

ImpactLab London 2025

How Will Canada's Cap on International Students Impact London's Talent Pipeline?

GLE2010: Introduction to Public Policy | Huron University College | Instructor: Dr. Kate Graham

Project Snapshot

In Winter 2025, 50 undergraduate students from Huron's GLE2010 course partnered with the City of London through the **ImpactLab** initiative to examine the local implications of Canada's international student cap. The federal policy reduced study permits by **35% in 2024** and an additional **10% in 2025**, citing housing and infrastructure pressures. Students conducted interdisciplinary research and produced a comprehensive policy report featuring sector-based analysis and community-focused recommendations.

Key Insights

Students as Economic Anchors

- 80,000+ students contribute significantly to London's economy—fueling local business, public services, and filling workforce gaps. International students, in particular, generate vital revenue for post-secondary institutions.

Housing: A Misplaced Blame

- The student cap was partly justified by housing pressures, yet research points to **systemic underinvestment** and **rapid population growth** as the core challenges. International students often face precarious housing conditions and limited support.

Transit and Infrastructure

- Students are the **largest user group** of London's transit system. A decline in enrollment could **reduce funding** and limit service availability for the wider community.

Labour Shortages & Brain Drain

- London struggles to retain talent post-graduation. The cap restricts international graduates from entering the workforce, especially in **tech, healthcare, and skilled trades**.

Post-Secondary Risks

- Ontario colleges rely heavily on international tuition. For example, **Fanshawe College** expects a **47% drop** in international enrollment—prompting **program cuts and layoffs**.

Shaping Public Narratives

- Government messaging may inadvertently shape public perceptions of international students. Careful communication is needed to preserve Canada's **inclusive reputation** in global education.

🔧 Student-Led Recommendations

✅ Invest in Housing & Infrastructure

Require affordable units in all developments and strengthen city-wide planning.

✅ Strengthen Talent Retention

Align work permit pathways with London's sectoral labour needs.

✅ Diversify Institutional Funding

Advocate for greater provincial investment and philanthropic support.

✅ Celebrate Student Contributions

Shift the narrative—view international students as community members and innovators.

✅ Maintain Transit Access

Protect and expand student-centric transit services critical to London's mobility.

📌 Conclusion

The federal student visa cap has significant ripple effects across London's housing, economy, workforce, and education sectors. Students in GLE2010 delivered data-driven, forward-thinking recommendations that support a more **resilient, inclusive, and future-ready London**. For more information refer to the full report.



**Students from the GLE2010: Introduction to Public Policy editorial team spoke at Huron's Centre for Undergraduate Research and Learning (CURL) conference in April 2025 about the class's ImpactLab project. Pictured from left to right: Dr. Kate Graham, Christian Kalbfleisch, Anusha Imam, Maryam Abouelela, Emily Morano and Isabella Caloura.*