. 30). Therefore, a separate study would be required to evaluate the experiences of these groups of students.

This capstone also focuses on research-intensive universities because about 50% of undergraduate international students study at these institutions (Heslop, 2014). For comparative purposes, Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia were selected because they recruit a large number of undergraduate international students and they are the leading postsecondary institutions in BC (Heslop, 2014). For these reasons, this capstone examines support services for undergraduate international

students at these universities and attempts to gauge at some of the challenges in assisting them.

### 2.3. Why Support International Students?

International students come from diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds and can experience three distinct adjustment processes in the host country (Arthur & Flynn, 2011 p. 224; Scott et al., 2015). The first process involves international students adapting to university life. The second adjustment occurs when international graduates' decide to stay in the host country and transition into the labour force. Finally, the third adjustment takes place when graduates choose to become permanent residents. Figure 4 illustrates the adjustment processes described above.



**Figure 4: International Students Adjustment Processes in the Host Country**

In the first adjustment process, international students may experience obstacles such as loneliness, culture shock, academic challenges and sometimes English language barriers (Scott et al., 2015, p. 4). This process can lead to high levels of stress and anxiety for international students as they adapt to the host country's environment (Arthur, 1997, p. 264). These difficulties have been well documented in the academic literature (Scott et al., 2015, p. 4). However, few studies examine the second adjustment process when international graduates' transition into the labour force (Arthur & Flynn, 2011 p. 224). During this stage, international graduates may experience uncertainty while they attempt to find employment. Therefore, it is important to understand their challenges and locate the source of possible difficulties. Finally, when international graduates enter the third stage they may choose to apply for permanent residency. Many international students may experience all three stages. In the literature, the second and third stages requires

examination to determine employment and permanent residency rates for international graduates. However, this study primarily focuses on the second stage during which international graduates' transition from university to the host country's labour force. By focusing on this particular stage, it is possible to better understand the challenges these students may experience and the support they may require. To get a nuanced understanding of this transitional phase however, there is need to first examine the differing motivations between universities and the BC government for attracting international students.



## **Chapter 3. Literature Review**

### **3.1. Motivations for Attracting International Students**

There are multiple reasons for both governments and universities to be involved in attracting international students. However, governments and universities do not necessarily share the same set of objectives. For universities, recruitment and retention of international students is part of their international engagement strategies (UBC Strategic Plan, 2011; SFU International Engagement Plan, 2013). These plans reflect the universities' efforts to internationalize their institutions in order to better position themselves in the global arena. Internationalization is a process of "integration of international, intercultural, and comparative perspectives throughout teaching, research and service" (SFU International Engagement Plan, 2013 p. 4). Part of the internationalization effort is to recruit and retain more international students as they contribute to institutional diversification through the introduction of diverse cultural knowledge, languages and experiences (Arthur & Flynn, 2013). The internationalization of the student body can ultimately enable universities to be more inclusive and diverse. In addition, recruitment of international students provides universities with a major source of revenue as they pay differential fees compared to domestic students (Arthur & Flynn, 2013). The revenue from differential fees makes the recruitment of international students an attractive business for post-secondary institutions, so much so that recruitment of international students has become a competitive business.

Countries like New Zealand, Spain, the Russian Federation and Korea, which were not traditionally involved in the international education sector, are building their capacities to recruit international students (OECD, 2013). The involvement of new countries means more intensive competition in recruiting international students. For Canada, Australia has been identified as a major competitor because of its geographical location and favorable policies for both visas and work permits (Nunes & Arthur, 2013, p. 35). To keep a competitive edge in the international education market, it is necessary for Canadian post-secondary institutions to invest not only in recruitment efforts, but also in the creation of support services aimed at improving retention. Ultimately, university recruitment and

retention of international students can also assist in attaining the government's objective of addressing long-term needs of the workforce.

From the provincial government's perspective, international students are a valuable pool of human capital and provide substantial contributions to the economy. Based on 2012 estimates, international students contributed \$1.8 billion to the BC's economy by spending on tuition and living expenses (AVED, 2012, p. 8). This expenditure also contributed to the creation of 22,000 Canadian jobs (*ibid*). As a result, the international education sector has become a major part of the governments' economic strategy (Scott et al., 2015). In addition to funding their own education, international students acquire human capital characteristics that can meet the needs of the host country's labour market (Hawthorne, 2008, p. 2). According to Statistics Canada, the proportion of Canadian seniors will more than double by 2036 and surpass the working age population (2010, p. 16). Given Canada's aging population, international graduates can play an important role in filling the needs of the future labour force. The provincial government's international education strategy recognizes international graduates' potential and has identified the need to ease their transition into the workforce (AVED, 2011, p. 20). However, it is unclear whether the provincial government perceives all international graduates as equally desirable.

While the current provincial international education strategy does not explicitly state whether all international graduates are to be viewed as welcome additions to the local labour force, it does single out sectors where labour market shortages are expected, such as health and applied sciences. (AVED, 2012, p. 15). Another way to ascertain the scope of the provincial government's interest in international graduates is to examine provincially regulated immigration pathways. The current BC Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) prioritizes international graduates from applied sciences, natural sciences, health, information and technology, business, hospitality, tourism and transportation (IMMIgroup, 2016). Therefore, while the provincial government's strategy states that it seeks in general to ease international graduates' transition into the workforce, the intention is focused on specific occupational groups (AVED, 2012, p. 15 & 20). Notwithstanding the provincial government's professed interest in international graduates, it is unclear whether acquiring a Canadian education actually facilitates international graduates' transition into the

workforce. Governments assume that international students who acquire Canadian credentials, gain fluency in one of the official languages, and become accustomed to the Canadian cultural environment can adjust more easily to the host country's labour market, but these assumptions are up for debate (Scott et al., 2015, p. 3).

### **3.2. Limited Empirical Research on the Advantages of Host Country's Human Capital for International Graduates**

Currently, there is insufficient research and little empirical evidence to suggest that international graduates who acquire a Canadian education have an advantage in integrating into the Canadian labour force. One study analyses employment outcomes of different immigrant groups such as Temporary Foreign Workers, international graduates and Skilled Worker Program Applicants using data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada. Sweetman and Warman use an ordinary least-squares (OLS) method to test a number of factors including whether having Canadian education served as an advantage in integrating into the workforce. Their findings demonstrated that international graduates' return from education was negligible. However, the study did show positive labour market outcomes for international graduates' but these results were not robust (Sweetman & Warman, 2014).

Another study in Australia showed that international graduates had comparable labour participation rate to off-shore migrants (Hawthorne, 2010). However, international graduates in two year university programs had deteriorating outcomes compared to off-shore migrants. The study identified assumptions around English language attainment as a contributing factor to deteriorating outcomes for international graduates. As a result, policy reforms now place greater emphasis on English language proficiency because it is a strong predictor for employment success and recent Australian work experience. While these findings might well prove to be equally valid in Canada, more research is required to understand employment outcomes of international graduates here. In the Canadian context, a lack of comprehensive quantitative data creates difficulty in analyzing international graduates' employment outcomes and their impact on the labour market (Williams et al., 2015, p. 15; CIC, 2015).

### **3.3. Tracking Employment Outcomes of International Graduates**

Few studies have tracked employment trajectories of international graduates. Part of the problem is inadequate data. At the national level, Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada's (formerly known as Citizenship and Immigration Canada) groups international students under temporary foreign workers class which creates difficulties in disaggregating and analyzing this particular group's employment trends and characteristics (Williams et al., 2015, p. 15). Furthermore, interviewees from a recent CIC evaluation of the international student program also identified a lack of information on "the type of work international students are doing and their impact on the Canadian labour market" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC], 2015, p. 17). At the same time, however, interviewees participating in CIC's evaluation noted that there are "no apparent barriers for international students" in gaining employment (CIC, 2015, p. 7). There seems to be a contradiction in the above two statements because with imperfect information, it is impossible to state with any certainty that international graduates do or do not face barriers in the labour force. Nevertheless, more recently the Globe and Mail retrieved a "secret" evaluation report from CIC regarding the Post-Graduation Work Program. The findings from this report are startling as they demonstrate that international graduates utilizing this program are largely employed in low paying jobs and had average earning lower than both domestic college and university graduates (Chiose, 31 March 2016). Clearly, more research is necessary to completely ascertain international graduates deteriorating labour market outcomes.

At the provincial level, BC Statistics (BC Stats) has been tracking employment outcomes for international graduates who have obtained diplomas, associate degrees, certificates, and more recently, baccalaureate degrees (personal correspondence, Jan 8, 2016). BC Statistics routinely carries out surveys to understand students' university experiences, employment outcomes and their participation in the labour force. Surveys target different programs such as associate degrees, diplomas, apprenticeship, and baccalaureate graduates (BC Stats, 2016). Since 2014, BC Stats started to include international graduates in their Baccalaureate Graduates Surveys (BGS) (personal correspondence, Jan 8, 2016). The BGS collects information every two and five years

after students have graduated (BC Stats, 2016). Currently, statistics comparing domestic and international graduates have not been published. However, correspondence with BC Stats revealed that international graduates' outcomes were not significantly different from the overall results (personal correspondence, Jan 15, 2016). In addition, the British Columbia Council on Admission and Transfer's recent survey noted that international graduates with baccalaureate degrees had high participation levels in the labour market and had similar levels of unemployment as their domestic counterparts (Adamoski, 2015, p. 43). However, the results showed that average full-time income was lower compared to domestic graduates (Adamoski, 2015, p. 43). As this is the first BGS to track employment outcomes of international graduates, successive surveys will be necessary to establish longitudinal trends in order to confirm if there are any differences in employment outcomes between domestic and international graduates. In the interim, however, there is a strong case for enhancing support services for international graduates who seek to transition into the Canadian workforce. There is limited research in this area but a few qualitative studies and surveys shed light into some of the challenges in preparing and transitioning into Canada's labour force.

### **3.4. Literature on Support Services for International Students**

Current literature focuses on international students' lack of preparedness for Canada's workforce and their perceptions around employability. Arthur and Flynn (2011) examined factors that influenced career decisions of international students in their final year of undergraduate and graduate study at a Canadian university. Using semi-structured interviews, their findings illustrate that some international students are ill-equipped and lack knowledge on how to navigate the Canadian job market (Arthur & Flynn, 2011, p. 234). In addition, their findings demonstrated that international students perceived their English language proficiency and a lack of understanding of Canadian workplace cultural norms as an impediment for employment (Arthur & Flynn, 2011, p. 229).

Similarly, the Canadian Bureau of International Education's 2007 survey and focus group results found that international students held negative perceptions about employment opportunities and 85% found it "difficult" or "very difficult" to find employment

after graduation (Bond, Areepattamannil, Brathwaite-Sturgeon, Hayle, & Malekan, 2007, p. 23). Aside from difficulties with employment opportunities, international students' perceive themselves as undesirable candidates among Canadian employers. In CBIE's 2007 survey, international students noted a lack of awareness among employers about hiring procedures, intolerance to different accents and a lack of commitment to long term contracts due to uncertain work status of these students (Bond et al., 2007, p. 21). However, international students believed that employers valued their cultural capital (*ibid*). Other common concerns often raised by international students are the lack of Canadian work experience and professional development opportunities needed for transitioning into Canada's workforce (Scott et al., 2015, p. 11; Arthur & Nunes, 2013, p. 40). Some of the concerns raised by international students are also shared by employers.

A BC-wide consultation among small and medium size businesses led by the Immigrant Employment Council of BC (2012) found English language proficiency to be a key concern among employers when it came to hiring immigrants. In particular, employers identified a need for immigrants to have not only proficiency in English but to be able to develop language skills that are appropriate for business and sector specific occupations (2012, p. ix). In addition, employers perceived a lack of Canadian work experience as a barrier in hiring immigrants because of the "cost associated with training and mentoring" (2012, p. ix). The findings from this consultation mirror what international students identified as necessary to prepare for entry into Canada's workforce. As a result, academics have advocated for the provision of tailored support services for international students at universities (Nunes & Arthur, 2013, p. 39-40; Bepple, 2014, 183-185). These studies indicate it should not be assumed that international students will not encounter unique challenges as they transition into the labour force. Just as different immigrant groups require specialized support services so do international students (Gates-Gasse, 2012, p. 274).

### **3.5. Addressing Career Development Needs of International Students**

After completing a postsecondary degree, international graduates desire to stay in the host country and participate in the labour market. A student survey report by the BC

Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development showed that 54% of international students wanted to work in BC after completing their education (2009, p. 3). Similarly, BCCAT recent survey found that 59% of respondents wanted to remain in BC after graduation, 24% wanted to go back home, 9% wanted to move to other regions in Canada, and 8% wanted to go to another country (2015, p. 40). Of the international respondents who indicated a desire to stay in BC, 63% of them wanted to enter the labour force, 8% wanted to pursue further education, 27% wanted to work and study and 2% wanted to do no work or school (2015, p. 41). These statistics demonstrate that international graduates view BC to be a desirable place for acquiring work experience, but given the existing barriers to employment more needs to be done to enable their transition into the workforce.

International students who intend to stay after graduation have unique career development needs because they are more likely to encounter difficulties with writing and speaking in English, lack awareness of Canadian work environments, and lack Canadian work experience (Nunes & Arthur, 2013; Arthur & Flynn, 2011; Scott et al., 2015; Gates-Gasse, 2012). International students need to overcome these difficulties in order for them to be employable in Canada's labour force. At present targeted support services are provided by universities prior to graduation rather than by the provincial government programs post-graduation. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate how existing support services are meeting international students' needs. Furthermore, universities justify charging differential fees on the grounds that they provide targeted support services for this student population (interview, November 11, 2015). But, limited research in this area shows that international students' find services are not adequately addressing their specific needs.

In one qualitative study, Popadiuk and Arthur recruited former international students from mid-sized West coast urban public university to showcase factors that led to their employment (2014, p. 126). Their findings showed that when it came to finding employment former international students relied less on career or counselling services and more on key relationships that they built through their university life such as supervisors and mentors (*ibid*, p. 130-131). Therefore, the study recommended that career advisors and counselors who may be guided by individualistic methods of counselling

need to consider different world views of international students and their complex decision making processes to adequately provide support (*ibid*, p. 134).

Similarly, another study showed that international students were aware of their university's career services but did not prioritize them as a way to prepare for the workforce (Bepple, 2014, p. 177). Bepple (2014) conducted an online survey and focus groups to understand how international students utilized their time at universities to prepare for entry into BC's labour force. The study targeted a wide range of international students enrolled in undergraduate, post-baccalaureate and graduate level academic programs at BC's postsecondary institutions. The response rate from the survey was lower than expected at about 12% but the survey combined with the focus groups managed to provide in-depth insight into the strategies employed by international students for career development (Bepple, 2014, p. 72). The study posed questions to understand factors that international students' thought were most important for gaining work-related experience. The findings showed that international students ranked English language skills as the most important factor, followed by Canadian education, Canadian work experience, volunteer experience, institutional career resources and finally non-Canadian work experience and relationships (*ibid*, p. 114-115). These results suggest that international students' were both aware of their language difficulties and the prerequisites necessary to enter the labour market. Consequently, Bepple's findings showed that international students used various strategies such as volunteering or gaining work experience to enhance their fluency in English (*ibid*, p. 118-119).

Nunes and Arthur (2013) also explored international students' transition experiences into the Canadian labour force. The study used semi-structured interviews and constant comparison methodology to understand 16 undergraduate and graduate international students' experiences and challenges (Nunes & Arthur, 2013, p. 36-37). One of their major findings was that international students expected more from career service personnel to assist them with acquiring relevant Canadian work experience prior to graduation (Nunes & Arthur, 2013, p. 39-40). Similarly, Arthur and Flynn's findings at a Western Canadian university showed that both undergraduate and graduate international students desired university services to customize workshops and programs to their needs in order to familiarize them with Canadian workplace culture (2011, p. 229).



In summary, a key theme from the above literature is that career resources are not necessarily utilized by international students. There can be numerous reasons why international students may not utilize existing career resources and some of them have been suggested by previous studies. For example, services are not tailored to meet the unique needs of international students (See Gates-Gasse 2012; Arthur & Flynn 2011; Nunes & Arthur, 2013) or career service providers are unaware of international students' complex decision making processes and instead impose their own bias on how to make decisions (Popadiuk & Arthur, 2014, p. 134). As a result, academics have advocated for the provision of tailored career support services to address international students' needs (Nunes & Arthur, 2013, p. 39-40; Bepple, 2014, 183-185). However, it is arguable that the onus of such services should not solely be left to universities.

### **3.6. Support Services in Other Provinces**

In the Atlantic and Maritime Provinces, universities have been providing tailored support services and programming for international students with the help of the provincial government. For example, Newfoundland's Memorial University received funding from the province to deliver a Professional Skills Development Program for both undergraduate and graduate international students (Gates-Gasse, 2012, p. 285). This program aims to educate students about Canada's employment culture and assists them with making connections with community stakeholders (Flynn and Bauder, 2015, p. 549). Additionally, a representative from the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism educates both international students and employers about hiring international students on university campus (Gates-Gasse, 2012, p. 285-286). Likewise, L'Universite de Moncton with provincial funding developed a tailored program titled "Destination Emploi" which educates Francophone international students about work opportunities and encourages businesses to hire these students (Flynn and Bauder, 2015, p. 549). University staff arrange one on one meetings with international students, offer networking opportunities with employers and also play a role in raising employers' awareness about hiring procedures (Gates-Gasse, 2012, p. 284). The results of this program have been remarkable because it has placed "77% of participants in off-campus employment during their studies and 61% in post-graduate employment" (*ibid*). In addition to the success of this project, university

administrators at L'Universite de Moncton believed the provincial government's role in funding of the program reduced conflict of interest between universities and government objectives for attracting international students (*ibid*). Universities believe their recruitment of international students is not for the purpose of immigration and hence a greater role of provincial government is required if their intention is to keep them in the host country (*ibid*, p. 284-285). The program developments in these provinces could be the result of major labour shortages which in turn incentivizes them to retain international students more aggressively. Nonetheless, it is important to investigate the availability of support services for international students at universities in British Columbia because there is very limited research in this area.

### **3.7. Policy Problems and Stakeholders**

Given the growing number of international students attending BC universities and the province's desire to recruit at least some of them to meet labour market needs, a comprehensive assessment of support services is long overdue. Such an assessment would include cataloguing existing services as well as assessing their effectiveness in preparing international graduates for entry into the BC labour force. To reiterate, the two policy problems addressed in this capstone are: (1) the provincial government's strategy is somewhat disconnected from the specific needs of international students (2) there is a lack adequate support services that can prepare them for the Canadian labour market. Key stakeholders in these issues include:

- The British Columbia Government which has the intention to recruit certain types of international graduates to meet the province's labour market needs.
- Universities are equally important in attracting and recruiting international students as part of their respective international engagement strategies.
- Universities support services providers who play a role in preparing international students for the BC's labour force.
- International students who have the intention to stay in the host country.
- Businesses who seek to employ skilled immigrants.

The subsequent chapter outlines a description of the research methodology of this capstone.

## **Chapter 4. Research Methodology**

The methodology of this capstone includes two components: university expert interviews and a comparative analysis. Due to the limited data available on this topic, qualitative research methods are used to collect information. This research has two main goals: (1) to understand the current state of support services for international students at Simon Fraser University (SFU) and the University of British Columbia (UBC) and (2) determine whether the available services are effective in facilitating international graduates' transition into the labour force. The data collected from both interviews and comparative analysis informs the design of policy options.

### **4.1. Expert Interviews with BC University Experts**

There are four main reasons for conducting interviews with university experts. First, this report seeks to understand university experts' experiences and perceptions around delivering services to international students. Second, it seeks to ascertain the current state of support services for international students. Third, it seeks to determine the availability and effectiveness of university support services for international students. Finally, this report seeks to identify areas where universities can enhance services and play a role in facilitating the transition of international graduates' into BC's labour force. These avenues of enquiry are based on those employed in a recent study completed in Ontario.

The study based out of Ontario examined a wide range of university services and challenges experienced by universities in supporting international students (El Masri, Choubak & Litchmore, 2015, p. 7). The study posed relevant questions that would be useful in developing an understanding of the state of support services for international students in the BC context. As a result, certain ideas and questions related to the types of services and challenges were adapted for this capstone. Additionally, a specific question related to the impact of government policies on international student services is used to understand any specific issues raised within BC (El Masri et. al, 2015, p. 4). The Ontario study influenced the design of the interview questions because the aim of this capstone is

also to understand the nexus between university support services and the transition of international graduates into the workforce. However, this capstone departs from the study in Ontario in two ways. Firstly, this research utilized qualitative research methods to focus only on career related programming and services at two BC universities for undergraduate international students while the study in Ontario used a survey to target a whole range of university student service providers. Secondly, specific questions were developed to assess career related services in areas such as coordination between different service units and engagement with employers and local stakeholders. Thirdly, interviewees were also requested to provide any publicly available data on satisfaction or impact assessment of university services to inform the analysis. These issues were raised with interviewees to locate any potential problems, emerging concerns and opportunities for enhancing services at universities.

## **4.2. Comparative Analysis in other Jurisdictions**

A comparative analysis can generate new knowledge, suggest policies, and highlight best practices that exist in other jurisdictions. They can also help identify common gaps and challenges in services and programming across universities. The procedure and results are discussed more in depth in chapter 6.

## **4.3. Limitations of Research**

The purpose of this research is to understand the availability and effectiveness of career services for international students. The findings from my research demonstrate that there are targeted support services and programs available for international students but it is unclear to what degree they are effective in contributing to their success in the labour force. As a result, the findings from this study are limited for two main reasons. Firstly, I did not gather data on international students' and graduates' experiences with career support services. However, I took into account international students' needs as outlined by academic literature and interviewees in the assessment of options.

Secondly, there is limited data on whether targeted workshops, events and programs for international students facilitated their transition into the labour force. While BC Statistic's Baccalaureate Graduate Survey now tracks international graduates, the data available does not disaggregate international versus domestic graduates. Furthermore, the BGS does not pose specific questions as to how experiential learning programs or career services lead to better outcomes in terms of skills attainment and success in the labour force for both international and domestic graduates. As a result, there is a need for better data and empirical evidence to fully determine the effectiveness of targeted support programs and services.

A third limitation of this study is that I was unable to secure interviews from UBC Co-operative education offices. I made attempts to secure interviews from UBC Arts Co-op and Engineering Co-op offices but I was unsuccessful. I was only able to secure an interview with SFU Co-operative education office. It is important to note that the interviewee from SFU Co-op is in charge of coordinating programming and services for international students participating in co-op. Therefore, these initiatives are unique to SFU Co-op.

Finally, I was also unable to interview career specialists in other departments such as engineering and applied sciences. Since many international students enroll in these programs, it would have been useful to know if career specialists in these departments identified any other challenges. The next section outlines expert interview procedures, relevant findings and conclusion.

## **Chapter 5. Interview Analysis**

This chapter outlines the expert interview procedures and relevant findings from two universities: Simon Fraser University (SFU) and the University of British Columbia (UBC).

### **5.1. Interview Procedure**

In total, seven university experts were interviewed: four at SFU and three at UBC. Participants were recruited via email invitations to partake in an interview for a maximum of one hour. Most interviewees gave consent to use their title when referencing a quote but some did not. Those who did not give consent will be referred to as “SFU or UBC university expert”. The interviews were semi-structured and were conducted in person or over the telephone. A template of the semi-structured questions can be found in appendix A. All interviews were transcribed, coded and findings were used to conduct a thematic analysis of the data.

Thematic analysis was chosen as a research method because of its flexibility in coding and analyzing data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). The analysis was conducted using a constructionist paradigm to bring out both explicit and latent themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 85). Common words and reoccurring ideas were extracted from within each interview and across interviewees in order to identify key themes in relation to the broader question of support services for international students (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Major themes that were prevalent across all interviewees from both universities included: career development, proficiency in writing and speaking in English, student service delivery approaches, and impacts of immigration policy. In addition to these major themes, there were several sub-themes that were sometimes both explicitly and or implicitly connected by interviewees. The broader themes were not necessarily interlinked by interviewees but were connected by the researcher to draw out an overall narrative and conclusion of the findings. The following paragraphs describe the prevalent themes that emerged from interviewees.

## 5.2. Career Development

### 5.2.1. Career versus Job

A prevalent theme that emerged across many interviews is the distinction between a job and a career.<sup>5</sup> Interviewees noted that all students have difficulty separating these two concepts. According to university experts, career development involves students accumulating experiences whether it be through volunteer work, community service or work experience. Whereas, a job is just a form of employment. University experts noted that students do not think about careers until the end of their degree but have expectations for job outcomes. In particular, some interviewees found that international more than domestic students had job placement expectations which university experts believed is not part of their obligation. Instead, universities are trying to counteract the mentality about job outcomes by focusing on motivating students to get involved in volunteer work and other forms of experiential learning such as co-operative education. Additionally, many interviewees emphasized how university experience is not simply about obtaining a degree or a means to get a job, an assumption made by many students. Instead, interviewees described how university experience is about developing one's identity via experiential learning and engagement with the community. The underpinning of this idea is that career outcomes are not predictable, non-linear, uncertain and complex. UBC's Career Director stated the following:

It's challenging because I think generally what we see from career development literature is that  $A + B = C$  is changing in the whole world. So, the predictability of careers and our notions of what jobs will be is changing with technology rapidly (interview, December 17, 2015).

SFU's Career Director also held similar views and pointed out the need to “dispel the myths of linearity” (interview, December 15, 2015). Still, interviewees recognize that it can be challenging for all students to understand that career outcomes are unpredictable and non-linear. In the case of international students, interviewees also emphasize that their career decision making processes are influenced more by familial expectations compared to domestic students.

<sup>5</sup> A job is a form of employment whereas a career is built overtime through experience.



### **5.2.2. Career Decision Making and Familial Expectations**

University experts at times implicitly and explicitly discussed international students' challenges in career decision making. Some experts identified challenges based on whether students wanted to stay in the host country or wanted to go back home. As one SFU university expert noted:

I think thinking about your career is something a lot of international students see a challenge because a career is different from a job. Thinking more long term. Do they want to stay here and find work or do they want to go home afterwards? I think long term planning can be a challenge (interview, December 8, 2015).

In addition to challenges with thinking about long-term career objectives, most interviewees also observed that international students experience greater pressure due to familial expectations around career outcomes. UBC's Career Director stated: "my hypothesis would be that the investment in tuition is so great on a personal and familial level that a career outcome is critical" (interview, December 17, 2015). In order to mitigate some of these pressures, university experts emphasize that all students should start early in getting involved in volunteering, community service and experiential learning programs such as co-operative education and work-learn programs to accumulate experience. In particular, university experts emphasize that early involvement in these programs can help international students acquire relevant Canadian work experience, connections, references, and knowledge of the Canadian work environment, all things the students themselves frequently identify as necessary for entering the Canadian workforce. However, experts recognize that it can be more challenging for international students to get an early start in volunteering and experiential learning because they are initially adapting to the university environment.

### **5.2.3. Early Career Development**

Although university experts emphasize early career development, some interviewees identified reasons that can hinder international students' involvement in connecting with services and programs. Some of them include: language barriers, culture shock and adjustment to the university environment. SFU's Career Director stated the following:

The main disadvantages are for a lot of [international] students that first year is such a transitional year. Language and culture. Culture shock going to a university is enough of a shock and going to a university in a different culture is enough of a shock. And if you have language issues on top of that, that's pretty big stuff to work against (interview, December 15, 2015).

While there is a recognition of international students' unique challenges such as language barriers, adjustment to a new environment and culture shock, the message from university experts is still to get involved with programs and services that they have to offer. This approach is also shared by UBC's Career Director: "We really try to frontload and make students think about career early" (interview, December 17, 2015). However, it is unclear whether the message conveyed by universities about early career development is reaching international students especially if they have language barriers. In addition to the message about early career development, interviewees had different assumptions about how services should be delivered and where international students would access their services.

### **5.3. Support Service Approaches**

#### **5.3.1. Accessing Services**

Some interviewees at UBC assumed that international and domestic students would access services and information in the same places. UBC's International Student Development Director described the service delivery approach:

UBC's approach toward international students' supports right now I would say is to recognize that with about 20% of our students being international we expect that they're going to receive their support and services within or outside the classroom really in the same kind of places that other students' are going for information...But, we also recognize there is an extra layer to being an international student at UBC. So for example, we don't have a special career center for international students (interview, November 13, 2015).

On the other hand, some interviewees at SFU recognize that international students would not necessarily go to the same places for support or information. In particular, some interviewees also recognize that information on support services is not necessarily accessible for international students. At SFU, a recent Co-op survey revealed that

international students did not use services on campus because “they don’t know about them, it’s too hard to find out information and/or processes are not straightforward and too much searching” (interview, November 20, 2015). As a result of these findings, SFU’s Co-op Student Advisor described the changes occurring in order to improve international students’ access to services on campus. SFU is seeking to embed resource links in one place so that international students are not confused about where to go for information. SFU’s Co-op Student Advisor noted the following:

We are looking at collaborating more with ISS [International Student Services] in far as their website would be the hub but we would own different components of it. Intuitively, they [international students] might go to ISS more than say to co-op. So, just having those things embedded as links or portals so it’s easy to find (interview, November 20, 2015).

From the above quote, SFU’s Co-op Student Advisor recognizes that international students will not necessarily go to the same places as all students do for career support which is in contrast to the assumptions held by interviewees at UBC. Thus, there are contrasting views about where international students would access services. Moreover, there were also differences in perceptions about whether or not current services are meeting the particular needs of international students.

### **5.3.2. Differential Needs**

At both universities, support services are not differentiated based on international or domestic because it is assumed their career development needs are the same. However, there are contradictions in the assumptions because interviewees recognize that international students are differential users of their services and have differential needs. For instance, UBC’s Career Director stated that “services are *not differentiated because many of the career development supports that students will need are not dependent on their visa status*” (my emphasis; interview, December 17, 2015). However, UBC’s Career Director pointed out that there are certain elements about the Canadian labour market that international students need to be aware of. Therefore, there is an implicit recognition that international students do have different career development needs.

In addition, some interviewees recognize that international students may not necessarily find current services meeting their needs but they did not specify exactly what aspects of their services did not meet their expectations. For instance, UBC's International Student Development Director stated the following:

We do have the sense but not the data to back it up that international students *don't always see the current service as supporting their particular needs* (my emphasis). So we do find that in some cases international students are looking for something that looks like it is for international students (interview, November 13, 2015).

Likewise at SFU, interviewees recognize that there is an underlying need that is not necessarily being addressed for international students. SFU's Career Director alluded to past initiatives to enhance services for international students but also noted the need to explore deeper to understand their needs. Part of the rationale for deeper exploration is the fact that international students use their services more than domestic students. SFU's Career Director noted the following:

We have known for a while that we have had international students make up a fairly large segment who take advantage of our services. So, we have always been keen to try work with them in different ways to try and provide better services...We had done some one off workshops here and there which have been fine but we have always felt that we needed to go a little bit deeper (interview, December 15, 2015).

In particular, both SFU and UBC's central career services found that international students are in fact differential users of one particular service which is one to one career advising/appointments. SFU's Career Director stated the following: "[w]e found that for one to one appointments, close to a third of students who take advantage of our services are either international or permanent residents" (interview, December 15, 2015). Likewise, UBC's Career Director noted seeing a similar trend:

One of the things I do notice is that in the area of advising, so those one to one and workshops around career [is] that international students participate on greater than per capita basis. So more international students access these services. So, they are *disproportionately* used by international students (my emphasis). And I don't actually know why that is (interview, December 17, 2015).

The differential use of one to one appointments *may suggest that in fact they have differential needs* which may or may not be adequately addressed by one-size-fits-all services. Interviewees did not necessarily know why international students disproportionately use one to one appointments. UBC's Career Director believed further research would be necessary to understand why international students used these services disproportionately, but suspected that international students might have more questions and perhaps barriers to employment which motivates them to use their service more frequently than domestic students. UBC Career Director noted the following:

I don't know if it's because international students face more barriers to employment, or have more questions about it. I am not sure if it's because they are more highly motivated due to differential tuition and it's important for them to work part-time and need help. It might be that international students are for some reason more outcome focused and more intentional about career outcomes (interview, December 17, 2015).

In contrast to central career services, experts from other career centers at both universities had not necessarily explored the differences in service usage in great detail or did not raise the same issues as central career service providers. One university expert from SFU noted the following:

We actually haven't taken a look at how many of them are international students because we see both types of students that come through. Actually, I'm curious to know so I might actually pull that up (interview, December 8, 2015).

In summary, these findings suggest international students disproportionately use one to one career advising. However, some questions still remain: why do they use this particular service disproportionately, and are the one to one appointments actually meeting the needs of international students? While university experts provide general career advising to all students, they do recognize there are aspects of Canadian work environment and etiquette that international students are not aware of. Therefore, there are voluntary targeted events, programs and workshop series to enhance international students' knowledge of Canadian workplace culture.

### **5.3.3. Targeted Support for International Students**

In response to international students' specific needs, career service providers have developed targeted events, programs and workshops to increase their awareness about Canadian workplace culture. Interviewees from UBC and SFU discussed some of the programs and workshops that are available to international students to help them understand the Canadian workplace culture and the labour market. For instance, UBC's International Student Development Director described a recent workshop on intercultural communication for international students:

There is a new seminar workshop series called soft skills in Canadian workplace. It's really intercultural communication 101 but very practically applied in a humorous way for international students (interview, November 13, 2015).

Similarly, UBC's Sauder School of Business has replicated a program for international students that originated from Memorial University of Newfoundland. The certificate program titled "Start Your Career in Canada" includes five different workshops related to resume, cover letter, mock interviews and networking to prepare them for Canada's labour market (interview, December 23, 2015). UBC's central career center also provides an annual event for international students transitioning into Canada's labour force titled "Launch Your Career in Canada". The event features a panel session that helps international students get information about what it takes to work in Canada after graduation and some of the options that are available to them through the BC Provincial Nominee Program (interview, December 17, 2015). At SFU, central career services has recently developed a program called Foundations for Career Success for International Students which provides a series of workshops that focus on Canadian workplace culture, language, and demystifying myths about career outcomes (interview, December 15, 2015).

In addition to above services, there are also specific workshops and programs to prepare international students for employment opportunities on campus and off campus. For example, international students receive differential workshops so that they are better equipped to apply to UBC's experiential learning programs such as Work-Learn (interview,

November 13, 2015).<sup>6</sup> Similarly, SFU's Co-op office has recently piloted an online program titled "Job Search Success: An Online Writing and Cultural Tutorial" that helps English as a Second Language (EAL) learners with writing resumes and cover letters along with aspects about Canadian workplace culture (interview, November 20, 2015).

Overall, these findings demonstrate that universities are providing resources and workshops to address international students' unique needs. However, it is not clear whether these programs and services are effective in contributing to international graduates' success in the labour force. Most interviewees discussed doing evaluations with current students about their satisfaction levels and pre-tests and post-tests to determine learning outcomes. Few interviewees mentioned tracking international graduates to determine the efficacy of their services. This is an area that requires attention because these programs aim is to better equip international students for Canada's labour force and therefore tracking international graduates is essential to evaluating the impact of their services.

Another prevalent theme that emerged for international students is their ability to write and speak in English. International students' come from various countries and have different levels of English language attainment which may be a primary consideration to facilitate their transition into the workforce.

## **5.4. Language skills**

Several interviewees pointed out inadequate writing and public speaking skills as common concerns raised by both international students and staff. For instance, Sauder's Career Center obtained feedback from a focus group of international students involved in their targeted certificate program titled "Start Your Career in Canada". Their findings showed "the need to practice their English and public speaking [skills]" (interview,

<sup>6</sup> Experiential learning is an immersive process of "learning by doing". It can entail an experience such as volunteering in a community or working with an organization through which an individual develops and acquires new skills (Lewis and Williams, 1994, p. 5)

December 23, 2015). Subsequently, Sauder invited TESOL masters club to speak at “Start Your Career in Canada” and discuss the benefits of being involved in such clubs.

Similarly, SFU's Co-op surveys directed at both international students and Co-op staff revealed the need for additional programming that would support international students with their writing and public speaking skills. As a result of these findings, SFU Co-op has developed online courses to not only help English as a Second Language (EAL) students with writing cover letters and resumes, but also integrates instruction on topics such as Canadian workplace values, norms, understanding their strengths and how to market themselves in the Canadian workplace. SFU's Co-op Student Advisor's research suggests that the best way to reach EAL learners is to offer something visual based which led to development of an online programming (interview, November 20, 2015). SFU's Co-op Student Advisor noted the following:

You know there is a video that has a hand that writes so the active seeing of the word written, hearing it, being able to pause it and then see an image next to it. I just think it addresses the different levels of language acquisition and the different kinds of learners (interview, November 20, 2015).

While language acquisition can be a greater challenge for international students, university experts also mentioned that domestic students can experience similar problems. In this case, SFU's Co-op Student Advisor made an important distinction about EAL learners by recognizing that “not all EAL students are international and not all international students are EAL” (interview, November 20, 2015). This distinction was not made by all interviewees but some recognize it implicitly. For example, another SFU university expert noted how one of their faculty members “noticed that writing and communication is a struggle for many international students but also for domestic students” (interview, December 8, 2015). However, some interviewee recognize that a lack of English language proficiency for international students is a greater problem compared to domestic students and can have implications on their employability. For example, UBC's Sauder Career Director recounted how “employers comment on the fact that our international students are not employable because they don't have sufficient language skills both written or and verbal” (interview, December 23, 2015).



Overall, international more than domestic students can experience challenges with writing and communicating in English. This in turn can impact their employability in the Canadian labour force. International students recognize their language deficiencies because they continue to point this out in surveys and data collected by university service providers. However, it is unclear whether existing services and programs are adequately addressing English writing and communication skills for different types of learners.

Aside from English language skills, international students' employability can be impacted by changes in immigration policies, processing of work documents and a lack of awareness among employers about processes to hire them.

## **5.5. Immigration**

### **5.5.1. Processing Times for Permits & Employer Awareness**

Several interviewees from both universities discussed the impacts of immigration policies on international students. Most interviewees agreed that changes to the post-graduation work permit from one year to a maximum of three years has relieved some stress for international graduates in obtaining employment. Despite these changes, processing times for study, work and post-graduation work permits is still slow. UBC's International Student Development Director noted the following:

Another piece is not policy [but] about resourcing. A long processing time for study permits, work permits up to 5 months right now for work permit application. That is operational but also budgetary (interview, November 13, 2015).

Similarly, a story recalled by UBC's Sauder Career Director revealed how processing of paper work can lead to problems for international students in securing a job:

Our biggest challenge has been the visa issue. I just heard a story of a student yesterday who thought she got hired by a big XXX company and it came down to the fact that sorry you're an international student. Paperwork isn't in place. We can't hire you. We can't proceed (interview, December 23, 2015).

Besides processing of documents, international graduates can experience more challenges in employment when there is a lack of awareness among employers about

post-graduation work permits and immigration pathways. SFU's university expert noted this link and described a specific situation:

Employers either may not be educated about the immigration pathways for international students or simply don't have the time. They want somebody now. I would say that especially is a big barrier (emphasis in original; interview, December 15, 2015).

In addition to the lack of awareness among employers, university experts often hear questions from international students about how to prepare for a conversation with employers about their international student status because they perceive it to be a barrier. One university expert described these concerns for international students:

So, we hear a lot from students when should I bring up that I am international student in an interview? What are the barriers for me of saying that I have only got a two year work permit? So there is coaching around that...There is a great power differential. It's very difficult to be one side of the table explaining law to someone you're hoping will hire you (interview, December 15, 2015).

Support staff at both universities recognize international students' challenges with communicating about their employment eligibility. International student advising offices often speak on behalf of international students to reassure employers. Despite these efforts, many interviewees cited confusion, trickiness, complexity and a lack of clarity with understanding and communicating about the post-graduation work permit among employers. UBC's Career Director noted the need for "more education around what these post-graduation work permits are and what's BC PNP [Provincial Nominee Program]? (interview, December 17, 2015)" Similarly, SFU's Career Director noted the importance of communicating with employers when policies change:

In the employer community, there is still a lot of confusion about the post-graduation work permit...So, even when things change there isn't much communication done with employers. All things being equal if you have two candidates one domestic and has no permit issues and one that says yeah but my permit I got another three years and it should be good to renew. What? What's that? You know all things being equal you will go with the path with the least resistance. That's my sense (interview, December 15, 2015).

In summary, processing of documents and a lack of awareness among employers can impact international graduates' employability. But changes in how immigration advice is

regulated is also creating complexities around the type of information that is shared with international students.

### **5.5.2. Immigration Regulations & Advising**

University experts from both SFU and UBC pointed to changes in immigration regulation as a key factor impacting international students. In recent years, changes to federal immigration regulations has affected immigration advising delivered by international student advising offices at postsecondary institutions. In 2011, Bill C-35 an amendment to the Immigration Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) clarified who is authorized to provide assistance on immigration pathways and case specific advising (Choy & Huston, 2013). The amendment made it clear that only lawyers, paralegals, or Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council (ICCRC) – a governing body for Immigration Consultants under the purview of the Minister - are authorized to provide immigration support under the IRPA Act (Choy & Huston, 2013). The passing of this amendment effectively meant that international student advisors did not comply with the IRPA Act. Subsequently, international student advisors needed to undergo training to become certified immigration consultants to provide support on immigration matters such as study and work permits. These changes have had both positive and negative implications. The positive aspect is that international student advisors have quickly adapted and have been training their employees to adjust with the new regulations in place. However, the trade-off in upscaling all staff has implications on both resources and other potential services that could have been offered by these offices. As one university expert stated:

We find that the more time we spend on immigration the more complicated things get. The more time we spend on immigration the less time we are going [to] spend on other things (emphasis in original, interview, December 15, 2015).

University experts also discussed how past government staffing cuts has impacted service delivery. SFU's university expert noted the following:

[In the past], [w]e had really good access to CIC Vancouver to answer questions that were complicated etc. Much of that disappeared in recent years due to government staffing cuts. So we no longer had the access to our local CIC colleagues that we use to have. That was a huge hit for us because as anyone

who has ever tried to call the call center knows you cannot get answers to those complicated questions that way (interview, November 13, 2015).

Similarly, UBC's International Student Development Director described how the past service delivery model prior to government staffing cuts provided better assistance for international students:

International students are desirable target for the federal and provincial governments. Post-secondary institutions are aware of this and so having [immigration] officers who are located on and off campuses is a model that has been used in the past (interview, November 13, 2015).

The cut in local immigration support and changes in immigration regulations has effects on international graduates who intend to stay in BC. One of the pressures cited by universities is a demand for support on immigration and permanent residency advising for international students. UBC's International Student Development Director described this in detail:

We have a huge pressure from [international] students for permanent residence advising, case specific, help me with my application, and tell me which one to apply for. Like most postsecondary institutions in Canada but not all Waterloo is a big exception we don't see it as the university's job to provide that service. But we consistently hear from students that they do think it is and that the university should provide it (interview, November 13, 2015).

When probed further to elaborate on why international students perceive these services to be a university responsibility, a unique response emerged about international students' needs and expectations with both immigration and career advising. It seems that some international students desire career advising to be integrated with information on immigration pathways to help them with their career decision making process. This type of advising would assist international graduates with their job search process which in turn can be used to leverage and qualify for permanent residency. UBC's International Student Development Director linked career and immigration intentions:

I think because we often talk to international students who just graduated or maybe they are in their three year post-graduate work permit and they say: If I had known in first year or if I had known when I started my masters, what the steps might be then I would have made **different choices** about **my career development**. So, if that [immigration and permanent residency] knowledge were embedded in the advising I am already getting I would have been better off and I could have stayed

in Canada instead of now at the end of my three year post-graduation work permit there is no job for me or I wasn't able to get a job that was high enough level of management to qualify for permanent residency (my emphasis; interview, November 13, 2015).

As a result of these expectations and also changes in immigration regulation, universities have shifted their permanent residence workshops. Universities provide general information on permanent residency options but do not advise on individual cases or review applications. UBC's International Student Development Director described these changes:

We now no longer describe to students what the immigration pathways are because they change often. We instead talk about the principles of what are some of the ways you will be evaluated for permanent residence and what are some of things you can do now to prepare yourself and to do your own research knowledgeably (interview, November 13, 2015).

In summary, international students who intend to stay and work in the labour force may also have immigration intentions. Therefore, there is a service gap for international students and graduates that is not being addressed which "leaves settlement agencies or post-secondary institutions to try fill the gap" (interview, November 13, 2015).

## 5.6. Summary of Findings

- International students are differential users of one to one career appointments which may suggest that they have *differential needs*. However, more research is necessary to determine why international students disproportionately use one to one career appointments and whether these appointments actually meet their needs.
- Universities are tailoring workshops and programs to suit international students' specific needs such as familiarizing them about Canadian workplace culture and how to write a resume and cover letter for Canadian employers. However, it is not clear whether these are effective in easing their transition into the labour force.
- In addition to tailored workshops, universities are providing employment opportunities through experiential learning programs so that international students can gain Canadian work experience. Again, it is unclear whether experiential learning programs

such as co-operative education are effective in easing international graduates' transition into the labour force.

- International more than domestic students can experience challenges with writing and speaking in English. This is a problem that is consistently cited in academic literature and interview findings. Yet, it seems universities are not adequately addressing these needs.
- Recent innovative initiatives such as the online EAL programming piloted by SFU Co-op could be valuable way to reach out to all students but further evaluations will be required to determine its effectiveness
- International students may have immigration intentions which can influence their career decision making processes. However, changes to immigration regulations and immigration pathways makes it difficult for university support staff to provide adequate advising on these matters. Moreover, detailed advising on immigration pathways and permanent residency support is not a service that universities believe they should be delivering because immigration is a shared responsibility between the provincial and the federal governments. As a result, there is a policy vacuum for immigration and settlement support which is quasi-filled by universities. Nevertheless, it is important to note that not all international students have the intention to stay in the host country and some may leave. UBC's interviewees acknowledged there is a service gap for international students who intend to go back to their home country. To reiterate, there are different needs of international students some of which universities are attempting to fulfill.

The aforementioned analysis is taken into account when examining common themes and differences in other jurisdictions. The proceeding section provides comparative analysis and relevant findings.

## **Chapter 6. Comparative Analysis**

### **6.1. Comparative Analysis Procedures**

A comparative analysis was used to compare and contrast best practices for support services targeted towards international students. Three universities were selected which include: Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN), University of Calgary (U of C) and Ryerson University (RU). These universities were selected because some of them have been cited in the academic literature, interviews and are located in regionally diverse areas. UBC's Sauder School of Business explicitly acknowledged implementing a type of program similar to one that originated from MUN. Similarly, both Ryerson University and University of Calgary have been making changes to enhance services for international students. Based on this reasoning, a total of three interviews were conducted from central career services at respective universities. Participants were recruited via email invitations to partake in an interview for a maximum of one hour. The same interview questions were used as outlined in appendix A. The following paragraphs provide a brief analysis of the common themes and differences between universities and best practices.

### **6.2. Service Delivery Approaches**

#### **6.2.1. Dedicated Staff for International Student Population**

A prevalent theme that emerged from interviewees is a recognition that international students have a diverse set of needs and having dedicated staff to work with this population would be an appropriate model for career services. In particular, U of C's Career Manager provided a rationale for having dedicated staff: "international students have been paying differential fees for a very long time and I don't know if we have always done a really good job of making sure that there are *specialized services* available to them" (my emphasis; interview, Jan 12, 2016). As a result, U of C's Career Center recently hired a career development specialist who works specifically with the international student population. Similarly both MUN's and RU's Career Directors identified having dedicated staff to assist with international students career needs (interviews, Jan 20, 2016; Jan 22,

2016). However, U of C's Career Manager more than other interviewees explicitly emphasized the strength of having specialized staff on their team and believed it was an important shift at their institution to enhance support services for international students. U of C's Career Manager stated the following:

I am proud to work at an institution that has recognized that and also put their money where their mouth is and create positions that are specialized for the [international] student population. I think the strength is in that an international student can go on to our platform and log in and they will see an international student as a tab where they can book an appointment and be assured that they will talk to somebody who is aware that they are an international student (interview, Jan 12, 2016).

In summary, all interviewees see having dedicated staff for international students and providing personalized services as strengths. In addition, some interviewees implicitly acknowledge the need for more personalized support because international students can have language barriers which can impede their understanding of career development messages.

### **6.2.2. Language Barriers and Career Development**

Some interviewees recognize language barriers as a key issue for international students in understanding the importance of services provided by career services and the emphasis they place on experiential learning as part of career development. In particular, U of C's Career Manager described the complexity of one to one appointments and how extra time is often needed to reinforce the message that they are trying to convey to international students. U of C's Career Manager stated the following:

...Also, just the level of complexity of the one to one appointments is much higher because sometimes there is the language barriers [and] other times it's just formatting resumes. The importance of experience over education is sometimes hard to wrap one's head around because we do focus on a lot on experience. Those appointments take a little longer because not only are we are trying to help students put together something makes them marketable but also explain why (interview, Jan 12, 2016).

Likewise, Ryerson's Career Director recognizes language barriers as a key problem for international students and raises potential drawbacks of career programs targeted for



international students. Although, the example used by Ryerson's Career Director is from the United Kingdom (UK), it is important to quote at length the observations as it can be applicable to any program that is designed and targeted towards international students with language barriers:

We recognized in South Hampton, [UK] that even though students are coming they weren't **necessarily understanding** because it became clear that English language level for job search or career development vocabulary wasn't necessarily there so that had knock off effects. So, you can build the workshop and deliver it but are they absorbing and understanding it. Are they understanding the takeaway? Culturally, we saw there was real drive to attend these workshops because they thought they were achieving something by attending them but that didn't necessarily translate in **their skill set** going up (my emphasis; interview, Jan 22, 2016).

These results suggest that language barriers can act as a major impediment for international students to understand the purpose of career workshops, programs, sessions, and ultimately the desired outcomes that staff expect after they utilize their services. In spite of the potential weaknesses in targeted programming, interviewees did not explicitly identify solutions to ameliorate the deficiencies in their services. But, most interviewees mentioned their responsiveness to international students' needs and highlighted a few of their best practices and strengths.

### **6.2.3. Best Practices**

The following is a summary of best practices identified by university experts for international students.

- Knowledge about the international student population.
- Recognize international students have differential career needs: some would like to build their career in Canada and some wish to go back to their home country.
- Hire specialized support staff to deliver tailored services to international students.
- MUN's Professional Skills Development Program for International Students.
- Target specific needs of international students such as creating opportunities for them to gain Canadian work experience.

- Embed experiential learning or work with professors who are open to different ways of teaching.

### 6.3. Summary of Results

This sections provides an overall summary of career programming available for international students at different universities, experiential learning programs and evaluation methods undertaken by service providers to assess effectiveness.

**Table 1: Comparative Analysis Results**

Universities	Memorial University	University of Calgary	Ryerson University	University of British Columbia	Simon Fraser University
<b>Name of Central Career Centers</b>	Career Development and Experiential Learning	Career Services	Career Center	Center for Student Involvement and Careers	Career Services and Volunteer Services
<b>International Undergraduate Student Population</b>	1,140 <sup>7</sup>	1,533 <sup>8</sup>	861 <sup>9</sup>	8,506 <sup>10</sup>	4,257
<b>Targeted Programming for International Students</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Career Programming for International Students</b>	Professional Skills Development Program for International Students	Specialized workshops	Specialized workshops	Launch Your Career in Canada; Specialized workshops	Foundations for Career Success

<sup>7</sup> Population estimate is from 2015; Data taken from MUN's Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning.

<sup>8</sup> Population estimate is from 2014; Data taken from U of C's Office of Institutional Analysis.

<sup>9</sup> Population estimate is from 2014; Data take from RU's University Planning Office.

<sup>10</sup> Population estimate for both UBC and SFU are from 2014; Data was extracted from BC Higher Education Accountability Dataset (BC HEADset).

<b>Length of Programming</b>	Eight weekly in-class workshop sessions	Workshops run throughout the year	Workshops run throughout the year	An annual event for international students and specialized workshops run throughout the year.	A series of five workshops
<b>Other Career Programming for all students</b>	-	Career Development Program	-	-	Job Search Success: An Online Writing and Cultural Tutorial
<b>Is the career program/workshops voluntary or mandatory?</b>	Voluntary	Voluntary	Voluntary	Voluntary	Voluntary
<b>Type of Evaluation of Services</b>	Student satisfaction surveys; Pre-test and post-test survey	Student satisfaction surveys	Student satisfaction surveys	Student satisfaction survey; Pre-test and post-test survey	Student satisfaction surveys; Pre-test and post-test survey
<b>Do they track international graduates' outcomes after participating in their targeted programming?</b>	Follow up after graduation	Unknown	Yes	Unknown	Too recent <sup>11</sup>
<b>Targeted Experiential Programs for International Students</b>	The International Student Work Experience Program (ISWEP)	None	The International Student Support Work Experience Program (ISSWEP)	Work Learn International Undergraduate Research Awards; Work Learn Program for International Students	International Work-Study Program

<sup>11</sup> The development of targeted programming for international students are recent initiatives at SFU.

<b>Other Experiential Programs for all students</b>	Memorial Undergraduate Career Experience Program (MUCEP); Co-operative Education; Mixed Internship Program	Internships; Co-operative education	Co-operative education	Arts Internship; Co-operative Education	Co-operative education
<b>Dedicated Career Specialist for International Student Population</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

## **Chapter 7. Policy Options**

This chapter outlines policy options derived from my analysis. The policy problem is complex because universities and the provincial government do not necessarily share the same objectives. Universities want to recruit and retain more international students whereas the government seeks to facilitate their transition into the labour force. While universities do not have the explicit objective of easing international graduates' transition into the labour force, they do claim to have developed targeted programming, services and events that seek to better equip these students to do so. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of these services in contributing to international graduates' success in BC's labour force. The subsequent paragraphs outline four policy options that will be evaluated before reaching a feasible recommendation.

### **7.1. Status Quo and Enhance Data Collection**

The results from the interviewees demonstrate that both universities have developed targeted support services and experiential learning programs for international students. Several interviewees mentioned the benefits of experiential learning and identified these programs as enhancing international graduates' capacity to be competitive for employment (interview, November 13, 2015). There is also existing literature that supports some of these assertions but it is not specific to international graduates. Current studies demonstrate that participation in co-op leads to better career outcomes, income and development of skills in areas such as problem solving, analytical skills, and critical thinking (Haddara & Skanes 2007; Sherlock, Feb 2, 2016).

While universities provide targeted support services and experiential learning programs for international students, it is unclear to what extent they are effective in helping them prepare for BC's workforce. This is problematic because if universities are claiming that their services and programs increase international graduates' capacity to succeed in the labour force, then there is a need for better empirical evidence to support such assertions. Presently, university service providers collect feedback from current international students through satisfaction surveys and pre-test and post-test evaluations

which examine shifts in learning outcomes. However, feedback from current students is not sufficient in either determining the efficacy of targeted support services or how applicable they were in preparing international graduates for BC's workforce. Despite the limitations in the universities' evaluation methods and data collection, BC Statistics has started to include international graduates in their Baccalaureate Graduate Survey (BGS).

Currently, the BGS has not published any specific breakdown of international graduates' participation levels and skills attainment or comparisons between domestic and international graduates (personal correspondence, 2016; 2014 BGS Report). Furthermore, BC Statistics has not incorporated specific questions related to how career services or experiential programs enhance both domestic and international graduates' outcomes and skills attainment. Therefore, the available data is still inadequate in answering some of the questions this study seeks to examine. As a result, universities can work with the BC Ministry of Advanced Education to incorporate specific questions in the BGS in order to determine the effectiveness of their targeted support services and programs (See Appendix B for potential questions).

It is in the best interests of both universities and governments to determine the efficacy of targeted support services for international students. For universities, comprehensive data can answer whether international graduates recognize the benefits of their services in contributing to their success in the labour force. It can also identify potential shortcomings of their services. This information can ultimately assist universities in deciding where to best allocate resources to enhance support services which in turn can help them retain more international students.

If the provincial government has a vested interest in keeping international graduates to address labour gaps then comprehensive data can assist the government in determining both how they can better support their transition into the workplace and their impact on the labour market.

## **7.2. Integrate mandatory online EAL workshops in existing career development programs**

The second option considers the integration of online programming for English as a Second Language (EAL) learners to enhance existing career development programs offered by universities. Several interviewees identified English language proficiency as a major barrier for international students.<sup>12</sup> Some interviewees mentioned how delivering tailored career workshops for international students does not necessarily mean they understand key messages around career development or job search vocabulary (interview, Jan 22, 2016). Further, some noted that culturally there is real drive to attend workshops because international student think they are achieving something by attending them (interview, Jan 22, 2016). But attendance did not necessarily translate in their skill set going up (interview, Jan 22, 2016). As a result, tailored career workshops can potentially have negligible impact for these students.

Additionally, a lack of fluency in writing and speaking in English can impact international graduates' employability and limit their capacity to succeed in the labour force. The complexity of language proficiency among international students is well known by universities. Therefore, one way universities can target language needs is by integrating online English writing and speaking workshops in existing career development programs.

SFU's recent initiative for English as a Second Language (EAL) can be an example of best practice. SFU's co-op program piloted an online course which seeks to help EAL students with writing but also integrates aspects of Canadian workplace culture (interview, November 20, 2015). An EAL programming combines two explicit needs that international students continue to voice which is writing and a lack of familiarity with Canadian workplace culture. Additional benefits from such dual-purpose programming is that it is a sustainable use of university resources, can be accessed anywhere and can reach a large number of students compared to face to face workshops. Furthermore, SFU's Co-op

<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that "not all English as a second language (EAL) students are international and not all international students are EAL" (interview, November 20, 2015). However, a growing international student population at universities are EAL students.

Student Advisor's research suggests that the best way to reach EAL learners is to offer something visual based (interview, November 20, 2015). Hence, online programming can be a good model for universities to consider but ultimately evaluation is necessary to determine its effectiveness.

One caveat regarding this option is that one program cannot completely ameliorate language difficulties that international students experience. So, there are still systemic challenges which may require alternative considerations such as working with faculties and professors who are open to different forms of teaching to accommodate different types of learners (interview, Jan 20, 2016). However, these types of initiatives would require massive investment and the universities' willingness to embrace these changes would be low due to limited postsecondary funding.

### **7.3. Universities and the BC Government harmonize their objectives for attracting international students**

Universities and the provincial government need to recognize that they have mutually beneficial objectives when it comes to attracting international students. Universities are recruiting international students that can potentially fill labour gaps in the province and provide targeted support services to retain them for the duration of their studies. However, if universities services are not effective in addressing international students' needs, then it can impact the retention of these students. Furthermore, while universities do not have the explicit objective of facilitating international graduates' transition into the Canadian workforce, they do play a role in their career development. Therefore, it is in the best interest of universities to understand how their existing services and programs are effective and contribute to international graduates' success in the labour force.

From the government's side, there is a need for greater clarity on whether or not all international graduates are an asset for BC's labour force. The current international education strategy does not explicitly acknowledge this but does list occupations that will be in demand in areas such as health, natural and applied sciences (AVED, 2012, p. 15). So, if the government's objective is to ensure international graduates from specific



occupation groups integrate smoothly into the workforce, then it is in their best interest to play a greater role in collaborating with universities to identify (a) international graduates' specific needs and (b) support their transition into the workforce. The provincial government should not assume that international graduates can easily adjust to the labour market. Overall, there is a need for better clarity and alignment of both government and university objectives to support international graduates' transition into the labour force.

#### **7.4. Educate small and medium-sized businesses around hiring international graduates**

Employers' incentive to hire international graduates can be impeded due to additional paperwork and a lack of awareness of processes to employ them. Most interviewees noted complexity, confusion, trickiness and lack of communication with employers about hiring procedures for international graduates and about post-graduation work permits. Although international student offices at universities communicate with employers about the legality of hiring international graduates, there is still a need for wider awareness among the employer community. Making employers aware of international graduates as potential skilled immigrants is crucial in integrating them into the labour force. BC's international education strategy included a plan with an aim of partnering with businesses and the BC Immigration Employment Council in "developing promotional material to highlight the benefits of hiring international students" (AVED, 2012, p. 21). However, personal correspondence with the Ministry of Advanced Education revealed there has been no action on this plan (personal correspondence 2016). The provincial government can act on this plan by providing resources to businesses and the BC Immigration Employment Council to collaborate and launch a campaign to raise small and medium sized companies' awareness of hiring international graduates.

## **Chapter 8. Criteria and Measures**

This chapter outlines a framework of criteria and measures that were developed prior to assessment of policy options. The framework, outlined in table 2, is used to assess trade-offs between options in order to reach a feasible recommendation. The following paragraphs provide a description of the overarching primary objective, criteria and measures.

### **8.1. Primary Objective**

The primary objective is to enhance the capacity of international graduates' to succeed in the labour force by improving support services that are targeted towards them. With this objective, the appropriate criteria includes: effectiveness, human development, cost, and stakeholder acceptability. The subsequent paragraphs provide a complete description of these criteria.

#### **Effectiveness**

Universities have developed targeted programs, events and workshops to prepare international graduates for Canada's labour force but it is unclear to what degree these services are effective in contributing to their success in the workforce. As a result, effectiveness is a key criterion to evaluate policy options. There are two measure for effectiveness: (1) average percentage growth from student to temporary foreign worker and (2) the degree to which an option reduces international graduates' barrier in entering the labour force.

The average percentage growth from student to temporary foreign worker is used to determine the degree to which an option increases the number of international graduates into the workforce. This is measured using CIC's facts and figures data for the years 2003-2012. If the option contributes to less than or equal to 11,567.8 international students transitioning between 2003 and 2012 then it will receive a low rank with a score 1. However, if the option increases the average number of international graduates by 2 percentage point then it will receive a medium rank with a score of 2. Finally, if the option

increases the average number of international graduates over 4 percentage point then it will receive a high rank with a score of 3.

Due to data limitations on whether universities services and programs made a difference in employment outcomes for international graduates, qualitative information will be used to assess the degree to which an option reduces international graduates' barrier in the labour force. If more than 5 interviewees identified an option to have a high impact then it will receive a score of 3. If 2-5 interviewees identified an option to have effect on reducing barriers then it will receive a medium rank with a score of 2. Finally, if only 1 interviewee identified an option to have an effect on reducing barriers then it will receive a low rank with a score of 1. It is important to note that this assessment will be weak because it is based on interviewees' perspectives and does not take into account international students' perspective. Ultimately, to determine effectiveness, universities need to track recent international graduates who enrolled in their programs or events to solicit feedback.

It is crucial to note that effectiveness is weighed two times more than other criteria for two main reasons when proposing to implement a policy option. First, the central argument in this capstone is determining the effectiveness of universities career support services in achieving the provincial government's labour market objectives. Since the provincial government has specified international graduates as a desirable pool of skilled immigrants, it is essential to understand how universities services can contribute to international graduates' success in the labour force. Second, universities implementing new programs and services should have a strong understanding of improving the effectiveness of international graduates' ability to enter the Canadian labour force. With a firm understanding of implementation effectiveness, international students are better served.

## **Human Development**

Human development is an essential criteria to determine how university support services are enabling international graduates to have more choices and opportunities to use their knowledge and skills to reach desirable goals in life (UNDP, 2015, p. 2). There are two measures for the human development criterion: the degree to which an option

enhances knowledge of Canadian workplace culture and English language skills. Each policy option will be measured based on qualitative information. A scale of 0.5-1.5 will be used rather than 1-3 to ensure that each criteria is equally weighted. If more than 5 interviewees identified an option to have a high impact on either Canadian workplace culture or language abilities, it will receive a score of 1.5. If 2-5 interviewees identified an option to have effect on international graduates' skills then it will receive a medium rank with a score of 1. Finally, if only 1 interviewee identified an option to have an effect on international graduates' skills then it will receive a low rank with a score of 0.5.

### **Cost**

Two measures are used to assess cost: one for universities and the other for the provincial government. Cost to universities is a key consideration due to a decrease in post-secondary education funding by the provincial government and a growing international student population. As a result, this criterion assess how universities can best adapt to international student needs concurrent with their existing pressure on human resources. The number of staff required is used to measure cost for universities. Each policy option will be evaluated from a scale of 0.5-1.5. If a policy option requires 1 staff then it will receive a high rank and a score of 1.5. Alternatively, if an option requires 2-4 staff then it will receive a medium rank with a score 1. Finally, if an option requires more than 5 staff members then it will receive a low rank with a score of 0.5

For government cost, the amount of funding required for a policy option will be used a measure. Service Canada's funding numbers for individual skills enhancement program will be used as a proxy to determine cost for the government. If an option requires less than \$10,000 dollars then it will receive a high rank with a score of 1.5. Alternatively, if an option requires \$10,000 to \$15,000 then it will receive a medium rank with a score of 1. Finally, if the cost of an option exceed \$20,000 then it will receive a low rank with a score of 0.5.

## **Stakeholder Acceptability**

Stakeholder acceptability will be considered to ensure policy options are suitable for BC government, universities and international students. One measure is used for each of the stakeholders.

For the provincial government, acceptability is dependent on consultation with different government departments, institutions and other stakeholders before implementing a policy option. If the implementation of an option requires consultation with a few government departments and institutions then it will receive a high rank with a score of 3. Whereas, if the implementation of an option requires consultation with three different government departments and several institutions then it will receive a medium rank with a score of 2. Finally, if the implementation of an option requires consultation with five government departments, institutions and other stakeholders then it will receive a low rank with a score of 1.

To assess universities degree of acceptability, the amount of assistance required by the provincial government will be used as a measure. If a policy option is implemented without any government support then it will receive a low rank with a score of 1. If an option is implemented with some financial support or transitional services then it will receive a medium rank with a score of 2. Finally, if an option is implemented with both financial assistance and transitional services by the provincial government then it will receive a high rank and a score of 3.

For international students, the probability of them finding a job will be used as a measure. If the probability of an international student obtaining a job does not change then it will receive a low rank with a score of 1. If the probability of an international student obtaining employment is less than 50% then it will receive a medium rank with a score of 2. Finally, if the probability of them obtaining a job is between 50% and 100% then it will receive a high rank with a score of 3. The following table summarizes the criteria and measures used to assess options in chapter 9.

**Table 2: Criteria and Measures Table**

Criteria	Definition	Measures	High Medium Low
<b>Effectiveness</b>			
<b>Growth Effectiveness</b>	% of growth from student to temporary foreign worker	Less than or equal to the average of 11,567.8  Increases average by 2% point  Increases average over 4% point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low: 1</li> <li>• Medium: 2</li> <li>• High: 3</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation</b>	A qualitative measure that evaluates how each option is reducing barriers for international graduates	0-1 Interviewee 2-5 interviewees 5-10 interviewees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low: 1</li> <li>• Medium: 2</li> <li>• High: 3</li> </ul>
<b>Human Development</b>	A qualitative measure that evaluates how each option enhances international graduates' knowledge of Canadian workplace culture	0-1 interviewee 2-5 interviewees 5-10 interviewees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low: 0.5</li> <li>• Medium: 1</li> <li>• High: 1.5</li> </ul>
	A qualitative measure that evaluates how each option enhances international graduates' English language skills	0-1 interviewee 2-5 interviewees 5-10 interviewees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low: 0.5</li> <li>• Medium: 1</li> <li>• High: 1.5</li> </ul>
<b>Costs</b>	Cost to Government	Funding of a policy option  < 10K 10-15K > 20K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low: 1.5</li> <li>• Medium: 1</li> <li>• High: 0.5</li> </ul>
	Cost for Universities	Number of staff required  0-1 2-4 5+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low: 1.5</li> <li>• Medium: 1</li> <li>• High: 0.5</li> </ul>

<b>Stakeholder Acceptability</b>			
<b>Provincial Government Acceptability</b>	The degree of consultation required	<p>Need to consult five govt. departments, institutions and other stakeholders</p> <p>Need to consult three different govt. departments and several institutions</p> <p>Need to consult a few govt. department and institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low: 1</li> <li>• Medium: 2</li> <li>• High: 3</li> </ul>
<b>University Acceptability</b>	Amount of assistance from provincial government	<p>No help from govt.</p> <p>Financial support or transitional services</p> <p>Financial support and transitional services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low: 1</li> <li>• Medium: 2</li> <li>• High: 3</li> </ul>
<b>International Student Acceptability</b>	The probability of obtaining employment	<p>No change</p> <p>Less than 50% change in probability</p> <p>Between 50% and 100% change in probability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low: 1</li> <li>• Medium: 2</li> <li>• High: 3</li> </ul>

## Chapter 9. Assessment of Policy Options

This section outlines an assessment of policy options based on the criteria and measures established in chapter 8. Table 3 provides a summary of the major trade-offs between each of the options. It is important to note that the assessment of options is informed by qualitative information and existing literature. The proceeding paragraphs describe the evaluation of options.

### 9.1. Status Quo + Enhance Data Collection

*Effectiveness:* Table 3 demonstrates that taking no action scores has a low impact on the growth of international students transitioning into temporary foreign workers. Since there is no change being implemented, the growth of international students transitioning to temporary foreign worker status is expected to be equal to the current average.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, this option is ranked LOW.

Based on the qualitative analysis, several interviewees pointed out that their experiential learning programs such as co-operative education and work-learn programs can facilitate international graduates' transition into the workforce because they gain relevant Canadian work experience, acquire Canadian references, and become accustomed to the work environment. Canadian work experience in particular is often a need cited by international students in academic literature (Nunes & Arthur, 2013, p. 39-40). Since many interviewees believed their programs had an effect in reducing international graduates' barriers, this option is ranked HIGH.

*Human Development:* Existing literature while not specific to international graduates demonstrates that participation in co-operative education improves students' performance in areas such as problem solving, analytical skills, and critical thinking (Haddara & Skanes 2007, p. 69-70). Furthermore, graduates who participated in co-op have better career outcomes and higher level of incomes but again there is a lack of specific evidence for international graduates (Sherlock, Feb 2, 2016). For international

<sup>13</sup> Average based on CIC's data for the years 2003 to 2012 = 11,567.8.



students, universities work programs offer them a chance to enhance their knowledge about Canadian workplace culture. Many interviewees believe such programming is beneficial for international students. Therefore, this option ranks HIGH in enhancing their knowledge of Canadian workplace culture. However, due to data limitation it is unclear to what extent experiential learning programs such as internships, work-learn programs or co-operative education improves English language attainment for international students. English language skills is a major concern for international graduates' employability, Therefore, this option ranks LOW in improving English language proficiency.

*Cost:* This option entails improving data collection on international graduates' skills attainment and outcomes to adequately assess the effectiveness of existing services and programs. This option would require universities to collaborate with the BC Ministry of Advanced Education to implement changes to the existing Baccalaureate Graduate Survey (BGS). Since these surveys are already routinely carried out by the government, the cost associated with adding a few more questions is estimated to be around 10K to 15K. Therefore, this option has a MEDIUM cost to the government. For universities, this option would have minimal impact on their human resources because the data collection is being carried out by the government. As a result, this option has a LOW cost for universities.

*Provincial Government Acceptability:* A plan for enhanced data collection will require consultation with one key department which is BC Statistics and a few institutions to suggest potential questions for improving the existing survey. Since this option does not require intensive consultation, it ranks HIGH.

*University Acceptability:* Universities would have LOW acceptability with this option because they are receiving no assistance from the government while the international student population is on an increasing trend.

*International Student Acceptability:* International students would have the about the same probability of getting a job as they do now. There is no change occurring for them with this option therefore, it would have LOW acceptability.

## 9.2. Integrate mandatory online EAL workshops in existing career development programs

The second option considers the integration of online programming for English as a Second Language (EAL) learners to enhance existing career development programs offered by universities. SFU's Job Search Success: An Online Writing and Cultural Tutorial program can be an important consideration for career service providers because it infuses both cultural aspects of Canadian work environment along with the opportunity to practice writing skills (interview, November 20, 2015).

*Effectiveness:* An option that aims to enhance career development programs cannot directly contribute to an increase in the number of international graduates transitioning into the labour force. The growth is expected to be equal to the current average.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, this option is ranked LOW. However, a few interviewees pointed out that international students desire the opportunity to practice their writing skills. So, an integrated programming has the possibility of facilitating their entrance into the labour force. As a result, this option is ranked MEDIUM in reducing their barriers.

*Human Development:* Since this option incorporates programming about the Canadian labour market, it receives a HIGH rank in enhancing international students' knowledge of Canada workplace culture. However, the option receives an overall medium score in enhancing English proficiency due to a lack of evidence on its effectiveness and because an online program cannot completely ameliorate language difficulties experienced by international students.

*Cost:* This option entails improving existing universities career programs. Currently, the government has allocated no funding towards such programs so it would have LOW impact on their budget. Whereas for universities, this option would have a MEDIUM impact on their budget as they will need to allocate at least two staff members to organize and facilitate an online programming.

<sup>14</sup> Average based on CIC's data for the years 2003 to 2012 = 11,567.8.

*Provincial Government Acceptability:* Currently, the provincial government is not involved in consultation with universities regarding enhancing career programming. Therefore, this option will have HIGH acceptability.

*University Acceptability:* Universities would have LOW acceptability with this option because they are receiving no assistance from the government to fund enhanced career development programming.

*International Student Acceptability:* International students would have better chances of getting a job after going through an enhanced career development programming. Therefore, it would have a MEDIUM acceptability for international students.

### **9.3. Universities and the BC Government harmonize their objectives for attracting international students**

The third option targets the harmonization of both universities and the provincial government's objective pertaining to attracting international students.

*Effectiveness:* An option which aims to align universities and government's objective would have no immediate impact on increasing international students' transition to temporary foreign workers. The growth is expected to be equal to the current average until both stakeholders resolve their conflicting interests. As a result, it receive a LOW rank.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, a few interviewees mentioned the need for a "more coordinated provincial strategy" and "a new model of partnership with the educational sector" (interview, December 17, 2015; interview, November 13, 2015). However, not all interviewees mentioned this idea therefore, this option still ranks LOW.

*Human Development:* The alignment of government and universities objectives does not contribute to the enhancement of international students' knowledge of Canadian workplace culture or English language attainment. Therefore, it receives a LOW rank in both of human development criteria.

<sup>15</sup> Average based on CIC's data for the years 2003 to 2012 = 11,567.8.

*Cost:* This option requires negotiations between the provincial government and universities administrators. These discussions should ultimately lead to a more coordinated strategy to support international students. The cost for the government to conduct these negotiations and revise their existing strategy would range from 10K to 15K. Therefore, it would have a MEDIUM impact on the government budget. For universities, this option will require a few employees to be involved in negotiations. Therefore, this option would have a LOW impact on universities human resources.

*Provincial Government Acceptability:* This option will mainly require the BC Ministry of Advanced Education to engage in consultation with several universities. Therefore, this option ranks MEDIUM for the provincial government.

*University Acceptability:* Universities would have LOW acceptability with this option because they are receiving no assistance from the government.

*International Student Acceptability:* There is no direct change occurring for international students in this policy option. International students would have the about the same probability of getting a job as they do now. Therefore, it would have LOW acceptability for international students.

## **9.4. Educate small and medium-sized businesses**

The final policy option aims to educate and make small and medium sized companies more aware of international graduates as potential skilled immigrants.

*Effectiveness:* An option aimed at educating employers can indirectly increase the percentage growth of international students transitioning into temporary foreign workers. Employers would be more aware of international graduates as a potential pool of temporary labour. Therefore, this option has a MEDIUM rank.<sup>16</sup> In addition, several interviewees mentioned a lack of awareness or knowledge about the post-graduation work

<sup>16</sup> A two percentage increase in the growth of international students transitioning into the labour force =  $(11,567.8) * (1.02) = 11,799.1$ .

permit program among employers. Therefore, making employers more aware ranks HIGH in reducing international graduates' barriers.

*Human Development:* This option has no impact on international graduates' knowledge about Canadian workplace culture or English skills attainment which is an important consideration for both preparing them for the labour force and for employers to hire them. Therefore, it receives a LOW rank in both human development criteria.

*Cost:* A plan to educate small and medium sized companies will be moderately costly for the provincial government to execute. In particular, the provincial government will need to first communicate with major business stakeholders and provincial non-government organizations such as Immigrant Employment Council of BC to assess existing campaigns, projects and events that are aimed at increasing employers' knowledge about international graduates' and then strategize a plan of action. So, the cost can range from 10K to 15K. Therefore, this option would have a MEDIUM impact on the provincial budget. On the other hand, this option would require zero university staff. As a result, it would have a LOW impact on universities budget.

*Provincial Government Acceptability:* This option would require governments to consult with various business stakeholders to create a plan for educating employers. Therefore, it would have LOW acceptability.

*University Acceptability:* Universities would have LOW acceptability with this option because they are receiving no assistance from the government.

*International Student Acceptability:* International students would have better chances of getting a job due to more knowledge and awareness among the employer community. Therefore, it would have a MEDIUM acceptability for international students.

## **9.5. Summary of Policy Analysis & Results**

My analysis of the four potential options indicates that integrating mandatory online English as Second Language (EAL) workshops in existing career development programs

is the best option. Status quo and enhancing data collection scores fairly close to integrating mandatory online EAL workshops. While educating employers has the third highest score and lowest among all of the options is to harmonize universities and provincial government's objectives for international students. Table 3 provides a summary of the policy analysis.

All of the options with the exception of option 4 scores low in increasing the average percentage of international students to temporary foreign workers. Conversely, option 4 does not have any effect in reducing international graduates' barriers or enhancing their knowledge of the Canadian labour market nor their English language abilities. While options 1 and 2 do have an impact in reducing international graduates' barriers and enhancing their awareness of the Canadian workplace culture. However, option 1 is still weak in improving international students English language abilities whereas option 2 has a medium impact in improving their language skills.

In terms of cost, option 2 is favorable for both the provincial government and universities. Currently, the provincial government is not contributing any funding for the development of career programming at universities. Thus, this option has no effect on the government's budget. Whereas for universities, option 2 will not be overburdening their human resources because it is an online program which will require few staff to implement. While options 3 and 4 will be moderately costly for the provincial government as they will need to allocate funding for negotiations with different stakeholders such as universities and businesses.

With stakeholder acceptability, universities will have low acceptability for all of the policy options as they are not receiving any financial assistance from the provincial government. The provincial government will have medium acceptability for option 3 and low acceptability for option 4 because they will need to consult post-secondary universities and businesses before implementing any policy change. International students will have low acceptability with options 1 and 3 because there is no change occurring for them. However, international students will have medium acceptability with an integrated EAL workshop because it can increase their chances of being employed in Canada's labour

force. Similarly, international students will have medium acceptability with employers being more aware because it can increase their probability of getting employed.

Despite the data limitations, option two is a very practical choice for universities to implement. Not only does it combine two crucial elements that international students desire for preparing a career in Canada, it also will not be overburdening in terms of cost for universities to have this policy in place. An added benefit from an intergraded online programming is the convenience and it can reach many students at one time. Therefore, there are two key recommendations based on the above policy analysis.

It is recommended that universities integrate mandatory online EAL workshops to enhance existing career programs. Further, it is recommended that universities and the provincial government collaborate in improving the data quality on universities career support services.

**Table 3: Policy Analysis Results**

		1) Status Quo + Enhance Data Collection	2) Integrate mandatory online EAL workshops in existing career development programs	3) Universities and the Province harmonize objectives	4) Educate Small and Medium Sized Businesses
<b>Effectiveness</b>					
<b>Growth Effectiveness</b>	% of growth from student to temporary foreign worker	Low (1)	Low (1)	Low (1)	Medium (2)
<b>Implementation</b>	A qualitative measure that evaluates how each option is reducing barriers for international graduates	High (3)	Medium (2)	Low (1)	Low (1)
<b>Human Development</b>	A qualitative measure that evaluates how each option enhances international graduates' knowledge of Canadian workplace culture	High (1.5)	High (1.5)	Low (0.5)	Low (0.5)
	A qualitative measure that evaluates how each option enhances international graduates' English language skills	Low (0.5)	Medium (1)	Low (0.5)	Low (0.5)
<b>Costs</b>	Cost to Government	Medium (1)	Low (1.5)	Medium (1)	Medium (1)
	Cost to Universities	Low (1.5)	Medium (1)	Low (1.5)	Low (1.5)
<b>Stakeholder Acceptability</b>					
<b>Provincial Government Acceptability</b>	The degree of consultation required	High (3)	High (3)	Medium (2)	Low (1)
<b>University Acceptability</b>	Amount of assistance from provincial government	Low (1)	Low (1)	Low (1)	Low (1)
<b>International Student Acceptability</b>	The probability of obtaining employment	Low (1)	Medium (2)	Low (1)	High (3)
<b>Total</b>		<b>13.5</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>11.5</b>



## **Chapter 10. Recommendations**

This chapter outlines recommendations for both universities and the provincial government. Currently, there is no adequate data and empirical evidence to prove that existing targeted support services and experiential learning programs increase international graduates' capacity to succeed in BC's labour force. Therefore, I recommend that universities collaborate with the BC Ministry of Advanced Education to include specific questions related to evaluation of career services in the existing Baccalaureate Graduate Survey (See Appendix B). Since the BGS now tracks both domestic and international graduates, this data can provide a comprehensive picture on the effectiveness of their targeted career support services and programs. This will ultimately inform universities whether their services are successful in preparing international graduates for BC's workforce. In the interim however, I also recommend that universities integrate online mandatory English as a Second Language workshops to enhance existing career development programs.

## Chapter 11. Further Research

This chapter outlines areas of potential research to fill gaps in understanding international graduates' needs and outcomes in the host country.

### 11.1.1. Empirical Research on the Effectiveness of Career Resources

This capstone outlined deficiencies in the evaluation of career support services and in particular with targeted support services for international students. Therefore, empirical research is needed to fully determine the effectiveness of career support services in enhancing the capabilities of international graduates for the local labour force. The following table outlines two key hypothesis related to experiential learning programs and targeted career support services for international graduates.

Independent Variable	Hypothesized Relationship	Explanation
<b>Experiential Learning Programs</b>	$H_0 : b_1 \notin 0$ $H_A : b_1 > 0$	Experiential learning programs is hypothesized to have a positive effect on international graduates' skills attainment and employment outcomes. While current research is not specific to international graduates, studies do show that students who partake in experiential learning programs such as co-operative education have better employment outcomes, higher income and enhanced skills in aspects such as problem solving and critical thinking (Haddara & Skanes 2007, p. 69-70; Sherlock, Feb 2, 2016).
<b>Targeted Career Support Services</b>	$H_0 : \beta_1 = 0$ $H_A : \beta_1 \neq 0$	Targeted career support services and programs is hypothesized to have an ambiguous effect on international graduates' skills attainment and employment outcomes. There is no existing empirical research in this area.

### 11.1.2. Immigration and Permanent Residency Support

Based on the interview results, there is anecdotal evidence which suggests that immigration and career development influences international students' decision making processes. As one interviewee pointed out: "if that knowledge about [immigration and

permanent residency] were embedded in the advising they [international students] receive then they could have made different **choices** about their career development” (my emphasis; interview Dec 2015). So, there is a desire for immigration advising to be infused with career development planning. Yet there is minimal support provided to international students and graduates regarding immigration and permanent residency advising. Universities believe these services are not part of their obligation and settlement agencies do not have the mandate to provide support to international graduates (Lowe, 2011, p. 22).

Consequently, there is a service gap for international graduates transitioning into the labour force that needs to be addressed by the provincial and federal governments. BC’s International Education Strategy outlined an objective to “leverage funding to assist community organizations in providing settlement services for international students” (AVED, 2011, p. 25). However, it is unclear to what extent these plans have been implemented by the provincial government. Since immigration and settlement support is a shared jurisdiction between the two governments, it is important for them to collaborate on increasing capacity for case specific advising, immigration and settlement services for international graduates.

## **Chapter 12. Conclusion**

This study attempts to examine the availability and effectiveness of career support services for international students at two BC universities. My findings demonstrate that universities are tailoring support services to address international students' unique needs but it is unclear whether they are effective in contributing to their success in the labour force. This is problematic because if universities claim these services better equip these students for the host country's labour force, then there is a need for adequate data to back up such assertions. Currently, universities gather feedback from current students about their services using student satisfaction surveys and pre-test and post-test methodologies to examine shifts in learning outcomes. However, these evaluation methods do not demonstrate whether international graduates actually found universities support services useful when transitioning into the workforce. As a result, there is a need to track international graduates to fully determine their efficacy.

Despite the data challenges, this study proposes two key recommendations. First, universities integrate mandatory online English as a Second Language workshops to enhance existing career development programs. Second, I strongly recommend that universities collaborate with the BC Ministry on Advanced Education to improve data collection on their career support services. This information will ultimately provide a better picture on whether universities career support services are effective or not and where to best target resources.

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## Appendix A.

### Interview Questions

Can you describe some of your experiences with services, resources and workshops for international students?

What types of programs, services and support does your department provide to international students?

How do you advertise these programs and services?

Do you think international students are aware of the services your department provides?

Generally speaking, how often do international students access and use your department's services/workshops/programs?

How do you track them?

Have you noticed any common concerns raised by international students related to services or career needs?

How did you/or your department address these concerns for international students?

Does your department communicate with other university offices about services for international students?

Does your department collect feedback on services provided to international students? (Can I have this information?)

How has your department used the feedback collected from international students?

What are some of the strengths in the services and programs provided to international students?

What are some of the challenges/gaps in providing services for international students?

What kind of support would help staff provide better programs and services for international students?

Has your department engaged with employers and other local stakeholders?

How can universities better support international students' transition into the labour force?

How do you think government policies (national/provincial) have impacted international student services and programs?<sup>17</sup>

For this project, I'm to look at a wide range of policy options. Do you have any ideas for policy options or best practices?

<sup>17</sup> This question was taken from (El Masri et. al, 2015, p. 9)

## Appendix B.

### Baccalaureate Graduate Survey – Evaluation of Career Services and Programs<sup>18</sup>

- 1) Did you participate in any of the career services programs or workshops at your respective university?
  - Yes
  - No
  
- 2) If the answer is no, ask why they did not participate in any of the career services or programs? If the answer is yes, skip to question 3.
  
- 3) What types of career programs, services or events did you participate in? Select all that apply.
  - Resume/Cover Letter Workshops
  - Launch Your Career In Canada
  - Foundations for Career Success
  - Job Search Success: An Online Writing and Cultural Tutorial
  
- 4) To what extent did the above programs, services and events prepare you for BC's workforce?
  - Very Prepared
  - Prepared
  - Somewhat prepared
  - Not prepared

<sup>18</sup> Please note certain questions are more targeted for international graduates (2-5). While others can be used for both domestic and international graduates.

- 5) To what extent did the above programs, services and events enhance your knowledge about Canadian workplace culture?
- Very knowledgeable
  - Knowledgeable
  - Somewhat knowledgeable
  - Not knowledgeable
- 6) How did your participation in universities experiential learning programs such as co-op, internships, job shadow, and/or volunteer help develop the following skills:
- Write clearly and concisely
  - Verbally express opinions or ideas clearly and concisely
  - Read and comprehend material
  - Work effectively with others
  - Analyse and think critically
  - Resolve issues or problems
  - Conduct research
  - Learn on your own
- 7) To what extent did the above experiential programs enhance your knowledge about Canadian workplace culture?
- Very knowledgeable
  - Knowledgeable
  - Somewhat knowledgeable
  - Not knowledgeable
- 8) How beneficial was your participation in universities experiential learning programs such as co-op, internships, job shadow, and/or volunteer in facilitating your transition into the workforce?
- Very beneficial
  - Beneficial

- Somewhat beneficial
- Not beneficial