

RESEARCH & EVALUATION

FANSHAWE COLLEGE



PREPARED FOR
IMPACT LAB

PREPARED BY
SOSC6003 W25, Fanshawe College

FANSHAWE COLLEGE

Research and Evaluation

SOSC-6003-(60)-25W: CAPSTONE

**The Impact of IRCC's 2-Year Cap on Student Permits on International Student Migration
from London, Ontario:**

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April 26, 2025

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ACRONYMS

- IRCC Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada
- PICS Progressive Intercultural Community Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction/ Background / Summary of the Project Scope

This project is an initiative of the City of London in partnership with Impact Lab London, in collaboration with educational institutions in the city, including Fanshawe College, Western University, Huron College, and King's College. In order to retain talents, the City of London, through this project, seeks recommendations for attracting young professionals into its talent pool.

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the impact of IRCC's 2-year cap on study permits on talent retention in London, Ontario. Being one of the biggest institutions to host international students, the scope of the research will be around Fanshawe College. The main purpose of this project is to find out various implications of this policy on talent retention in London. A survey will be conducted on this project and Fanshawe students will be asked various questions regarding this policy and its implication on talent retention in the City of London. This project will use a mixed methods approach including qualitative and quantitative methods. The primary survey will ask both types of questions from Fanshawe students, and this data will be analyzed to make suitable recommendations for the City of London. In addition, a comprehensive document analysis and literature review will be conducted to understand the impact of this policy on the education sector and its implications for talent retention in London.

The study also aims to understand international students' perception about this policy

and its implications on their decision to stay back in London or not. Moreso, the suggestions and recommendations they have for the City of London amidst all this uncertainty and confusion regarding IRCC's policy regarding cap on study permits. These recommendations will help to make London a desirable location for young professionals and recent graduates and the City of London will provide them with opportunities which will make them stay back after their studies. The scope of study will provide practical and suitable strategies and solutions to this problem. Since this policy is new and there was a data limitation, our document analysis majorly relied on the news and the information available on IRCC's official government website. The news talked about IRCC's cap on study permits and its impact on college closures, layoffs, and program suspensions. The survey was designed exclusively for Fanshawe students, including current and former students, since they are the ones which were impacted by the policy implications and new talent which impact lab London wants to retain in the City.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a detailed review of existing research and literature on the impact of the IRCC cap on international students and the effect of this policy on talent retention in London, Ontario. This section will use research articles, policy documents, reports, and surveys to identify major themes and trends in existing literature. The main aim of this literature review is to analyze and identify gaps in the literature related to challenges, mitigation, and impact of IRCC's policies on talent retention in London. The objective of

this literature review is to narrow down the challenges and mitigation strategies and provide well-informed solutions and recommendations to the City of London based on the findings of the literature.

Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (2025) introduced a cap on international students in January 2024 where it was stated that international student enrolment decreased by up to 40% in Canada. The main purpose of this policy is to ease pressure on the rental market, healthcare, and other services. Now there is a need to analyze the long-term impacts of this policy on the Canadian economy, educational institutions, and talent retention in different regions. Therefore, there is a gap in the literature which our research project will tend to cover.

Lepawsky, Phan, and Greenwood (2010) argue that the regions that offer good job opportunities, high quality of life, and socio-cultural diversity attract more talent.

a) Understanding of Talent Retention in the Canadian context

According to Kelly & Nguyen (2023), Canada brings in hundreds of thousands of qualified individuals every year through various immigration streams. Ontario particularly the GTA region attracts the most talented people, and small cities struggle to retain talent. This study focuses on why non- metropolitan cities attract talent and why people choose smaller cities, and this study explores the reasons behind this choice. This will help us analyze why people tend to choose smaller cities for settlement. We can apply the insights of this study to make recommendations for

London to retain talent.

As earlier mentioned, Lepawsky, Phan, and Greenwood (2010) argue that the regions that offer good job opportunities, high quality of life, and socio-cultural diversity attract more talent. Therefore, this study seeks recommendations that will give the City of London some valuable insights on how to attract people to live and work in the city after completing their studies. This is why the city, in partnership with ImpactLab London, is collaborating with major educational institutions in London, to carry out research that will inform talent retention in the city.

b) Policies and IRCC cap on international students

Regionalization policies were introduced in Canada to disperse immigration throughout the country by using provincial nominations (Kelly & Nguyen, 2023). Smaller cities also noticed the economic benefits of immigration and started to adopt different immigration policies to attract talented people. This study is extremely useful in our research context where London is looking for ways to retain talent in the city.

c) International student enrolment in Canada

According to Lepawsky, Phan, and Greenwood (2010), knowledge economy started to become a significant factor of success for main centers in Canada. This study focuses on the high enrolments of international students by Canadian educational institutions, but the impacts other than the economy were not discussed in detail. This study talks about

the IRCC policy to bring in international students in order to boost the economy of the country but does not address other factors like a strain on housing and healthcare.

Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (2025) informs that the enrolment rates after the cap on international students dropped more than the recommended cap introduced by the government. All of these happened due to the uncertainty and delays in visa processing, these things made the prospective students apply somewhere else.

Additionally, according to a study conducted by Applyboard, from January through October 2024, the Canadian student visa approval rate was around 50% (Applyboard, 2025). Based on this approval rate, we project that the full-year number of approvals will decline by 45% year-over-year, due to the fact that prospective students are losing interest in studying in Canada, resulting in a maximum of 280,000 approvals across all study levels (including K-12 and postgraduate) (Applyboard, 2025). The number of approvals for capped study levels fell by 60% in Jan–Oct 2024, compared to the same period in 2023, while cap- exempt approvals dropped by 27% (Applyboard, 2025).

Furthermore, visa approvals for major student populations such as India, Nigeria, and Nepal dropped by over 50% through the first ten months of 2024. By contrast, student populations from Senegal, Guinea, and Vietnam maintained year-over-year growth (Applyboard, 2025). IRCC reveals a dramatic decline in the new study permit approvals in January 2025, while policy makers had planned a 10% reduction, but the actual drop was 46%, making the lowest application volume since 2021 (IRCC, 2025).

METHODOLOGIES

This research employed a mixed methods approach to evaluate the impact of **IRCC's 2-year cap on Study Permits** on student migration and talent retention in London, Ontario. This study tried to cover the broader framework of the City of London's "Impact Lab: Talent Retention" initiative and uses both qualitative and quantitative data to make evidence-based recommendations.

Primary Data Collection

A survey including 28 closed and open-ended questions was conducted among students at Fanshawe College, which is one of the largest educational institutions in London, Ontario. The survey was distributed on the platform called Kobocollect. A total of 55 responses were recorded. The questionnaire included informed consent at the beginning of the survey. The survey was designed to understand students' thoughts and awareness of the IRCC cap, migration decisions, career aspirations and perceptions of London as a place to live and work. The answers provided more light on their opinions regarding the available support resources and the tendency to stay in London after graduation.

The survey was done using the combination of random and snowball sampling to include the participants. This helped to make sure that the responses represented diverse population of international students while considering limitations like low response rate. To ensure reliability and ethical integrity, it was made sure that participation was voluntarily, also efforts were made to ensure anonymity.

Secondary Data Collection

The research also incorporated document analysis, focusing on relevant IRCC policy documents, statistics provided by the government and media reports and news to make broader understanding about national and regional trends. Data collection method included documents from Statistics Canada and Simply Analytics to make the demographic and economic analysis. To understand the existing debate on immigration, international education policy and provincial talent retention methods, literature from peer-reviewed journals and research publications was reviewed.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data analysis was systematically done using descriptive statistical methods which included frequency distributions, percentages and cross-tabulations. Using this approach helped us to understand trends, such as levels of awareness about the IRCC policy, intentions of students on migration, and their views regarding job opportunities and living conditions in London, Ontario. Also, the relation between students' country of origin and their desire to remain in London was a factor in understanding the pattern in student behaviour and decision making.

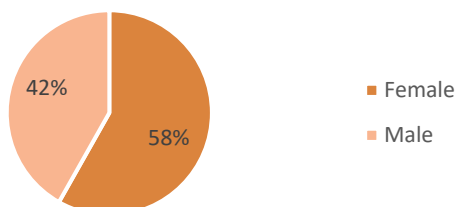
Likewise, open-ended questions that gathered qualitative responses were thematically coded using a grounded approach. Recurring themes such as uncertainty about post-graduation opportunities, experiences with local support systems, and perceptions of government policies were identified. Qualitative responses were helpful to understand

in-depth and context of the statistical findings.

FINDINGS

This section gives a summary of important findings from the evaluation of the 2-year Cap on study permits and its impact on talent retention in the City of London. Because there are limited data sources for this study, some of the findings are in the form of basic details about the aftermath of the policy, mainly focusing on the last 12 to 15 months following the implementation of the policy. The study targeted a sample size of 100 respondents but received 55 responses only. Despite the limitations regarding the data, the triangulated approach of using multiple lines of evidence and data collection methods has helped mitigate the concerns. The survey started by collecting some demographic data of respondents, where we asked about gender, age, nationality and other demographic information as visualized below:

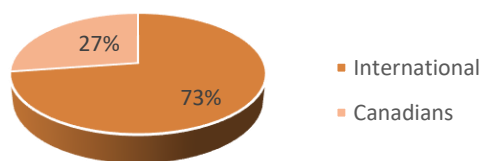
Gender of Respondents



The chart in figure 1 is analysis made from the conducted survey in this project, it shows the distribution of respondents' gender, showing that 58% of respondents are female and 42% are male.

Figure 1: Gender of Respondents

Origin of Respondents



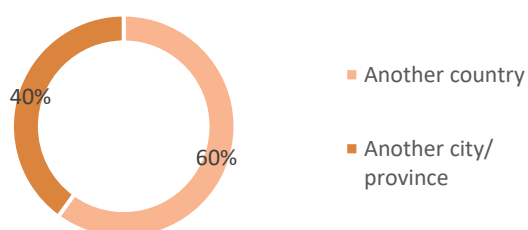
The study also asked about the origin of respondents, the chart in figure 2 shows that 73% are from other countries while 27% are Canadians.

Figure 2: Origin of Respondents

Although the study is more focused on international students as they are directly impacted by the 2-year Cap on study permits, we also wanted to get insights from domestic students as talent retention in the city of London concerns everyone, regardless of their immigration status.

Where Respondents moved to London from

Where Respondents moved to London from



It was important for the study to understand where respondents moved into London from, for the purpose of studies, 60% of

Figure 3: Where respondents moved

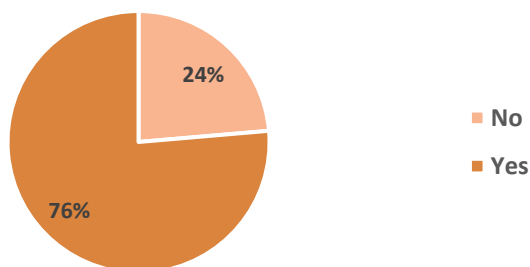
respondents moved from other countries while 40% moved from other cities in Ontario or other provinces in Canada to school in the city of London. This shows that the city of London has a lot to offer when it comes to quality education, and that it is one of the choicest destinations for studies.

General Opinion on the IRCC Policy

In order to lay a good foundation, the study sought to understand respondents' general

opinion about the policy, just to establish their knowledge of the policy and ensure that they are on the same page as regards the purpose of the study.

Awareness of the 2-years Cap on study permits



Do people know that this policy currently exists and is being implemented?

It turns out that that most respondents (76%) are aware of this policy while 24% of respondents are not aware of the

Figure 4: Awareness of the policy

existence of the policy. A good explanation for this is the fact that some of the study respondents are domestic students, who are not affected by the policy, so it is possible that they are not aware that a policy like this is currently being implemented.

Enrollment and Migration Trends

The study also sought to examine the current trends in student enrolments and migration in general. It's a question of graduate students' plan after their studies, do students plan to move from the city or stay in the city after their studies?

Decision to stay or leave London after Study

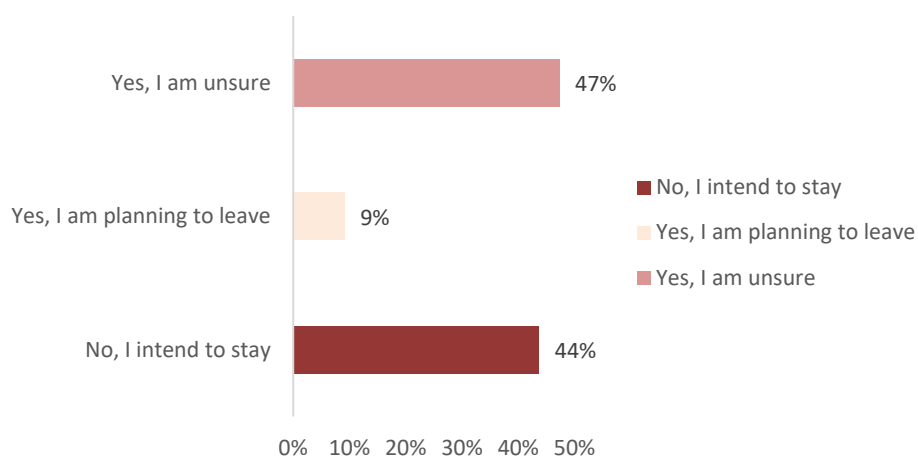


Figure 5: Respondents' decision to stay or leave after studies

From the above chart, 44% of respondents intend to stay in the city after their studies, which is good because the city will be

able to retain talents. However, 47% of respondents are not sure if they want to stay back after their studies or not. This is an opportunity for the city to market what it has to offer these graduates, to attract them to stay back after their studies. It is a win-win situation, the city gets to retain talents, and the talents are happy to build a meaningful life for themselves and their families and call London home in the long run.

Effects of the policy

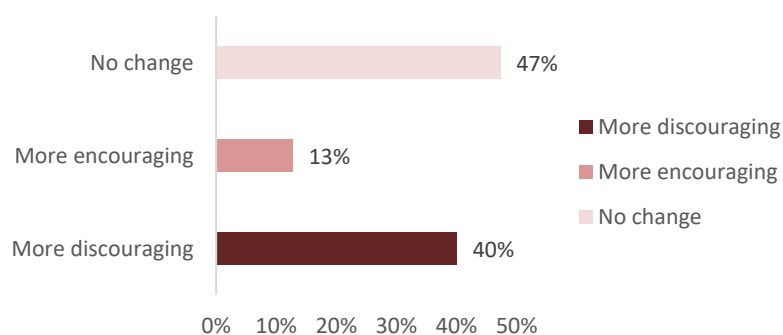


Figure 6: Effects of the policy on respondents

This policy mostly affects the aspiring students that would like to study in

Canada, as this means that their chances are slim. But 40% of respondents feel discouraged by this policy. Surprisingly, 13% of respondents feel encouraged by this policy, the study further probed to know why, and we got responses that suggests that the policy will reduce competition in the job and housing market and that with fewer international students, the people that are already in Canada will have higher chances of being employed with lesser competition. One of the study respondents had this to say, *"I think it's encouraging because if we have fewer students coming into the country, the country will focus on making life more comfortable for those that are already here, getting jobs and renting would be easier and less expensive"*

Based on literature review and document analysis, the rates of enrolment have drastically reduced, a lot of colleges and universities and suspending some academic programs and smaller campuses are being shut down. "The number of approvals for capped study levels fell by 60% in Jan–Oct 2024, compared to the same period in 2023, while cap-exempt approvals dropped by 27%" (Applyboard, 2025).

The study also analyzed the latest news from the media and from Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada's website, IRCC reveals a dramatic decline in the new study permit approvals in January 2025, while policy makers had planned a 10% reduction, but the actual drop was 46%, making the lowest application volume since 2021 after covid, (IRCC, 2025).

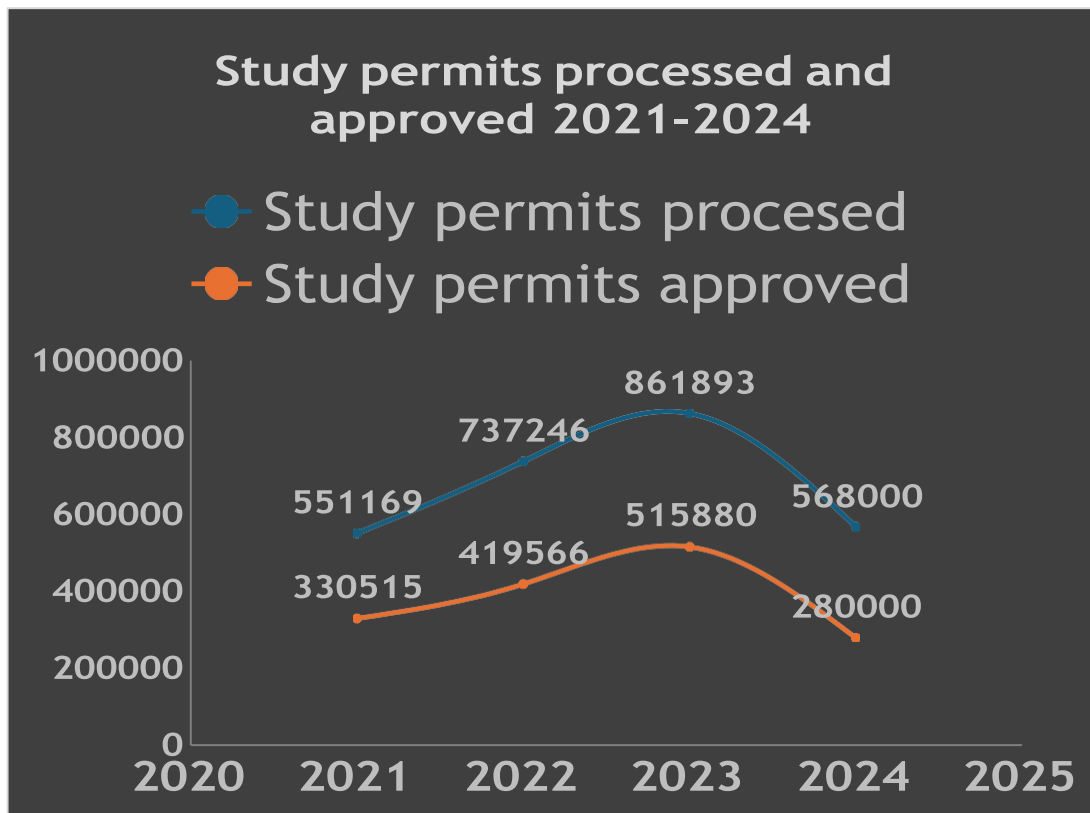


Figure 7: Source: IRCC. Disclaimer: Data for 2021-Oct 2024 is sourced from IRCC. Full-year 2024 figures are estimates, extrapolated from Jan-Oct 2024 and full-year 2021-2023 IRCC data. Projections may be subject to change based on changing conditions and source.

From the chart above, we can see that the number of study permits application has increased by year since 2021, but there is an obvious reduction in applications in 2024, which was when the 2-year cap was announced and implemented. The 280,000 study permits approvals for 2024 represents a 45% decline from the 2023 figure of 515,880 approvals and is also 15% lower than the target the Canadian government announced a year ago.

Visa approvals for major student populations such as India, Nigeria, and Nepal dropped by over 50% through the first ten months of 2024. By contrast, student populations from Senegal, Guinea, and Vietnam maintained year-over-year growth (Applyboard, 2025).

What this means is that the number of students from these countries which were usually higher in volume, has now reduced due to this policy and Canada has now become less attractive study destination for them. While for the other countries, they maintained year-over-year growth because I believe that they want to balance the volume of international students as regards to nationality.

In the news lately, there's been a lot of college closures, program suspensions, staff layoffs and other financial impacts that this policy has caused. Below are some of the headlines that the study captured from the media these past few months.

- "Fanshawe College president tells staff to expect layoffs as program reviews continue" (CBC News, 2025).
- "Has Canada overshot its mark in cutting international students' enrolment? What the latest study permit data shows" (Keung, 2025).
- "Canada's immigration department cutting roughly 3,300 jobs over 3 years" (CBC News, 2025).
- "Fanshawe suspends 18 programs as international student numbers drops" (Shaba, 2025).
- "Fanshawe College face \$60M deficit, deep job cuts: President"
- "Layoffs and program cuts coming to Fanshawe College in spring, president says" (Trevithick, 2025)
- "Canadian Study permit approvals fall far below cap targets" (Nash, 2025).

- “2024 international study permit rates set to fall by 45%” (University World News, 2025).

All these and many more are the latest headlines on the internet. All these changes affects the talent retention plans of the City of London, because due to this policy and others that followed this one, Canada has now become less attractive to young professionals, the reduction in enrolment rates, is a proof of this, thereby limiting the likelihood of the city to even get talents in the first place, talk less of retaining them.

How does it affect talent retention in the City of London

Now what does this mean for the city of London and how does all of these affect its talent retention plan?

The study sought to examine the availability of support services for international students in the city, and we got these responses below:

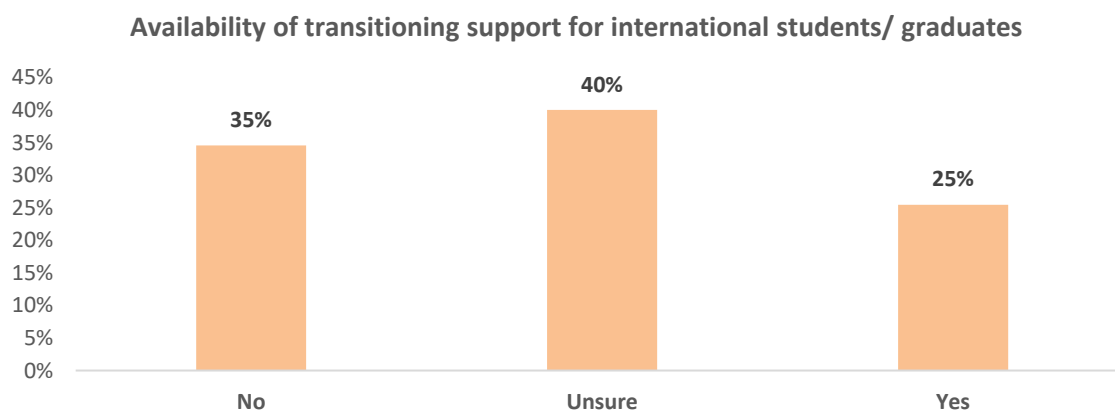


Figure 8: Availability of transitioning support for international student/ graduates

From the above chart, 40% of respondents are unsure of the availability of support for international students in the city, if there are, then there is need for awareness creation, but if there are none, then it's time for the city to step up and provide an avenue to support international students and graduate students to transition easily into the workforce. A very good example of this is the Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society in Surrey, British Columbia, this is a platform that supports international students and graduates in transitioning into the workforce. Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS) Society is a registered non-profit organization that has been serving the community since 1987.

PICS Society provides a broad spectrum of programs and services which include Employment Programs, Settlement Services, Language Services, Social Programs and Housing Services (Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society, n.d.).

The city of London can also replicate this kind of program as a way to attract talents.

The study also sought to know what would motivate people to stay back after their studies, and the study respondents had this to say.

In order to improve talent retention, the city should:

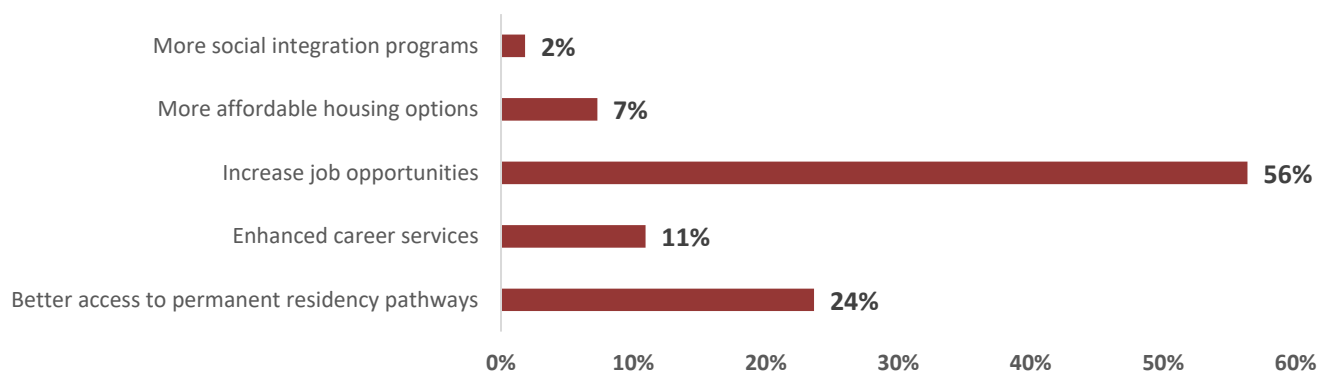


Figure 9: Recommendations for the city of London

From the chart above, increased job opportunities take the lead at a whopping 56%, followed by better access to permanent residency pathways at 24%. These are the major concerns of international students and graduates, if the city can do something about these major concerns, then it would be helpful in motivating talents to stay back in the city after their studies.

DISCUSSIONS

There was little or insufficient significant data available regarding this policy and its impact, although, different news emerged on a regular basis regarding college closures, program suspensions and staff layoffs due to low enrollment rates. These were the major impacts of this policy. This research study has a primary research survey, and the findings of this study could be considered as one of the pioneer studies that will lead to further discussions on this topic. There is no better perspective than students' as far as talent retention is concerned.

This study provides a firsthand opinion of graduate students who are affected by this policy and are making their decision whether to stay in London or move to other cities and provinces after they graduate. Their recommendations should be extremely valuable to the City of London, since those students are themselves giving their views on talent retention in London.

The findings reveal the complex picture of the impact of IRCC's 2-year cap in the setting for international students in London. One of the most prominent concerns emerging from the

survey is that Student express their uncertainty about staying in London after graduation. Although the policy aimed to reduce pressure on public services like housing and healthcare, it has caused more serious problems. Students expressed their concern about high tuition fees, less job opportunities and confusing rules about getting permanent residency. Also, the data showed that many students do not fully understand what the cap means and how it can affect them, that shows that communication between students and government schools is not well.

The impact extends beyond the student experiences. For example, post-secondary institutions like Fanshawe College are already feeling the impact, it has faced a significant financial shortfall leading to program suspensions and potential layoffs. London could lose an important source of social, cultural, and economic growth if this trend keeps up. The international students not only contribute tuition fees and living expenses but also provide diversity to the local workforce, makes community life strong and helps fulfill essential skill gaps. On a positive note, some students believe that London's vibrant sense of community and cheaper cost of living is one of the strongest reasons to stay. These qualities make London different from more expensive urban cities like Toronto and Vancouver. This demonstrates how targeted policies and neighborhood initiatives may be able to retain international students in the city.

Lastly, the results highlight that all stakeholders involved like educational institutions, local employers, municipal leaders and immigration policymakers take urgent

coordinated action to make London a welcoming and supportive place for international students, graduates and potential talents.

CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY

Low response rate

The research encountered substantial difficulties because international students along with recent graduates responded minimally. The declining response rate can be linked to uncertainty and stress among this population which arises from policy instability and financial pressure (Butler, 2023b). Participants are less likely to participate in research because they doubt institutional support along with having uncertain expectations about future residency. The planned sample size for the study was 100 but alas, it got just about 55% response as against the target.

Limited data and information access

Accessing precise and latest information created some difficulty in our research process. Current data tracking becomes problematic because both immigration policies and international student enrolment experiences persistent changes at a fast pace. Studies suggest that current study permit approvals have fallen below official government restrictions thus complicating tracking of consistent trends (Nash, 2025). The unstable situation affects how easily institutions can get data along with its trustworthiness. Also, with the fact that it is a new policy, there are little to no studies on the impact of the policy, making it difficult to gather relevant resources.

Limited project's scope

Since the research team had multiple projects that were ongoing, there was limited time to cover every aspect of the project extensively, the team had to rush through a lot of aspects. For example, the data collection window was limited, thereby limiting the number of responses that the survey got.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Social integration programs should be designed to help international students as well as graduates integrate into Canadian society:

Targeted social integration programs should be developed to enhance the feelings of welcome and support among international students. As mentioned before, a good example is the Program for International Students (PICS) at Surrey, BC, which represents a successful program because it offers specific settlement services for newcomers, including international students and graduates. The city of London should implement such strategies to create spaces for graduate integration which promotes connections between residents.

Promote partnership among the local businesses and educational institutes:

International graduates' job placement can be increased through the facilitation of partnerships between the city council, colleges/universities and local employers. Such collaborations can be mutually beneficial as institutions can support their students to transition into the workforce and provide pathways to student employment while also

maintaining institutional relevancy and hire rating, both nationally and internationally.

Clarify and help to support all PR pathways and IRCC policies:

Complex immigration pathways make international students confused as to what to do after graduation. Most recently, there has been confusion, and uncertainty created by the most recent job cuts at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and changing study permit regulations (Weller, 2025; Keung, 2025). Better communication, more transparent policy frameworks and support need to be offered to students who want to plan their lives in Canada. Also, the city can collaborate with IRCC on creating a permanent residency pathway based on its in-demand jobs. For example, the rural immigration program will be piloted soon.

Develop better career service for students and graduates:

About students' success post-graduation, career guidance is important to achieve their long- term goals, support centers for students' careers could provide help with resumes, interview preparedness, networking events and job fairs that are specially adjusted to the needs of international learners.

CONCLUSION

In the end, this study has found that the IRCC's 2-year cap on study permits has affected the student enrollment rates in colleges and universities in Canada particularly Fanshawe College and this has put significant impacts on talent retention in London. The students at Fanshawe College have expressed their concern about this policy and their decisions about living in London after their

studies. Even though there was limited data available on this topic, we were able to find valuable insights by surveying Fanshawe students and analyzing current news resources. The impacts of this policy can be seen on low enrollments in colleges, program suspensions, layoffs, and budget cuts. As far as Fanshawe college is concerned they have suspended 39 programs, and this will impact the job opportunities for graduate and young professionals in London. The survey has made some recommendations for the City of London such as the international students want more clarity regarding the policy, the City of London should provide more job opportunities for fresh graduates, and more support services for the students. This study provided the firsthand recommendations from the students which were affected the most by IRCC's policy, moreover, this study will help the City of London to understand the predicament of Fanshawe students and what they want in order to stay in London.

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APPENDIX

[Survey Questionnaire](#)

CAPSTONE PROJECT

Research and Evaluation of Support Systems for Students and
(Young & Mature) Adults in London –Report

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Submitted on: February 07, 2025

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1. Executive Summary:

This capstone project explores the challenges faced by students and young adults in London, Ontario—particularly in the areas of employment, housing, transportation, and mental health. While the city attracts a large number of students, retaining them post-graduation remains a major challenge.

Key Findings:

- **Limited Job Opportunities:** Many students struggle to find relevant jobs during and after their studies, prompting them to relocate.
- **Unaffordable Housing:** Rental costs are high and suitable housing options near campuses are limited.
- **Transit Barriers:** Infrequent or unreliable public transit hinders access to education, employment, and community participation.
- **Mental Health Strain:** Students face rising stress levels, and existing mental health services are often under-resourced or difficult to access.

To understand these challenges, the study employed a mixed-methods approach:

- **Quantitative data** from online surveys (analyzed using SPSS tools like descriptive stats, correlation, and regression).
- **Qualitative insights** from open-ended survey responses and stakeholder policy reviews.
- **Visualizations** such as graphs, charts, and thematic maps were used to communicate findings clearly.

The report also identified several structural and operational gaps, including:

- Inconsistent funding and short-term program cycles.
- Poor collaboration among local service providers.
- Disconnects between youth needs and current policy initiatives.

Recommendations include:

- Expanding local work-integrated learning opportunities like co-ops & internships.
- Increasing investment in affordable housing, especially near educational institutions.
- Improving public transit routes and frequency to better serve students and young workers.
- Enhancing mental health and social support networks through partnerships and community programs.
- Encouraging multisector policy collaboration to support long-term youth retention.

Conclusion:

If left unaddressed, these systemic barriers will continue to drive young talent out of the city. This report presents data-driven, actionable solutions to help the City of London build a more inclusive, supportive, and opportunity-rich environment for its student and young adult population.

2. Background:

This project tried to understand the types of academic, financial, mental health, and career support available for students and adults. It explored services provided by universities, government programs, private organizations, and community groups in London. This project aimed to assess whether all students and adults can easily access these support systems along with the evaluation on how support services address the needs of diverse groups, including international students, working adults, and individuals with disabilities. The project analysed how well these systems helped students and adults in their academic success, career progress, and personal well-being and also measured the impact of financial support on reducing dropout rates and increasing educational opportunities. The project also tried to evaluate the effectiveness of mental health services in promoting well-being and reducing stress among students and adults with the focus on examining how career support services influence job placements, skill development, and professional growth. This project helped to study the role of mentorship, internships, and career guidance in shaping career paths. Finally, the project wanted to determine whether support services contribute to lifelong learning and adult education opportunities.

3. Methodology:

3.1 Evaluation Approach

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a comprehensive analysis of talent retention in London, Ontario. The combination of survey data, survey guide, secondary data and literature review ensured a holistic understanding of key challenges and opportunities.

3.1.1 Quantitative Methods

A structured online survey was designed and distributed to students, recent graduates, and young professionals in London, Ontario. The survey questionnaire included multiple-choice, Likert-scale, and ranking questions to quantify perceptions of employment prospects, quality of life, affordability, and social engagement. A survey guide was developed to ensure research rigor by promoting standardization, clarification, ethical and procedural compliance, and quality control throughout the survey administration. Responses were collected over a period of four weeks through university and college networks, social media, and community organizations. We collected data for a total of 93 respondents from our survey.

Descriptive statistics, including mean scores, frequency distributions, and standard deviations, were used to summarize key variables. Correlation analysis was conducted using SPSS to examine relationships between factors such as job availability and respondents' willingness to remain in London. Regression analysis served as an inferential statistical method to identify predictive factors influencing decisions to stay or leave the city.

Data were presented using tables and a variety of graphs, including pie charts, bar graphs, bell-shaped distributions, and box plots, to visually illustrate patterns and trends in the survey responses. These visuals helped to highlight key issues related to employment opportunities, social connectivity, and affordability concerns.

3.1.2 Qualitative Methods

Open-ended surveys were conducted with both international and domestic participants, including current post-secondary students (college and university), mature students, recent graduates (within the past two years), and young professionals working in London. These responses provided nuanced insights into workforce retention challenges. Additionally, relevant policy documents and local economic reports were reviewed to offer contextual understanding of London's retention strategies.

Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes in the qualitative data, with particular attention to employment accessibility, housing, and transportation. Coding techniques were applied using Google Forms and Excel to categorize responses and identify common patterns across stakeholder groups.

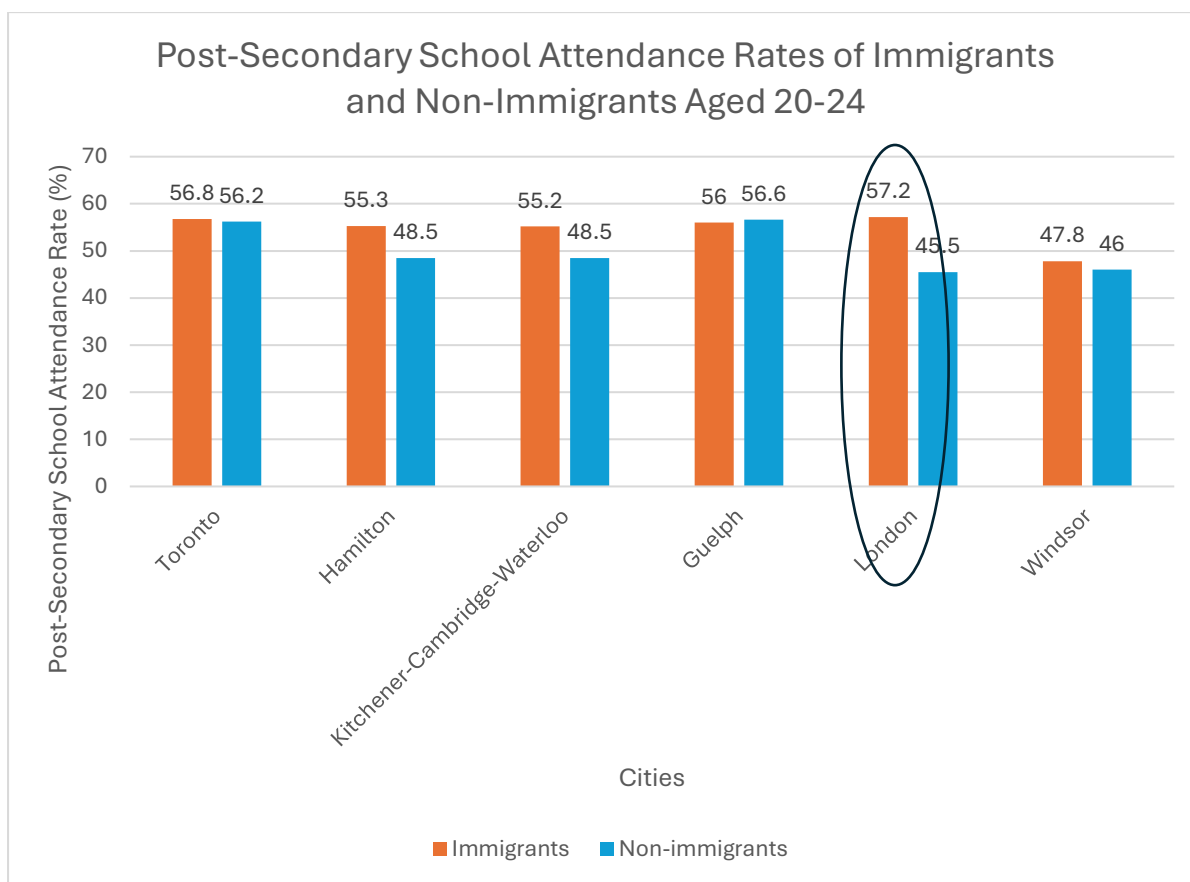
Thematic maps were created to represent frequently mentioned concerns and opportunities. Qualitative findings were integrated with quantitative data using mixed-methods matrices, resulting in a cohesive narrative that synthesized both sets of insights.

3.2 Linking Methods to Gaps and Outcomes

The evaluation ensures **triangulation** of findings by cross-referencing survey data with policy reviews, thereby enhancing the reliability and depth of the analysis. It strengthens recommendations by aligning data-driven trends with actionable strategies, such as expanding career development programs and enhancing community engagement. By providing both **quantitative evidence and qualitative insights** on key retention barriers—including job availability, housing affordability, and policy challenges—the report offers a well-rounded foundation for informed decision-making.

4. Findings:

This project has referred to many existing research articles and have received a total of 93 respondents from the survey. During the research on existing articles, the project found that the attendance rate of immigrants for schooling is highest in London with the values of 57.2% of immigrant's attendance rates when compared to other cities (Graph 1) (Statistics Canada, 2025). This says that there is a huge requirement for providing more job opportunities to the graduates in London. London has non-immigrants attendance rates as 45.5%. The next city followed by is Toronto with value of 56.8% of immigrant's attendance rate and 56.2% of non-immigrants attendance rates. The next place was occupied by Guelph with the values of 56% and 56.6% of immigrants and non-immigrants attendance rates. Hamilton and Kitchener almost had similar attendance rates with respect to immigrants and non-immigrants. The least was found to be in Windsor of 47.8% and 46% of immigrants and non-immigrants attendance rates.

Graph 1 – Attendance Rate of Students in London, Ontario

Source – (Statistics Canada, 2025)

This research also found that there is a high cost for rentals in London (Table 1) (Western University, 2024). As seen in the table, a single bachelor apartment is costing \$1070 and a single bedroom apartment as \$1555. The other room type fares are also too high for an international student to afford them.

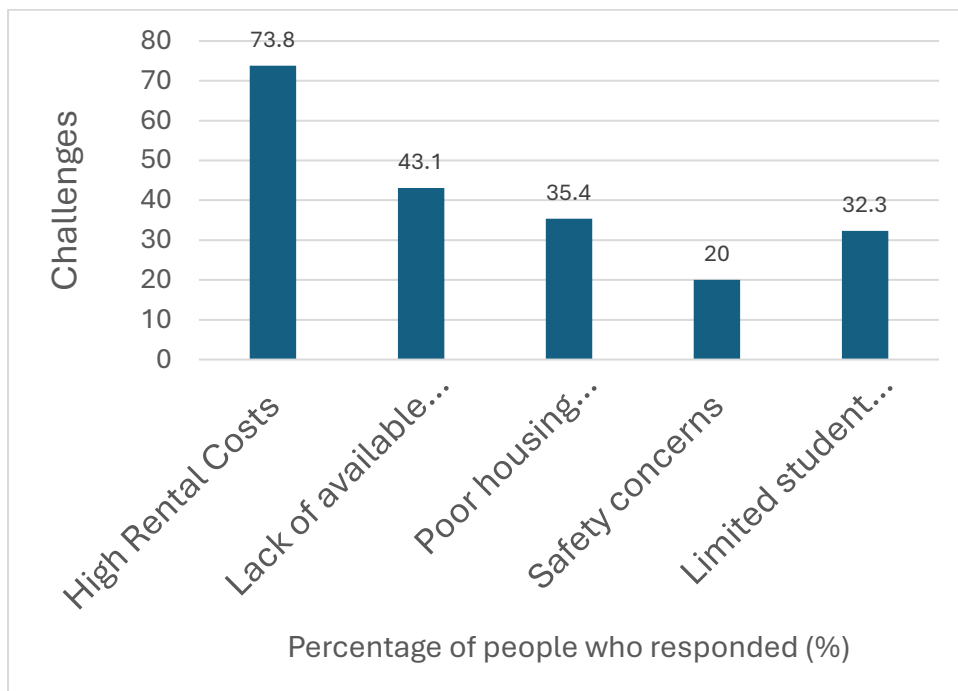
Table 1 – Rental Costs in London, Ontario

	Inclusive	Utilities Extra
Bachelor Apartment	\$1070	N/A
1 Bedroom Apartment	\$1555	\$1566
2 Bedroom Apartment	\$958/Bedroom	\$1036/Bedroom
3 Bedroom Apartment/House	\$946/Bedroom	\$967/Bedroom
4 Bedroom Apartment/House	\$865/Bedroom	\$971/Bedroom
5 Bedroom House	\$960/Bedroom	960/Bedroom
6+ Bedrooms House	\$994/Bedroom	\$1032/Bedroom
Rooms	\$921	\$868

Source – (Western University, 2024)

The survey helped to find the difficulties for housing being faced by the students and graduates. The main cause that many people said was high rental costs. Many respondents have said that they were facing high affordability issues for housing which is making an extra burden to them. Then followed by lack of available housing. They felt that insufficiency of houses in London was making them difficult to find a house. The next reason said was poor housing conditions. The individuals felt that there were many houses with poor maintenance making difficult to choose a house. Limited student housing conditions and safety concerns are the other problems that students facing difficulty in finding a suitable house.

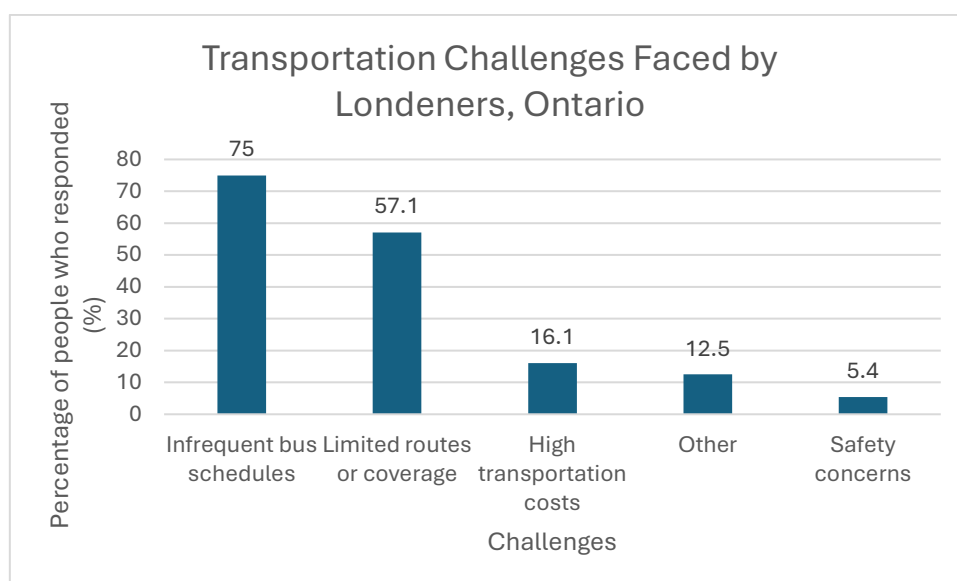
Graph 2 – Housing Challenges in London, Ontario



The survey found that graduates are experiencing many challenges for finding the jobs in London, Ontario (Graph 3) and hence they are not interested in staying in London after their graduation. The main reason for facing difficulty in finding a job was found to be limited job opportunities. Most of the respondents said that there were no sufficient job opportunities available for them to find a job after graduation. The next reason stated by the respondents was employers preferring candidates with more experience. The respondents felt that because of lack of experience they were facing hard time to find a job. The next most responded to was lack of networking opportunities. Individuals say that they have very limited networking opportunities to build a network for the job opportunities and facing difficulty to find job. Lack of work permits for international students was also one of the reasons mentioned by the respondents.

Graph 3 – Job Challenges in London, Ontario

Students as well as graduates said that they are facing many difficulties in transportation which making them to leave London. The primary cause stated by the respondents was infrequent bus schedules (Graph 4). Many people said this as major reason because the people who work late nights or the students who have classes in the early mornings and late evenings are facing difficulty to catch a bus to reach the desired destination. The next followed reason stated by them was limited routes of coverage. Individuals say that they have to walk for long distances because of limited routes of coverage. High transportation costs was the next reason stated by them as they find it difficult to afford especially for unemployed students and graduates. Safety concerns was the least responded challenge faced by the Londoners. They said some homeless people during the transport making them feel insecure. Mental health was also disturbed for the students and young adults (“Mental Health & Well-being”, 2024).

Graph 4 – Transportation Challenges in London, Ontario

5. Limitations and challenges:

5.1 Limitations -

- **Local Focus:** The research is centered solely on London, Ontario. While this allows for a more detailed analysis of local issues, it means the insights may not apply broadly to other regions across Canada.
- **Reliance on Survey Data:** The findings are largely based on online surveys, which, while insightful, may be influenced by participant bias, limited honesty, or overrepresentation of certain groups such as students over older adults.
- **Short Study Duration:** The data collection was confined to a one-month period, providing only a limited view of the challenges faced. A longer timeline could have revealed trends over time or seasonal issues, particularly around school start and end dates.
- **Partial Stakeholder Involvement:** Although the study includes input from students and a review of policy documents, it lacks direct engagement from key community players like municipal officials, health providers, and local employers. Their involvement could have added more depth to the analysis.
- **Constraints on Resources:** The scope of the project was restricted by limited time, budget, and access to confidential data such as employment records or healthcare usage, which could have enriched the findings.

5.2 Challenges

5.2.1. Getting Survey Responses

Collecting data through surveys turned out to be more difficult than the expected. It was hard to get enough people to participate, and even when they did, some didn't complete it or skipped important questions. It felt like we had to keep reminding and encouraging people just to get the minimum number of responses we needed.

5.2.2. Tech and Resource Limitations

London didn't have access to some of the data we were hoping for-like detailed stats from government or institutional sources. We reached out to a few organizations for info, but many didn't get back to us. Also, figuring out certain tools (like survey platforms or formatting the report) took longer than expected, and sometimes tech issues slowed us down.

5.2.3. Trouble Reaching Experts

Many individuals wanted to include insights from professionals or people working in local organizations, but getting in touch with them was tough. Most were too busy to respond or couldn't commit to interviews within the specified timeline. Because of that, people had to rely more on research and reports instead of first-hand expert opinions.

6. Recommendations:

- **Improve Employment Opportunities:** The employment problems faced by students and graduates in London require expansion of practical job programs including internships co-ops and mentorships. The experience students gain along with their development of local business connections through these opportunities are the benefits of practical job programs. Graph 3 reveals that numerous students decide to move away from the city because of absent employment choices. Providing businesses with financial stimuli when they employ graduate recruits would boost local recruitment rates thereby improving graduate retention (Flynn et al., 2011).
- **Increase Affordable Housing:** The high cost of rental properties and insufficient student-oriented living solutions create housing affordability challenges that obstruct students and young professionals (Table 1; Graph 2). The city needs to back the development of economical residential choices for students which should be positioned within proximity to college campuses and employment centers. Public agencies working together with private developers will enable the creation of affordable housing programs through subsidies. Through supportive city policies for flexible student-specific lease agreements the burden on students and their life quality would decrease significantly (City of London, 2019, 2020).
- **Enhance Public Transit Access:** Numerous survey participants expressed concerns about how infrequently buses ran along with their restricted evening and weekend schedules (Graph 4). More frequent transit service with extended operating times enables students along with young workers and social participants to commute easily between school and work and their social arrangements. The accessibility of London as a city for public transit-reliant young residents would improve when transit passes receive discounted or subsidized rates.
- **Support Social Engagement and Well-Being:** A significant number of students identified social isolation together with mental health concerns which prove the necessity for more robust community assistance structures (Mental Health & Well-being, 2024). The city needs to allocate funding for community programs with inclusive features as well as youth-based events and accessible public spaces that build membership connections. The partnership between Y.O.L.O and the city would establish better social support networks through youth leadership, which aims to improve the mental well-being among students and young professionals.
- **Strengthening Policy and Institutional Collaboration:** The submission identified poor coordination between educational organizations and both the local government and service providers. The consistent fulfillment of student requirements demands long-lasting data-backed plans that receive support from effective multi-sector cooperation. Policymakers together with institutions should merge shared goals and resources which will boost support systems and student retention rates across London.

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FANSHAWE COLLEGE

SOSC – 6003 - CAPSTONE

CAPSTONE PROJECT – Talent Retention in the City of London

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Submitted to: Prof. Jannelle Yoon

Submitted on: 14 April 2025

Submitted by: Group 3

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This capstone project examines the escalating talent retention problem in London, Ontario. Despite the city's sound educational system and strategic geographical position, most young professionals are abandoning London to pursue more rewarding job prospects, better pay, and an improved quality of life in bigger cities.

Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, combining a survey of 122 post-secondary graduates and students, secondary labour market data, and a comparative analysis of talent retention strategies in other successful Canadian cities, this research identifies the key factors driving talent outmigration. Survey findings reveal a significant mismatch between graduate skills and local employment opportunities, limited prospects for career advancement, and financial pressures stemming from a high cost of living and low starting salaries.

Comparative research on initiatives in Thunder Bay, Calgary, Hamilton, and the Toronto-Waterloo Innovation Corridor highlights strategies that London can adopt. This report recommends tailored solutions such as career development workshops, local co-op and internship programs, job-matching platforms, and industry-specific job fairs. These initiatives aim to bridge the gap between education and employment, enhancing the city's appeal to emerging talent. Finally, the report concludes that without immediate and strategic interventions, London risks losing a significant portion of its skilled labour force. By addressing systemic barriers and fostering a welcoming environment for young graduates, the city can strengthen its economy and position itself as a place where talented professionals choose to stay, grow, and contribute.

BACKGROUND

The retention of skilled talent remains a significant challenge for London, Ontario, particularly as larger urban centers such as Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal are perceived to offer broader occupational opportunities and a higher quality of life. Most students and recent graduates from Western University and Fanshawe College leave London after completing their programs (*Non Profit Network Encouraging London Students to Stay in the City*, 2016). This pattern of population outmigration challenges London's economic future, workforce development, and professional talent retention. This study analyzes students' and recent graduates' challenges, motivations, and needs as they decide whether to remain in or leave London to pursue a better future and enhanced lifestyle opportunities.

According to the study "*Graduate Retention in the Waterloo Region: A Study on Youth Migration Patterns*" (Millward et al., 2017), while a portion of students expressed satisfaction with the quality of education in Waterloo, 60% left the region after graduation due to limited professional opportunities in their fields and a lack of socio-cultural engagement. The study highlights that strengthening partnerships between local employers and educational institutions, expanding co-op and internship opportunities, and improving access to basic amenities are key strategies to enhance graduate retention.

When examining London's case, many students surveyed indicated that securing meaningful, well-paying jobs in their fields is challenging. Many expressed concerns about the limited accessibility of local employment opportunities within their chosen professions, highlighting a significant mismatch between their skills and available jobs. Another key issue was the lack of strong industry connections, such as internships, mentorship programs, and networking events that link graduates to local employers. The most significant finding from the survey, however, was the financial and housing pressures graduates face, with wages failing to keep pace with the cost of living. This research outlines the steps London, Ontario, must take to retain talent and address these challenges.

METHODOLOGY

The primary data source for this study is a structured survey conducted among post-secondary students and recent graduates in London, Ontario. The survey was designed to collect both closed- and open-ended responses, capturing comprehensive insights. It gathered information on participants' educational levels and fields of study, current employment and residency status, perceptions of job availability in London, the alignment of local opportunities with their career goals, and the factors influencing their decisions to stay or leave. The survey focuses on key questions such as: What factors influence their decision to stay or leave? How do students and graduates perceive local employment prospects in the region? Moreover, what measures can be implemented to improve their chances of building a successful career in London? Additionally, the survey invited suggestions for improving talent retention. A total of 122 responses were collected and analyzed for this research.

The secondary data source includes labour market data, specifically focusing on current employment rates by sector in London, Ontario. This data combines job growth forecasts in high-demand industries and local unemployment and underemployment rates among graduates. Most importantly, it includes salary comparisons between London and other cities across Ontario. These reports help assess how well the city's job market aligns with the ambitions and expectations of recent graduates.

Another key method used in this study was a comparative analysis of cities across Canada. This analysis demonstrated that enhancing co-op and mentorship programs, offering incentives for companies to hire new graduates, and developing networking hubs and innovation districts aimed at young professionals can significantly improve talent retention. These findings suggest similar strategies could effectively retain talent in London, Ontario.

CURRENT STATE OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN LONDON, ONTARIO

The City of London is a city that has a well-established economic base. It has all the major industries like healthcare, manufacturing, information technology, education, and finance. The city can also benefit from

its prime location between Toronto and Detroit. This makes London an attractive destination for businesses looking to expand. Despite these advantages, the city struggles to retain skilled professionals due to several key challenges within the local job market.

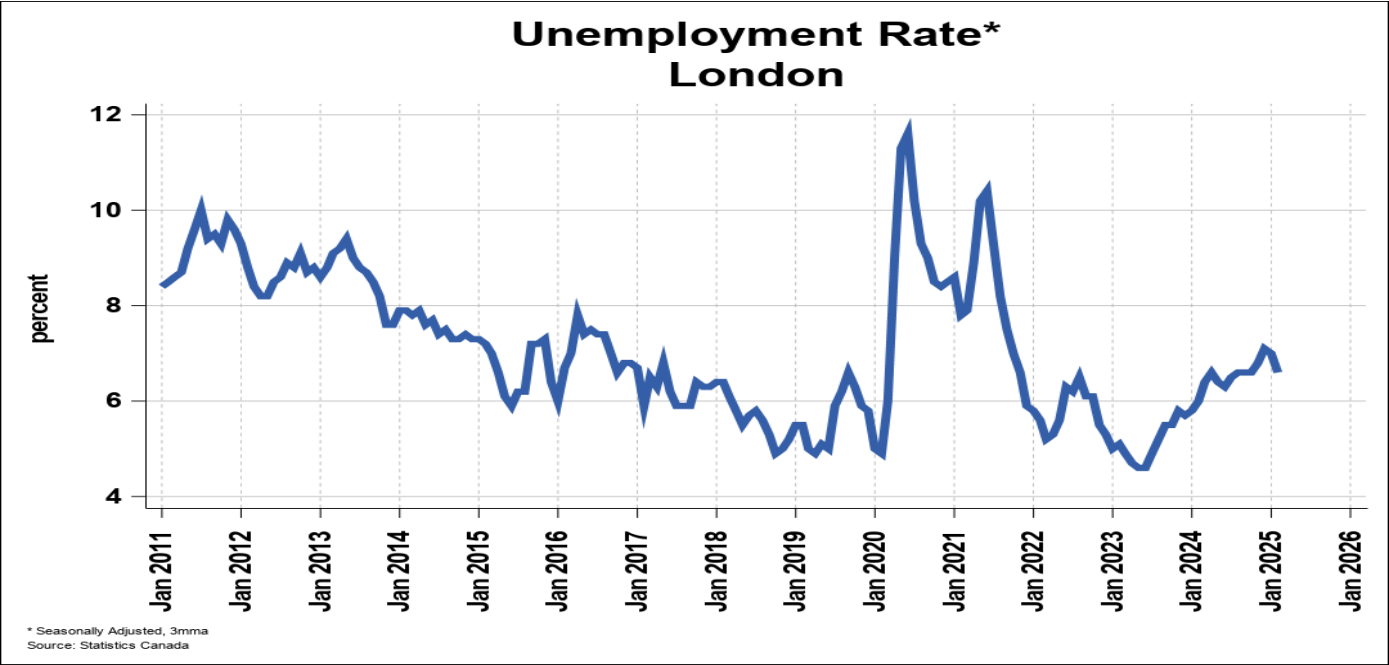


Diagram 1, Source: (London & St. Thomas Employment Trends, CREA Statistics, 2025)

As shown in Diagram 1, although the unemployment rate decreased in 2023, it has since shown a clear upward trend, indicating that unemployment is again on the rise (London & St. Thomas Employment Trends, CREA Statistics, 2025).

Demographic Group	London Emp Rate	Canada Emp Rate	Difference (in population) (Moffatt, 2019)
15-24 M	53.5	55.4	-675
25-54 M	79.4	86.3	-7135
55+ M	37.0	40.8	-2763
15-24 F	53.1	57.2	-1443
25-54 F	74.6	79.1	-4851
55+ F	30.6	31.3	-592

Table 1, referred from: (Moffatt, 2019)

Despite being a regional hub for higher education, London, Ontario, lags behind the national average in employment rates across all demographic groups. This gap is particularly significant among individuals aged 25–54. If aligned with the national average, it could result in approximately 12,000 (25 – 54 M category difference 7153 + 25 – 54 F category difference 4851) additional people being employed (Moffatt, 2019). Since the city has a large student population to whom lower employment rates are offering, there lies the real issue - the city's limited capacity to convert educational attainment into sustainable and full-time employment.

Historically, according to the data, London performed better in this regard, as seen in 2001 when employment rates for core working-age men and women surpassed national benchmarks. The current fall in employment rate points out the critical disconnect between education, job demand, and talent retention. Addressing this gap requires increasing the availability of quality jobs and creating clearer pathways for students and recent graduates to transition into the local workforce. Without targeted strategies, such as employer partnerships, career integration programs, and more substantial support for full-time roles, London risks losing a significant portion of its educated talent to more competitive labour markets.

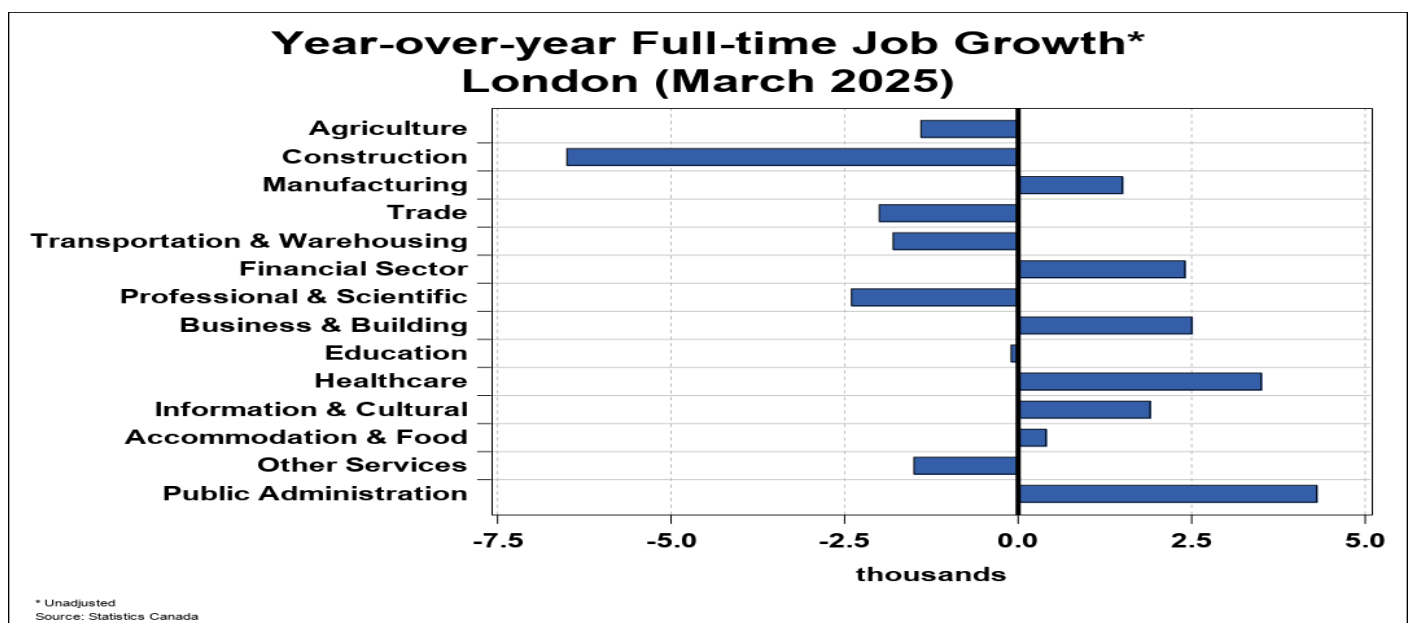


Diagram 2, Source: (London & St. Thomas Employment Trends, CREA Statistics, 2025)

This diagram 2 shows the change in full-time employment in March 2025 across various sectors. A positive percentage indicates growth in full-time jobs over the year, while a negative percentage signifies a decline. This representation helps identify long-term trends in the labour market and provides valuable insight into the overall full-time employment in that region.

For instance, if Diagram 2 shows a +2% change in October 2024, there were 2% more full-time jobs than in October 2023. Conversely, a -1.5 % change would indicate a 1.5% decrease in full-time employment year-over-year.

The diagram shows that the construction field showed the most significant decline in March 2025. This clearly shows the necessity of developing immediate strategies to overcome this decline and to improve employment opportunities in the construction field (London & St. Thomas Employment Trends, CREA Statistics, 2025).



Diagram 3, Source: (London & St. Thomas Employment Trends, CREA Statistics, 2025)

Diagram 3 shows the monthly growth in full-time employment in London. It shows whether the full-time job has increased or decreased compared to the previous month.

In order to understand the dynamics of the current job market, monitoring monthly changes is important. It allows us to understand the impact of recent economic developments, policy changes, or seasonal employment patterns.

By analysing these data, it is understandable that the current labour market in London, Ontario, shows significant signs of need for recovery. Even though unemployment is relatively stable, the low or negative full-time job growth in many sectors highlights the need for urgent strategic efforts to stimulate job opportunities, particularly full-time job positions. This can include supporting entrepreneurship programs, local and new businesses, and investing in sectors intended for long-term growth, such as technology, healthcare, and skilled trades (London & St. Thomas Employment Trends, CREA Statistics, 2025).

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: TALENT RETENTION PROGRAMS IN OTHER CANADIAN CITIES

Examining strategies implemented in other Canadian cities facing similar issues is valuable to better understand London's talent retention challenges and identify potential solutions. By comparing London's approach with successful initiatives in regions like Thunder Bay, Calgary, Hamilton, and the Toronto-Waterloo Innovation Corridor, this study highlights effective practices that could be adapted to strengthen London's ability to retain its skilled graduates.

Talent Retention Project 2022 in Thunder Bay

The Talent Retention Project 2022 in Thunder Bay is a valuable example of an excellent talent retention program. Through this project, they identified and highlighted the critical gap in student engagement. They identified that many students, especially international and underrepresented groups, were unaware of local employment opportunities or support systems. In response to this, the city established a committee called the Talent Retention Steering Committee. This committee strengthens community connections, promotes regional job opportunities, and creates pathways for student integration into the local workforce (Talent Retention Project 2022, n.d.).

Thunder Bay adopts this program considering Nova Scotia's Study and Stay program. This program is designed to support students in their final year of study. The program combines career development

tools, mentorship, networking events, and immigration guidance. This program's targeted and structured approach has led to outstanding results. It met and surpassed its goal of retaining 80% of participating graduates one year after completion (Talent Retention Project 2022, n.d.).

Both these initiatives point out how important a structured approach is in improving the graduate retention rate in a town. For a city like London, boosting current career pathways, enhancing students' access to professional networks, and proactively addressing the needs of international students are crucial to talent retention. The project found that students, particularly international and underrepresented groups, often lack awareness of local opportunities and support networks.

Toronto - Waterloo Innovation Corridor

The Toronto-Waterloo Innovation Corridor is one of North America's most dynamic technology and innovation ecosystems. By spreading approximately 100 kilometres wide, this corridor connects the economic strengths of Toronto with the innovation-driven culture of Waterloo and forms a robust and collaborative hub. This hub is home to over 15,000 tech companies, including over 5,000 startups. It also has a highly skilled workforce exceeding 300,000 professionals. Including all these, the region offers an excellent infrastructure for business growth and technological advancement (Discover the Toronto-Waterloo Corridor: North America's Second Largest Tech Hub, 2024).

For the success of the innovation hub, numerous accelerator and incubator programs support entrepreneurs and attract global talent. This corridor not only improves economic growth but also strengthens talent retention. Professionals are more likely to stay in the region because they have high-quality job opportunities and continuous upskilling opportunities (Discover the Toronto-Waterloo Corridor: North America's Second Largest Tech Hub, 2024).

For a city like London, replicating models like this, such as building startups, improving academic-industry collaboration, and creating innovation hubs, could significantly retain young and skilled graduates.

The City of Calgary's 5G Discovery Zone

Calgary showed how investments in digital infrastructure can serve as a foundation for talent retention and economic revitalization. The most notable initiative of the city is the 5G Discovery Zone. This program will incorporate next-generation connectivity (5G Network) to attract global investment and create new job opportunities. This zone provides an environment where tech companies, entrepreneurs, and researchers can test and scale digital solutions, making Calgary an attractive destination for businesses which having a forward-thinking attitude (City of Calgary, 2024).

The impact of this initiative extends far beyond infrastructure. The 5G Discovery Zone has attracted world-class companies to Calgary. Because they offer the digital capacity needed for high-performance computing, data-intensive applications, and remote operations, this discovery zone particularly supports remote work and flexible employment models, which young professionals increasingly value.

Moreover, the improved digital infrastructure has acted as a catalyst for employment growth across multiple sectors. With introducing technology firms and startups, Calgary increases its skilled job opportunities. This eventually encourages graduates and professionals to remain in the city itself. This innovation boosts the local economy, helping to address the "brain drain" phenomenon often seen in mid-sized Canadian cities (City of Calgary, 2024).

Calgary's innovation offers a valuable lesson to cities like London. Investing in digital infrastructure is not only about technological development, but also an effective strategy for talent retention. By improving digital capacity, municipalities can create an environment where talents choose to stay.

City of Hamilton's Recruitment and Retention Strategy in a Tightening Labour Market

The City of Hamilton demonstrates an interesting model of how strategic planning can strengthen the talent retention rate in the city. To tighten the labour market, Hamilton launched a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy to address systemic issues within its municipal workforce. One of the foundational steps involved was modernizing outdated recruitment practices to ensure they aligned with current market expectations. This included streamlining hiring procedures, updating compensation

frameworks, and implementing structural changes to reduce excessive workloads (City launches recruitment and retention strategy to better compete in tightening labour market, 2025).

Beyond this, Hamilton also recognized the importance of implementing a supportive and forward-thinking work environment. The city introduced a consistent hybrid work policy allowing greater flexibility and work-life balance. Internal promotion opportunities were also considered. They figure out that creating clear career progression pathways to grow within the organization will motivate the employees to stay without seeking opportunities elsewhere (City launches recruitment and retention strategy to better compete in tightening labour market, 2025).

To further improve its competitiveness, Hamilton also launched a targeted marketing campaign. This campaign showcased the city as a vibrant, inclusive, and opportunity-rich employer. This city branding helped change public perception about the city and attract a broader range of qualified candidates to the town (City launches recruitment and retention strategy to better compete in tightening labour market, 2025).

Hamilton's model highlights the effectiveness of such an approach that addresses structural inefficiencies and employee well-being. Cities like London could adopt this model, which includes modernizing hiring practices, flexible work options, and providing advancement opportunities within the organizations. This could significantly improve talent attraction and retention in the city.

SURVEY FINDINGS

We conducted a survey targeting the current graduate students and recent graduates to understand the current employment ecosystem and the talent retention challenges in London, Ontario. A total of 122 responses were collected in the survey, covering various aspects such as employment status, career alignment, challenges, and expectations from employers. The findings provide valuable insights into how well the city supports the career and growth opportunities of the population getting educated, and what steps could be taken to improve talent retention.

Out of 122 responses, the majority of participants have high-level qualifications. 51.7% have a Master's degree and 25.8% have a Bachelor's. These respondents were at diverse population levels from diverse

fields such as business, pharmacy, engineering, IT, healthcare, and the arts. Of these 122 respondents, 88.8% are employed part-time and 11.2% hold full-time positions. 78.7% of respondents reside in London, and 15.6% have recently moved there. When asked about job availability in their field, most responded as moderate or slightly low. Only 8.3% consider that the current job opportunities align with their career goals. This highlights the disconnection between the city's job market and the expectations of the skilled population.

Which factors attract you to stay in London? (Select all that apply)

122 responses

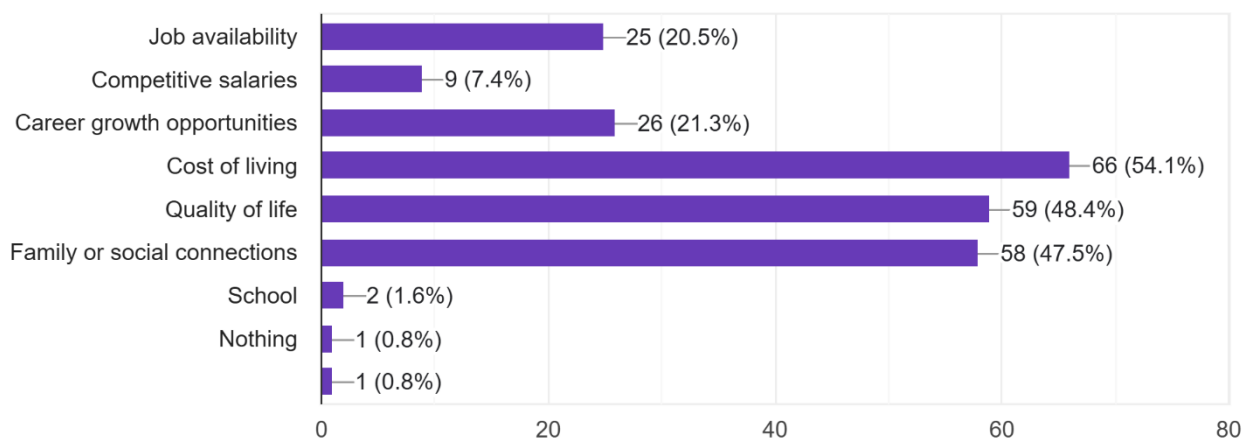


Diagram 4, Source: (Survey,2025)

According to diagram 4, the main factors attracting talent to stay in London include cost of living (54.1%), quality of life (48.4%), and family and social connections (47.5%). While lifestyle and personal networks influence retention, career opportunities are not a very attractive factor among the population. This highlights the critical need to improve and expand career growth opportunities in the city.

What would most likely influence you to move out of London? (Select all that apply)

122 responses

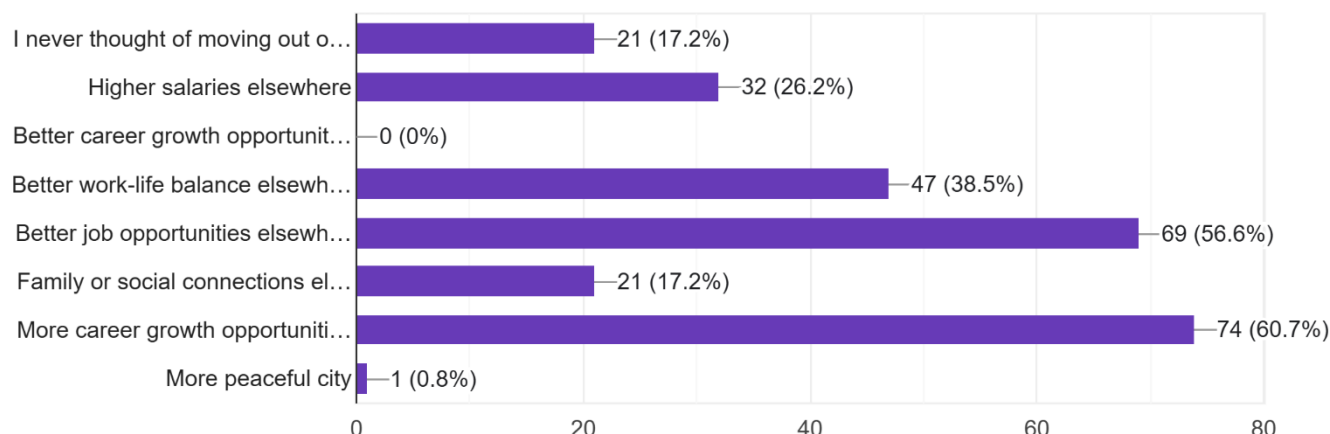


Diagram 5, Source: (Survey,2025)

Diagram 5 shows that 56.6% of the respondents identified better job opportunities elsewhere and the lack of career growth (60.7%) as the primary reasons for leaving London. This response highlights the urgent need to enhance the development of local career pathways and expand meaningful employment options in the town to retain these top talents in the city itself. Improving current conditions and employment chances is essential to prevent brain drain and make London a more attractive and competitive destination for skilled professionals.

What could employers in London do to retain talent like you?

122 responses

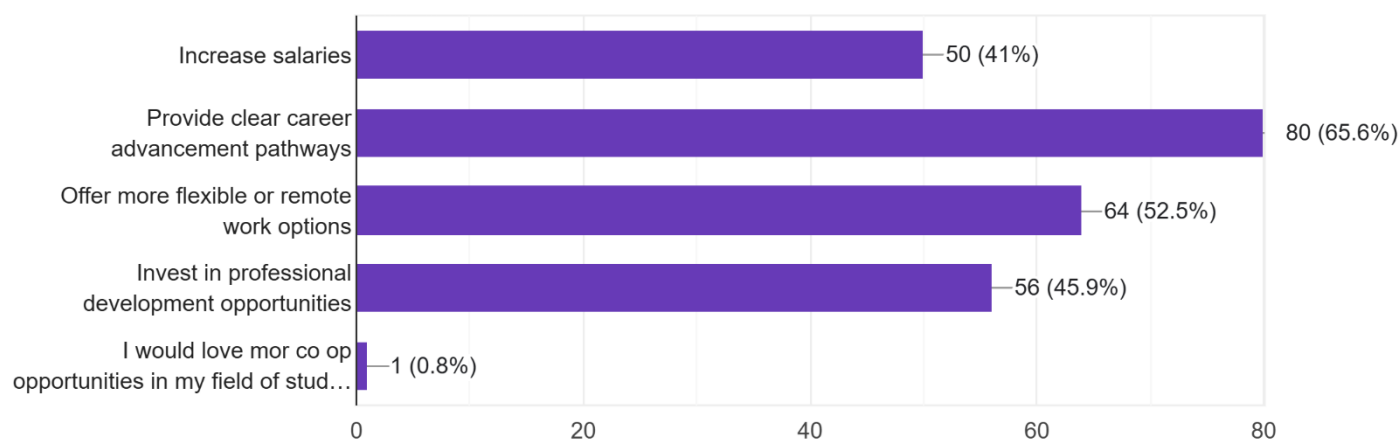


Diagram 6, Source: (Survey,2025)

While asked about what employers in London can do to retain top talent, many suggestions were made. That suggestion included providing clear career advancement pathways (65.6%), more flexible/remote work options (52.5%), investing in professional development opportunities (45.9%), and increasing salaries (41%). Analysing these responses, it was pointed out that respondents are looking for not just jobs but meaningful, growth-oriented careers.

Have you participated in any professional training or upskilling programs in London?

122 responses

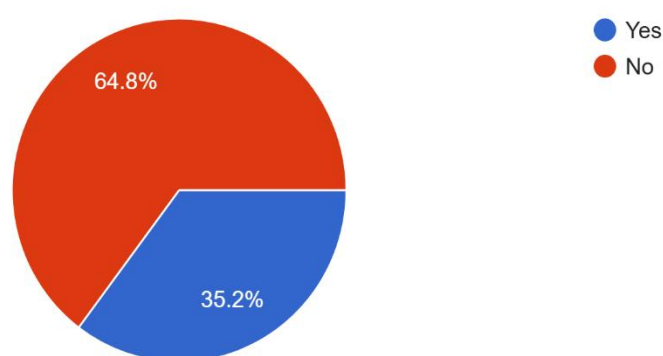


Diagram 7, Source: (Survey,2025)

The survey found that only 35.2% of respondents have participated in professional training or upskilling programs in London. Most of the population, 64.8%, has not yet engaged in such opportunities (Shown in diagram 7). This information highlights the significant gap in the awareness of career development programs among graduate students. This underscores the importance of expanding high-quality, targeted upskilling programs aligned with local job market demands to better prepare and retain talent in London.

When asked about satisfaction with the current mentorship programs available in London, only 4.2% of respondents responded that they are delighted, and 5.1% expressed dissatisfaction. Interestingly, most of the population (55.9% of respondents) responded neutrally to that question (Shown in diagram 8). This indicates the general lack of awareness or limited access to existing mentorship opportunities. This

indicates the urgent need for increasing visibility of these upskilling programs, better promotion, and increasing accessibility of such programs to support professional development and talent retention.

How satisfied are you with the mentorship and networking opportunities available in London?

118 responses

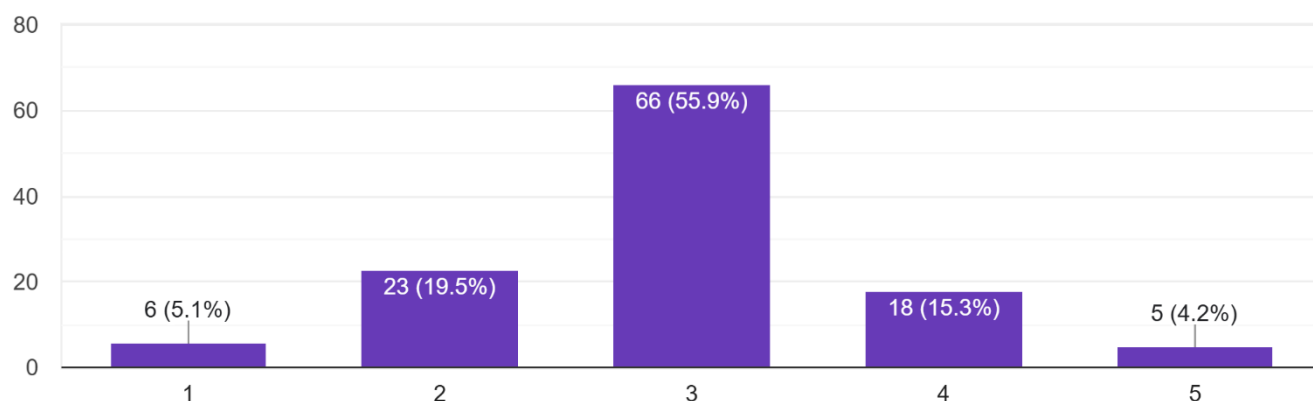


Diagram 8, Source: (Survey,2025)

When qualitatively analysing the responses provided by the survey respondents, many people who responded to the survey said that London needs more job opportunities, especially full-time and entry-level roles. A few even shared personal examples, like long lines at local businesses because they are short-staffed, pointing out that there is room to hire more people. This gives the impression that the city's job market is not keeping up with the needs of its residents, especially for those just starting in their careers. Besides more jobs, one of the key themes that emerged during the analysis is the need for mentorship and career upskilling programs. Respondents discussed the need for better support to grow their careers, such as more job fairs, co-op programs, and hands-on training, especially for new graduates.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Economic progress into the future depends heavily on stronger digital networks, employment reforms, and establishing an innovation center. Recent graduates will not receive immediate solutions through the

essential modifications to their daily job search activities. Students and new graduates experience the absence of suitable networking tools that connect directly

between professionals in their fields, resulting in their urgent need for such professional networking access. The tailored networking process exists through graduate participation in exclusive mentorship programs, industry gatherings, and meetings between alumni and employers. These opportunities give graduates special chances to build professional relations as they acquire essential inside knowledge and uncover positions beyond typical publicity methods. Developing specific professional relationships enhances graduate retention by building a space that validates their value and ensures safety through community networks (Employment Support – Immigration, 2025).

Student and young professional retention in London needs targeted solutions because of its complicated nature. The initiatives target the students' particular requirements to help their career advancement, which will make London more desirable for professional residence.

Career Development Workshops

Universities mostly sideline career services, although most institutions already provide these resources. Academic programs should include workshops that teach resume writing, interview techniques, and networking abilities so students develop professional resumes by the end of their semesters.

Local Internships and Co-op Programs: The solutions are combined projects between businesses, educational facilities, and students. The joint venture pools students' practical experience through hands-on work that directs them toward local professional prospects while cultivating shared accomplishment.

Job Matching Platform: A specific platform matching London-area job vacancies to students and fresh graduates would create easier employment access to suitable local options for this demographic.

Industry-Specific Job Fairs: Job seekers can benefit from industry-specific fairs when employers from their targeted field interact directly with them for career opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight an emerging and concerning trend. London risks losing a notable proportion of its educated and skilled labour force. This may be because of limited professional opportunities and poor industry-academic relationships. Even though it is home to large educational institutions, the city fails to secure long-term jobs, thus resulting in talent outmigration.

Through comprehensive research analysis and survey research, students and recent graduates desire better jobs aligned with their field of study, better-paying jobs, and a more inclusive professional climate. Case studies in Thunder Bay, Calgary, Toronto-Waterloo, and Hamilton demonstrate the success of targeted, innovative retention programs in addressing these concerns.

London must increase academic-industry collaboration to improve talent retention and expand career development and co-op opportunities. Structured mentorship programs, local job-matching websites, and varied recruitment strategies are also vital. By implementing these evidence-based solutions and addressing the needs of its emerging workforce, London can be made a more attractive, sustainable location for young talent.

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Survey

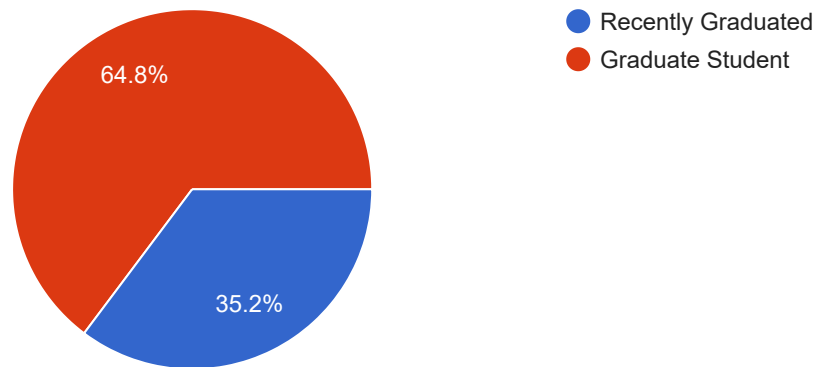
122 responses

[Publish analytics](#)

Choose the best one that suits you.

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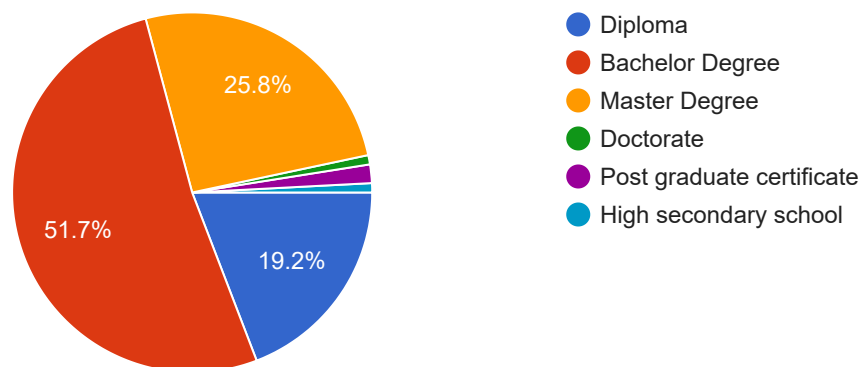
122 responses



What is your highest level of education?

 Copy

120 responses



What is your field of study?

122 responses

Education

Construction

Civil engineering

Business

Pharmacy

Bachelor of Arts

Automotive

Healthcare

Civil Engineering

Business

Architecture

Commerce

IT

Education

Pharmacy

Engineering

Addictions and mental health

Communication

Developmental service worker

Information Technology

Aviation



Technology

Bachelors in medical science

Bachelor of arts bachelor

Data Analysis

Arts

Developmental Service worker

Geographic Information Systems

chemistry

Architecture

Manufacturing

Geographic Information Systems

Physics

Developmental Service Worker

Master of Arts

Science

Research

Health

Electronics Equipment and Maintenance

ARTS

Food and beverage

master of science

Mechanical

Mechanical Engineering



Dentistry

Speech-Language Pathology

Developmental service worker

Human Resources

Biomedical

Business Management

Science

Social sciences

High school

Business marketing

Health science

Developmental Services Worker

Teaching English to Speaker of Other Languages

ESL teaching

Information technology

Finance/Business

Social work

Commerce

Business Administration

Journalism, ESL instructor

Geology

TESOL

Bachelor in Computer Science



Management

Regulatory Affairs

HealthCare

Geographic information system

Research

Health Care

Agribusiness Management

Computer science

PSW

Developmental services worker

Human Resources Management

Information Technology

Bachelor's in Education

Mechanic Engineering

Research and evaluation

Automotive service management

ESL

DSW

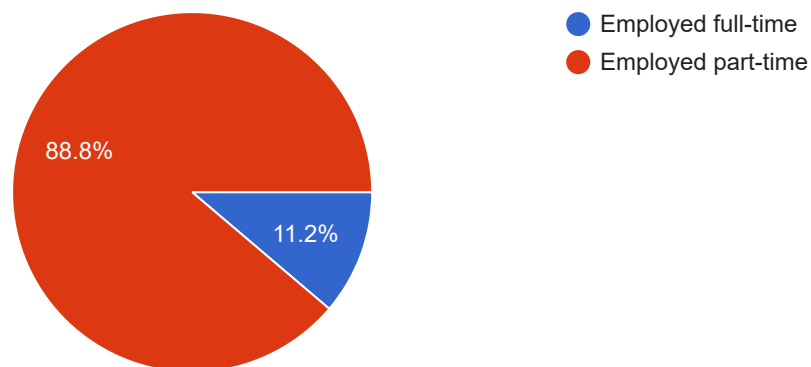
Insurance and risk management

Embedded system

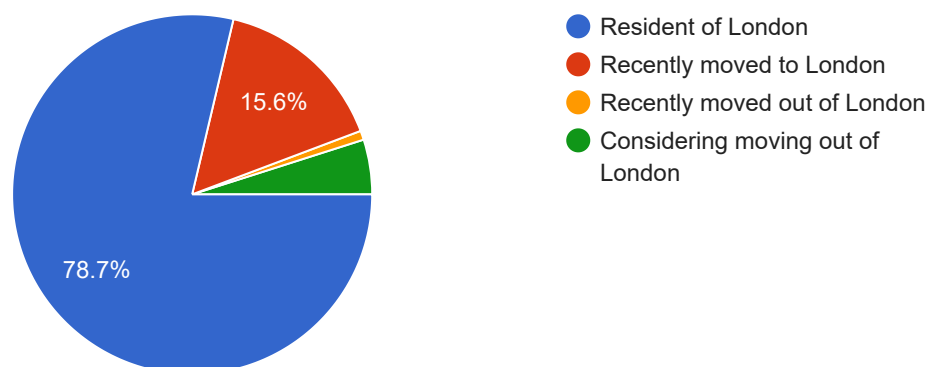


What is your current employment status? Copy

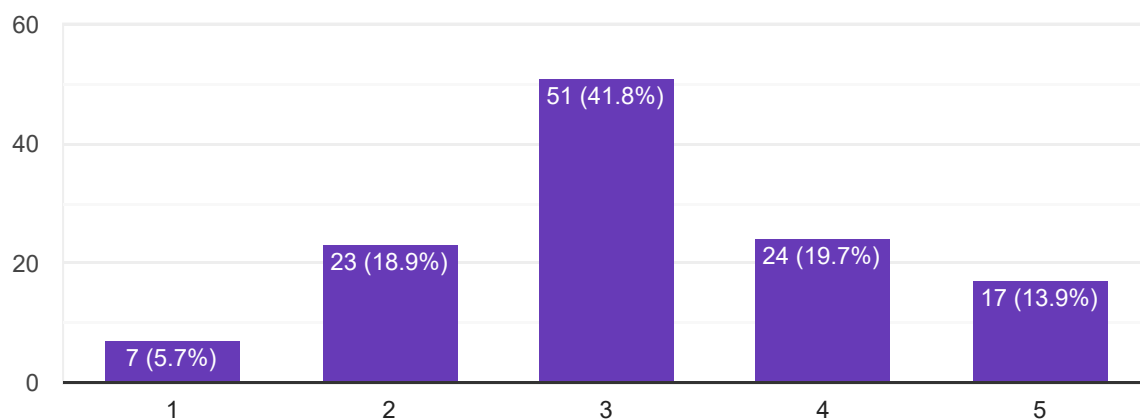
107 responses

**What is your current residency status?** Copy

122 responses

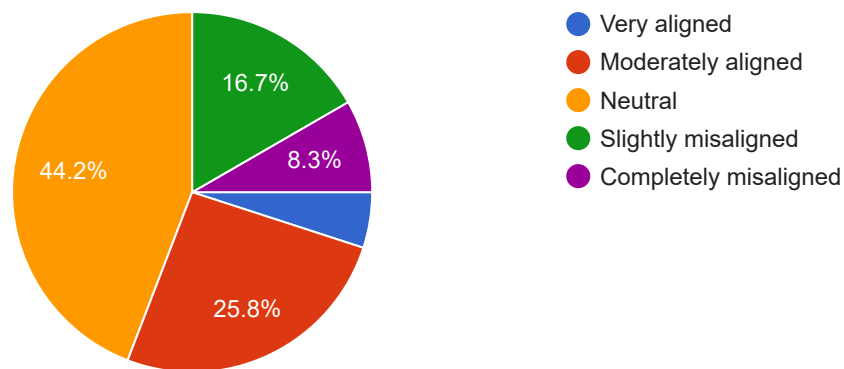
**How would you rate the availability of jobs in your field in London?** Copy

122 responses

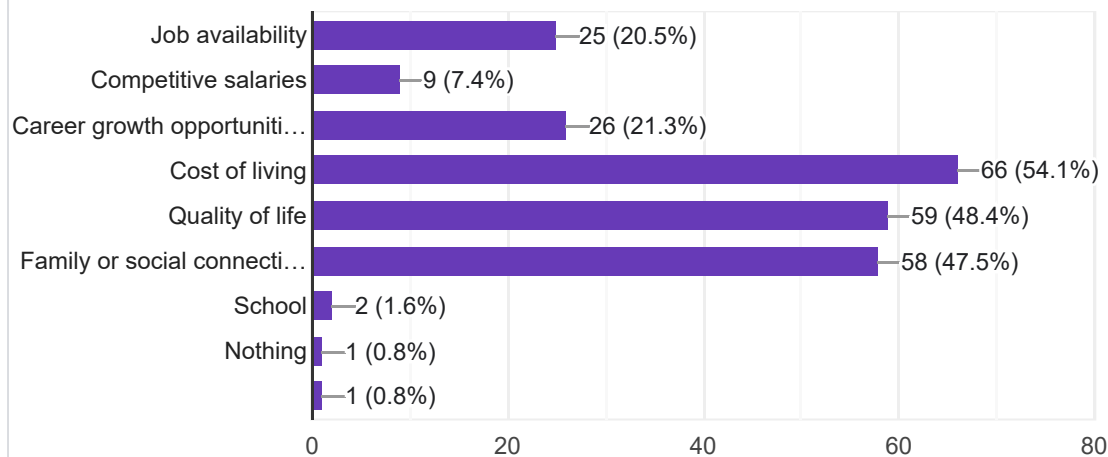


How aligned are the job opportunities in London with your career goals? Copy

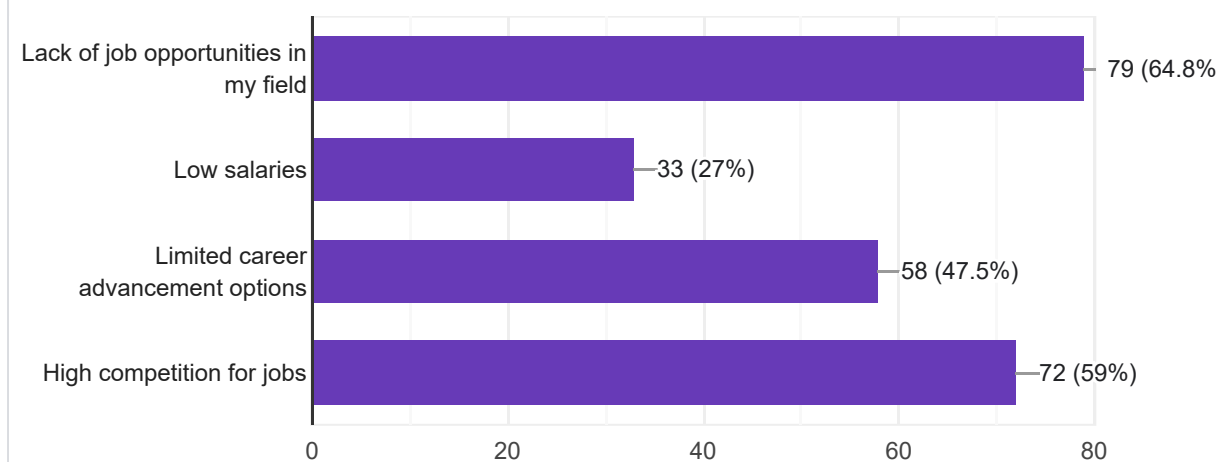
120 responses

**Which factors attract you to stay in London? (Select all that apply)** Copy

122 responses

**What challenges do you face in finding suitable employment in London? (Select all that apply)** Copy

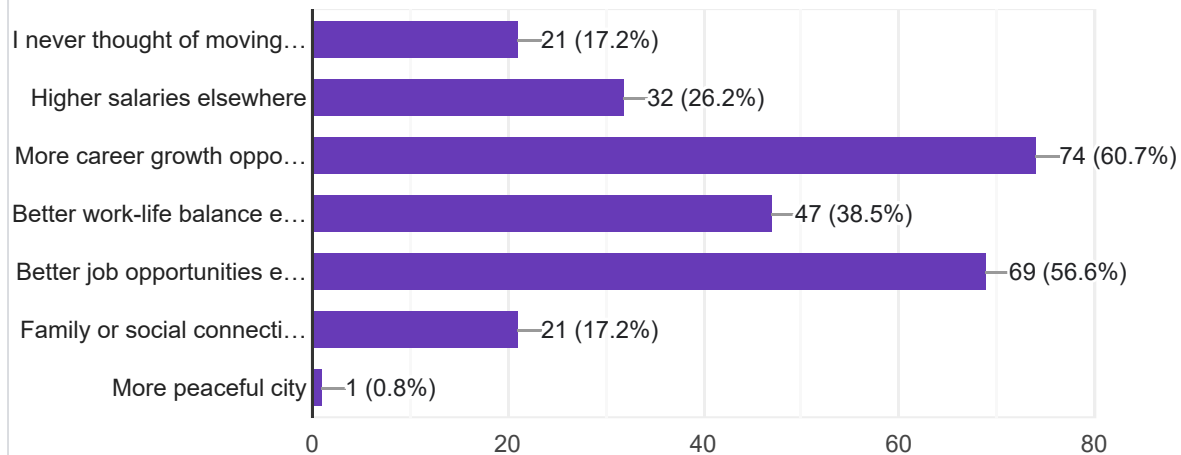
122 responses



What would most likely influence you to move out of London? (Select all that apply)

 Copy

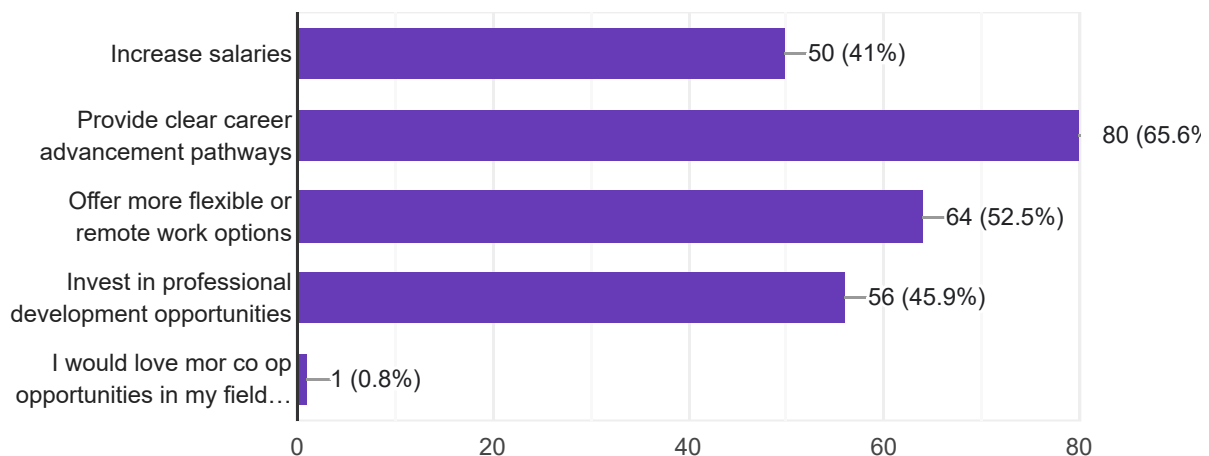
122 responses



What could employers in London do to retain talent like you?

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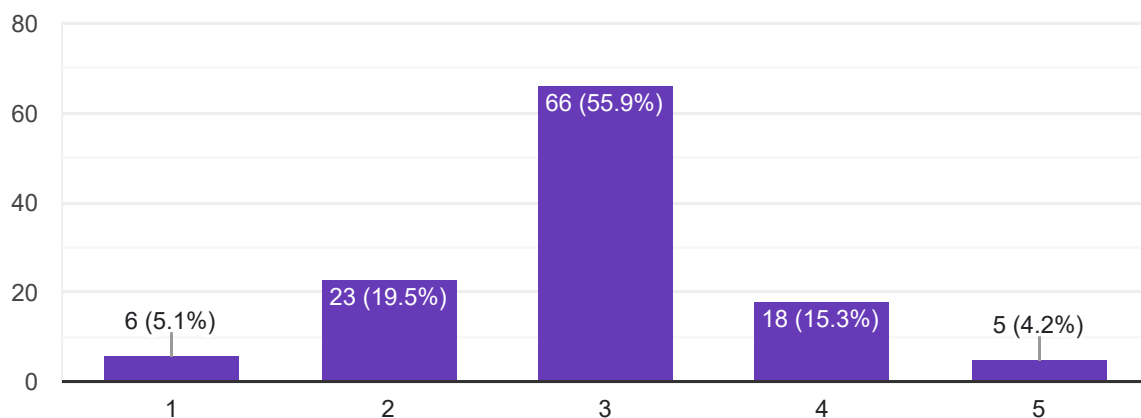
122 responses



How satisfied are you with the mentorship and networking opportunities available in London?

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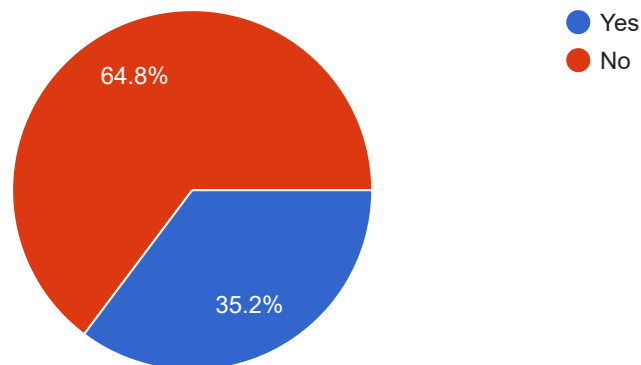
118 responses





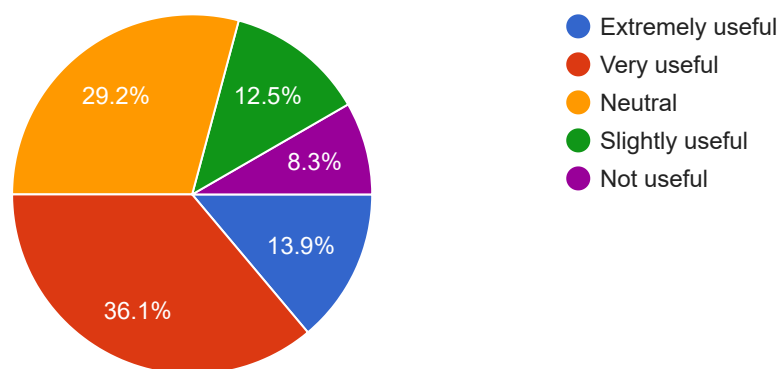
Have you participated in any professional training or upskilling programs in London?

122 responses



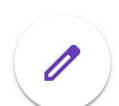
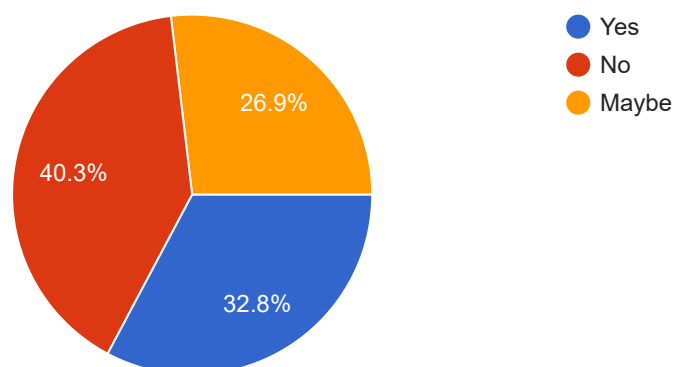
If yes, how useful were these programs in advancing your career?

72 responses



Do you have access to flexible or remote work opportunities in your current job/current field of study?

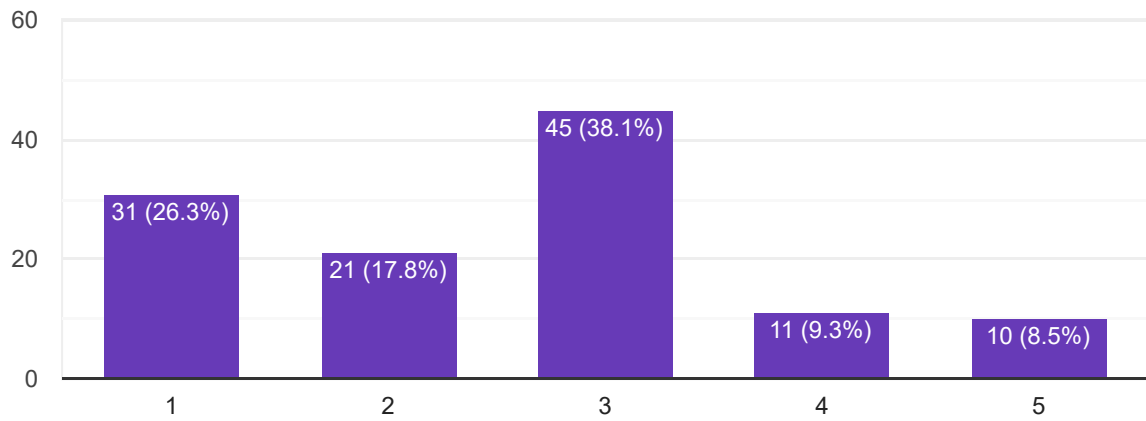
119 responses



How important are flexible or remote work options in your decision to stay in London?



118 responses



What specific changes would make London a more attractive place for career opportunities?

66 responses

Moderate climate and less expensive

More opportunities

More work opportunities

Improve bus service

The job openings in London can be increased. London needs more employees in different field than they have now. For example, in Tim Hortons where I usually go, the customer line is too long since there is only one worker to attend the customers while they have two counters which makes it difficult for the customers., likewise in any other jobs the employers can hire more. If a part time job is difficult to find in a city like London, what would be it like to find a full time job!

Increasing job opportunities, particularly in entry-level positions

Provide more professional training to recently graduate students for career enhancement.

Conducting job fair in various locations

More opportunity

More investments, more job opportunities etc.

open more job positions. even if for me, as a gis analyst, they can provide more opportunities especially for graduated students, in different firms.

Need more career opportunities for individuals financial growth.

London needs more high-paying jobs in tech and healthcare, better public transport, affordable housing, and stronger business-education links. Supporting startups and offering job incentives can boost career opportunities.

Job availability and reduced cost of living

More job openings

London has one of the thriving job markets , they should organize community initiatives to help employers highlight their open positions through portals

From my perspective, stabilize economic conditions by mitigating inflation and recessionary pressures, which currently constrain hiring and business expansion. Apart from this, focus on



emerging sectors like green jobs, AI development, cybersecurity, and sustainability, which are forecasted to grow rapidly. Implement modular and flexible training programs aligned with employer demands, particularly in digital and transferable skills.

Better job, transportation and education

Cost of living and growth in life

More career opportunities for freshers

need more job opportunities I live in there from last 7 to 8 months, and I have no job till last 7 to months that's why job is more important.

More competitive salary based on experienced.

Need to increase more career opportunities so people would find their satisfaction to stay here and provide chances them to grow and get promotions.

More medical and dental establishments

More investment in new businesses

The frequent change in city renovations and the changes in the law in each job opportunity.

MORE JOB OPPOTUNITIES FOR FRESH GRADUATES

I believe that having access to opportunities from the moment I was graduating would have been a fantastic experience. Also, if we could have mentors who are in the industry tell us about the different career paths that we can pursue, it would also help open up doors for us as job seekers.

Permanent full time jobs in my field

Good connections with family and friends

Provide more frequent bus to reach everywhere .. and also London should open more job opportunity for newly graduated

Bring more industries and career opportunities

More job openings for graduates

Transparency in hiring

Reduce tax

Advancement and mentorship



More management jobs

Give opportunity for people to invest, lower tax rates, support start-up businesses, invest in peoples ideas that would help create job opportunity and lower environmental pollution- waste reduction (great ideas but no proper funding, lack of place and logistics)

More job opportunities

Building more houses, lowering rent salaries, and providing job opportunities.

Better investment in job sectors

Need more Job fairs and part time job opportunities for students.

Improve infrastructure as soon as possible

Cool and calm with more job opportunities

Provide job opportunities for fresh students

More options for public transport. Better bus routes, less competition in the job market.

London could attract more career opportunities by expanding industries, offering better wages, supporting new graduates, improving public transportation, and making housing more affordable.

More number of jobs

More opportunities for the novice job seekers

Maybe a clear employment setup. With better job specifications.

More job opportunities in environmental and science fields

More Job oportunities

More remote opportunity

i think more IT firms are needed

Growth

Better work life balance

More career opportunities

More facilities



More job opportunities

As an assistant educator in daycare, basic wages should be increased. my friends in BC are earning more than me and should concern on high tax.

London, Ontario, needs more development across various industries to become a more attractive place for career opportunities. Despite the city's size, it has grown into a multicultural hub with a diverse population, including individuals with strong educational backgrounds and qualifications. These talented professionals are well-suited for roles across sectors like technology, healthcare, construction, and finance. By investing in infrastructure, supporting innovative startups, and encouraging partnerships between educational institutions and industries, London can create more job opportunities and retain skilled workers. Strengthening these areas will not only boost the local economy but also position the city as a competitive destination for career growth.

A more diversity of job options, London is more like a big rural area instead of a city

More job options

Maybe more top companies have offices here rather than toronto.

More Job opprtunities

More industries



Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your career decisions and employment opportunities in London?

41 responses

No

Nothing

I would like to pursue in my career within 5 years

Job placements in colleges

Hire more people

Many workshops and upscaling activities can be introduced in different levels of jobs. For example, for technical jobs the software introductions and hands-on activities can be done.

NA

Just try sending and applying to Indeed or other websites

Nothing

Finding stable jobs is tough due to competition. More networking events, career fairs, mentorship programs, and professional training would help job seekers grow and adapt to market demands.

If I get employed in another city, I will move in a heartbeat.

Honestly, speaking I haven't any job but I would like to navigate these dynamics, focus on upskilling in digital tools, targeting growing industries, and leveraging hybrid work opportunities.

I want to do office job in london in my future.

There are huge amount of talent in our city but less opportunity to shape or shine, provide a path to shape their career and talent, it is profitable for all.

There are more opportunities in London but the amount of applicants are higher, so regarding these most of the people are not having enough opportunities to express themselves

MOST JOBS ASK FOR 4-10 YEARS EXPERIENCE WHICH DOESN'T MAKE SENSE BEING A GRADUATE TO APPRPACH RECRUITERS BEING A FRESHER.

As an international student, if I had clarity on the major in demand sectors within London, that would have been very beneficial. I believe that students should have talks from different



people within the industries to get a better understanding of their lives after graduation.

The cost of living in london is very affordable.

If there is a good salary for our job, London is a good place for settle down.

More job opportunities

Competitive salary package and opportunity for hires outside of referral

Many qualified people with no chance to invest their experience and share their knowledge with the community.

I see myself in Electrical Technician in future and I do lots of research for job opportunities regarding this field in london and its good for me here because there are lots of jobs in that specific field.

because of hectic schedule, impossible to get any job

No, thank you.

Nope

I want to expand my career as an Educator and plan for the future to establish a daycare centre for early childhood development.

London has only limited industry variety, no advanced technology or relevant reseach opportunity.

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Research and Evaluation of Financial Challenges Faced by graduates and prospective Graduates in London –Report

Submitted by: Dhimant Acharya

Aanshu, Aanshu

Annu, Annu

Dipali Mukeshbhai Patel

Dimple, dimple

Submitted to: Professor Jannelle Yoon

Submitted on: February 07, 2025

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

London, Ontario, home to institutions like Western University and Fanshawe

College, is becoming increasingly unaffordable for its recent graduates. Rising housing costs, expensive transportation, food insecurity, and employment barriers are making it difficult for graduates to establish themselves and build stable futures in the city.

This report explores the question: What are the primary financial challenges facing recent graduates in London, and how can they be addressed to improve affordability and retention? Through secondary data analysis, literature review, and comparisons with similar cities, the report identifies key issues and highlights effective policy responses.

Findings show that many graduates are struggling with unaffordable rent, limited job opportunities, and high daily expenses. These pressures are particularly acute for international graduates who face added employment and financial barriers.

Recommendations include expanding affordable housing options, introducing rental and transit subsidies, enhancing job placement programs, and

increasing financial support services. By adopting these strategies, London can create a more supportive environment for recent graduates and secure its future as a vibrant, inclusive city.

The document presents solutions for resolving these problems:

- Increasing access to affordable housing for recent graduates through municipal partnerships and development incentives
- Low-income or underemployed post-graduate students should receive rental assistance benefits specifically developed for them
- The workforce entry of recent graduates should benefit from discounted transit passes through subsidized programs.
- Creating graduate employment pipelines through collaboration between local employers and post-secondary institutions
- The municipality needs to expand food assistance services that offer specific support for young adults.
- The city should deliver money management lessons and job transition guidance specifically designed for international students graduating from their studies.

London will establish itself as a vibrant inclusive city through adoption of these strategic plans which support new graduates entering the workforce.

2. Background (Scope of project)

London, Ontario, has become a major educational hub, attracting a significant number of international and domestic students. With institutions such as Western University and Fanshawe College, the city has built a strong reputation for academic excellence. However, in recent years, rising costs of living, transportation expenses, and employment challenges have created an economic strain that impacts student success and retention. Understanding these financial barriers is essential to ensuring that London remains a desirable destination for graduates.

1. Affordability of Housing

One of the primary concerns is the affordability of housing. The demand for rental properties has increased, leading to higher rents and a reduced supply of affordable accommodations. Many students are forced to live in overcrowded apartments or take on excessive workloads to afford housing. This situation is

particularly difficult for international students, who often face additional financial constraints, including higher tuition fees and limitations on work hours.

2. Transportation

Transportation costs have also emerged as a major issue. Public transit fares have risen steadily, and many students struggle to afford transportation to and from campus. While some universities offer discounted transit passes, these programs do not fully alleviate the financial burden. Additionally, the efficiency and reliability of public transportation services remain concerns for students who rely on buses to travel between their residences, campuses, and workplaces.

3. Food

Food insecurity is another significant issue affecting students in London. Rising grocery prices, combined with financial constraints, have led to an increased dependence on food banks and meal programs. Many students report skipping meals or compromising on nutritional quality due to affordability concerns. This has long-term health implications and affects students' ability to focus on their academic performance.

These financial burdens not only impact students' academic success but also influence their decisions about whether to remain in London after graduation. A significant portion of graduates choose to leave the city in search of better economic opportunities elsewhere. This trend poses a challenge for London's long-term economic development, as it leads to a loss of skilled professionals who could contribute to the local workforce. The objective of this study is to analyze these economic challenges in depth and propose effective solutions that can enhance affordability and student retention in London. By examining cost-of-living trends, employment opportunities, and policy interventions, this report aims to provide actionable recommendations to improve the quality of life for students and graduates in London, Ontario.

3. Methodology Statement

This study on the financial challenges faced by students employs a qualitative approach, utilizing secondary data analysis and a literature review to gather relevant information. The goal is to understand the extent of financial difficulties students experience and the factors contributing to these challenges.

1. **Literature Review:** A comprehensive review of existing research, academic papers, reports from educational institutions, government publications, and articles was conducted. This review helped in identifying common financial issues faced by students across various regions, such as high tuition fees, living costs, and access to financial aid. The literature review also provided insights into policies and initiatives aimed at addressing these challenges.
2. **Secondary Data Analysis:** Data was sourced from public databases, government reports, and financial studies related to students' finances. Key reports from organizations such as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), government education departments, and financial aid bodies were analyzed to identify trends, challenges, and potential solutions in managing student finances.
3. **Comparative Analysis:** A comparative analysis was performed between the financial situations of students in different cities, with a particular focus on London. This analysis examined how living costs, tuition fees, availability of part-time work opportunities, and access to financial support differ across cities. Special attention was given to the disparity in students' financial struggles between London and other regions, considering factors like

accommodation costs and the overall cost of living, which are particularly high in London.

4. **Data Synthesis:** The findings from the literature and secondary data were synthesized to present an integrated view of the financial challenges faced by students. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the systemic issues and potential areas for improvement in the student financial ecosystem.

relying on secondary data and existing literature, this methodology provides a thorough understanding of the financial challenges students face without primary data collection, focusing instead on a broad range of existing information.

4. Key Findings

4.1 Housing Sector

This graph indicates the number of hours a single wage earner would need to work per month in order to afford rent on a standard two-bedroom apartment unit in London, according to data collected between 2018 and 2021. It compares these hours to the generally accepted benchmark for full-time work, at 150 hours per month.



(Graphic: Londoners Continue to face Rental Affordability Challenges)
Sources: Statistics Canada, CMHC Rental Market Survey and CMHC Calculations

Graph 1: Number of Hours Required to Afford Rent in London (2018–2021)

This graph indicates the number of hours a single wage earner would need to work per month in order to afford rent on a standard two-bedroom apartment unit in London, according to data collected between 2018 and 2021. It compares these hours to the generally accepted benchmark for full-time work, at 150 hours per month.

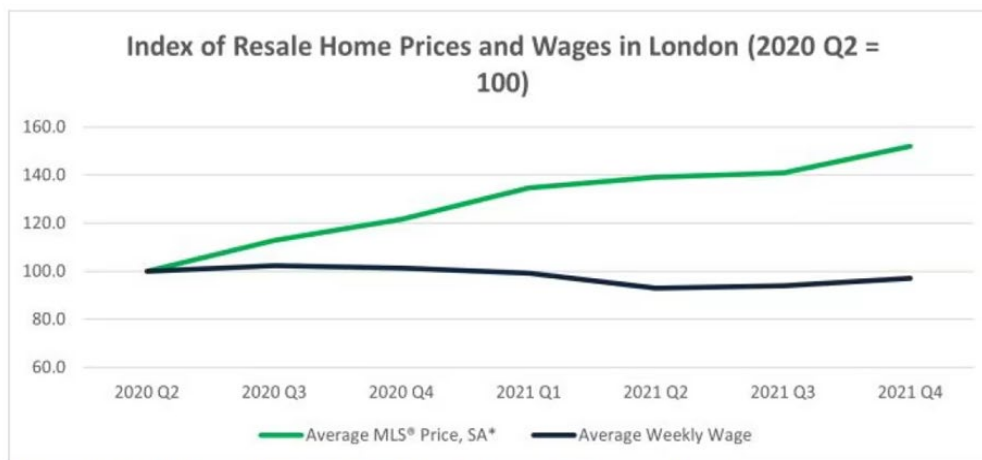
- In 2018, the required hours were already at 143, close to the full-time mark.

Strangely enough, in 2019 and 2020, this rate slightly decreased and leveled off at 139 hours, suggesting the temporary recovery or possible stagnation in rent

costs or an increase in minimum wage. By 2021, though, the required working hours had risen significantly to 154, above the full-time threshold.

- This increase brings into sharp relief an affordability crisis: even full-time employees would not be paid enough to afford London's average rent. For students—who typically have limited working hours owing to school schedules and visa limitations—this is even more pressing. Most are reliant on low-wage or part-time jobs and, without external financial support, being able to afford housing is almost unthinkable. This pushes students into compromising lifestyles, shared overcrowding, or relying heavily on loans and credit to offset basic expenses.

A consistent message within local housing market remains around the increasing costs of housing in London in comparison to the local incomes.



(Graphic: Rapid House Price Growth in London Despite Stagnant Wages)

Sources: CREA, Statistics Canada, CMHC Calculations

Since the second half of 2020, when the housing market effectively re-opened following the strict lockdown measures in the spring, house prices in London have risen by nearly 52%. Wages have effectively remained stagnant over that time.

Graph 2: Divergence Between House Prices and Wages in London (2020 Q2–2021

Q4)

The second graph charts the indexed values of resale house prices (green line) and average weekly wages (blue line) in London, with Q2 of 2020 as a base value of 100. This format facilitates the display of relative changes over time.

- The average house prices in London have increased sharply by nearly 52% between Q2 2020 and Q4 2021, reflecting a property market boom. At the same time, the average weekly wages have been more or less flat with some minor ups and downs but without any clear rising trend.

- This divergence shows that while housing costs have increased rapidly, incomes have not followed—creating a widening crisis of affordability. The gap between the two lines graphically illustrates this disconnect and shows systemic issues in the housing market.

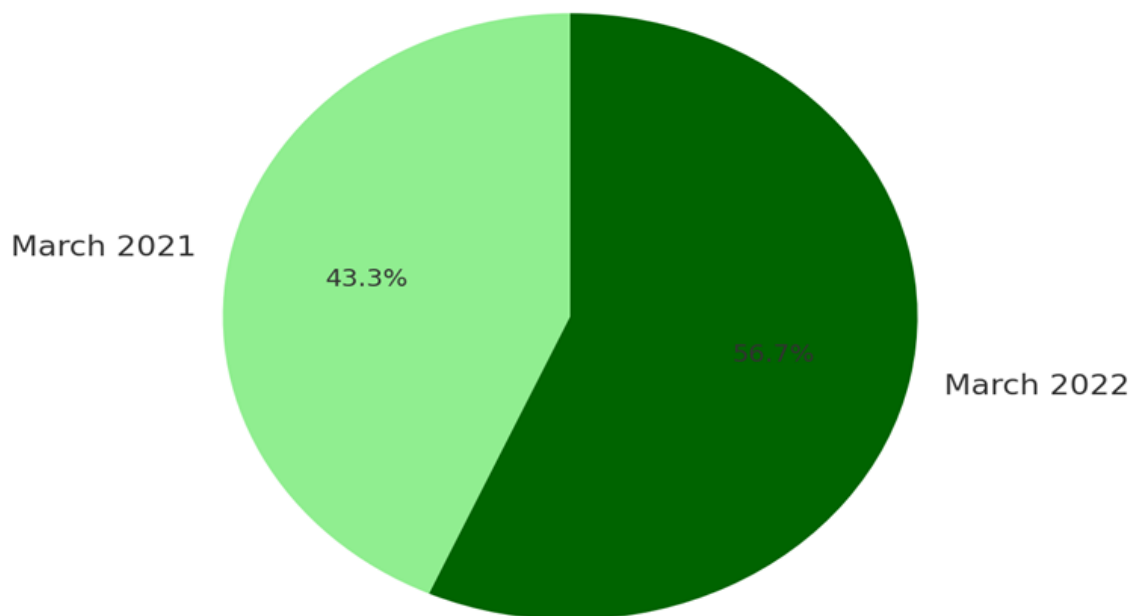
4.2 Transportation Sector



- The chart illustrates the increase in London Transit Commission (LTC) fares from 2023 to 2024, highlighting rising costs for all rider categories.
- Cash fares, weekly passes, and income-related passes all experienced fare hikes, with the weekly pass showing the most significant increase—from approximately \$81 in 2023 to \$97 in 2024.
- The income-related pass, intended to support low-income riders, also rose notably from \$61 to \$73.
- In parallel, LTC's operational budget increased from \$46 million to \$56 million, as shown by the red dashed line.
- While this indicates greater public investment in transit, the simultaneous fare increases raise concerns about the affordability and accessibility of public transportation especially for low-income residents who rely heavily on these services.

4.3 Food Insecurity

Proportion of Families Assisted by London Food Bank



The data shows a **notable increase** in the proportion of families assisted by the London Food Bank from March 2021 to March 2022. In just one year, the food bank supported a **13.4% higher share** of families, indicating a **rising need for food assistance** within the community.

This increase could reflect several factors:

- Ongoing economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Rising cost of living (including inflation and housing)
- Job insecurity or insufficient income

- Greater outreach and accessibility of the food bank services

5. Limitations and Challenges

5.1 Limitations

5.1.1 Geographic Focus Area: London and Comparator Cities

This study centers on London, Ontario, with comparison drawn from other Canadian municipalities. While this is local focus, findings will not necessarily apply completely to students living outside other provinces, territories, or rural regions.

5.1.2. Difficulty in Collecting Primary Data

No interviews or questionnaires were conducted. It was an exclusively second-hand source-based study that limited the inclusion of first-hand views from the student perspective and could have excluded first-hand qualitative details.

5.1.3 Limited Study Duration

The survey was conducted for a brief period only, which precluded the possibility of pursuing long-term or periodic trend estimation. Overall trends like increasing inflation or cyclic increases in tuition fees could not be tracked over time.

5.1.4 Data Gaps and Access Challenges

A few of the key datasets like local student income sources, food bank utilization, or institutional expenditures of certain kinds were not publicly available or were too aggregated. This constrained micro-level analysis possibilities.

5.1.5 Variability in Data Acquisition Methods by Sources

Different sources applied different definitions and methods, so information could not easily be compared between institutions or between cities. Some of the datasets lacked structured consistency or transparent metadata.

5.2 Challenges

Throughout the process of working on this project, several academic, technical and personal concerns cropped up. These are reflective of both the subject matter and the nature of conducting research under pragmatic constraints.

5.2.1 Balancing Academics and Commitments

Balancing the project alongside existing coursework, part-time work, and family responsibilities was an ongoing balancing act. Prioritizing time management, work had to be completed late at night or weekends in order to meet deadlines without compromising other aspects of academic performance.

5.2.2 Navigating Secondary Data

Since the project was solely based on data available, it was critical to select consistent and pertinent sources. This involved devoting much time reviewing academic papers, government data sets, and housing market reports. There were inconsistent or incomplete sources, thus comparative analysis was more time-consuming than expected.

5.2.3 Data Interpretation and Visualization

Transforming raw data into descriptive graphs and storytelling visuals was technical as well as analytical in nature. Choosing the most appropriate charts, label precision, and staying on message demanded close care. Software tool-related learning curves associated with good visualizations were there too.

5.2.4 Emotional Significance of the Subject

Exploring matters like student loans, food deserts, and housing costs weren't an abstract exercise—it resonated. Many of the challenges discussed in this report are genuine concerns for current students, as well as research team members, including ourselves. This emotional involvement generated motivation as well as episodes of gravity and frustration.

5.2.5 Limited Access to Expert Input

Efforts to include professional perspective from financial aid counselors, student housing advisors, or mental health professionals were foiled by scheduling issues and institutional delays. As a result, the report relied more on published reports than direct insight, which could have added depth to certain areas of the debate.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Housing

6.1.1 Increase Access to Low-Cost Student Housing

Institutions and local governments must invest in building or subsidizing more student-specific low-cost housing near campuses. Long-term opportunities can also be funded in cooperation with non-profit housing groups.

6.1.2 Encourage Shared and Co-Operative Living Models

Encourage the development of co-ops or shared accommodation platforms that unite like-minded students (e.g., vegetarian or cultural communities). Institutions

can promote this through authenticated listing sites and roommate pairing services.

6.1.3 Implement Rent Controls and Student Protection

Advocate provincial legislation that caps rent increases within student-dense areas and protects student renters from exploitation or swift eviction, especially during term time.

6.1.4 Provide Emergency Shelter Support

Institutions must establish temporary shelter assistance for vulnerable students at risk of being displaced, including short-term housing, monetary bursaries, or arrangements with local shelters and hostels.

6.2 Food

6.2.1 Augment On-Campus Food Banks and Subsidized Meals

Higher education institutions should maximize access to food banks, subsidized meal plans, and even pay-what-you-can cafés so that no student has to go hungry.

6.2.2 Offer Culturally Appropriate and Dietary-Specific Options

Offer campus food services, including vegetarian, vegan, halal, and allergen-free options, at affordable prices. Engage with student organizations to tailor services accordingly.

6.2.3 Partner with Local Markets and Restaurants

Implement student discount programs with grocery stores, farmers markets, and restaurants to reduce the cost of off-campus shopping and dining.

6.2.4 Promote Food Literacy and Budgeting

Provide workshops or webinars on meal planning, budget cooking, and cooking—skills that allow students to dine well for less.

6.3 Transportation

6.3.1 Improve and Subsidize Transit Access

Expand or initiate discounted transit passes (U-Pass programs) for students. For students residing in low-income neighborhoods, advocate for longer or more frequent bus routes.

6.3.2 Promote Biking and Safe Pedestrian Access

Institutional and municipal support of safe, accessible bike routes and sidewalks will encourage low-cost and sustainable modes of transport.

6.3.3 Develop Ridesharing or Shuttle Services

Schools may also work with ride-sharing services or offer campus shuttles that connect principal housing areas to campuses, especially late in the evening.

6.4 Employment and Income

6.4.1 Expand On-Campus Job Opportunities

Create more part-time positions through libraries, student services, and campus maintenance for students to earn income without long commutes or conflicting schedules.

6.4.2 Support Work-Integrated Learning

Encourage co-op programs, internships, and paid research assistantships that provide relevant experience and income simultaneously.

6.4.3 Increase Awareness of External Supports

Inform students about external grants, tax credits (e.g., Canada Training Credit), and subsidies they may qualify for but are often unaware of.

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