

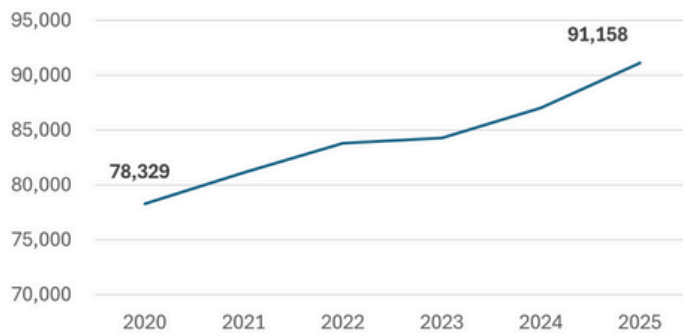
Supporting Growing University Student Demand to Meet Ontario's Labour Needs

More Ontario Students Want a University Education

Over the last five years, Ontario universities have experienced a **16.2% increase** – that's 12,715 more domestic students – in the number of Ontario high school students applying to attend an Ontario university. This shows that Ontario students see the value of a university education in their future career and talent development.



More Ontario High School Students Want to Attend an Ontario University



Source: Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC). Snapshot as of mid-January of domestic Ontario Secondary School Students (OSSS) applying for fall, first year, full-time undergraduate study at an Ontario University. Does not include international students attending an Ontario Secondary School. Also excludes all other domestic applicants (this group increased by 21.5% over the same period).

It's also projected that **up to 18%** Ontario high school students will want to enroll in an Ontario university by 2030, when considering the expected population growth in 18 to 24-year-olds, according to the Ontario Ministry of Finance's July 2023 projections.

Limiting Access to a University Education

Since 2016, a funding cap has been imposed on domestic students at Ontario universities. The current funding cap, known as the corridor model, limits the number of domestic students for institutions that receive funding. This restricts Ontario students' access to a university education in the province.

28,100

is the number of domestic students already above the funded level.

The underfunding for these students is estimated at **\$224M+** per year. This means that funding for these domestic students falls short of what is needed to cover the costs and universities have to find other means to cover these additional seats.

In fact, because of the provincial funding cap on domestic students:

UP TO
100,000

Ontario high school students will be at risk of not getting into the program or university of their choice, despite their qualifications, by 2030.

Economic Gains and Career Success for University Graduates

Ontario university students are graduating from in-demand programs ready to work and contribute to the success of their local communities and the province's growth.

95.1%

of Ontario university graduates are employed two years after graduation, according to the latest [Ministry of Colleges and Universities Graduate Survey](#).

Graduates of Ontario universities are contributing significantly to the economy, with university-educated individuals earning higher wages on average over their lifetime. According to the [Blue-Ribbon Panel's report](#) on postsecondary education, the economic return on investment for university graduates exceeds that of non-degree holders, illustrating the long-term financial benefits of university education for individuals and the broader economy.

\$50B+

is the amount university graduate income contributes to Ontario's GDP, according to the [Conference Board of Canada](#).

Fueling Ontario's In-Demand Fields

Ontario is facing critical labour shortages, and Ontario universities and their graduates are helping fill those needs.



928,700 – total number of jobs Ontario will need that require a university education from 2021-2030 – [Stokes Economics](#)



1,500 – the number of additional new teachers needed annually by 2030, due to teacher retirement and elementary-secondary enrolment retirement forecasts – [Ontario College of Teachers](#)



26,000 – number of additional registered nurses (RN) the province needs just to catch up to the RN-to-population ratio in the rest of Canada – [RNAO 2024 Report](#)



18,500 – workers estimated to leave the manufacturing sector every year between now and 2031 – [Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters \(CME\)](#).

In response, universities are increasing enrolment in high-demand fields and adapting programs that proactively equip students with skills for critical roles across the province.

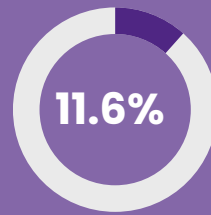


Increase in STEM enrolment since 2010

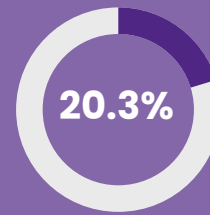


Increase in health care enrolment since 2010

In fact, over the last year, universities have seen increased interest from Ontario high school students in some of Ontario's most in-demand fields:



Increase in applications to university engineering programs from 2024 to 2025



Increase in applications to university health professions and related programs from 2024 to 2025

Now is the Time to Ensure Ontario Has the Highly Skilled Talent It Needs

Ontario's future economic growth depends on continuing to invest in a properly funded university system.



Without proper investment, Ontario students risk access to the programs they need to ensure the province has the highly skilled talent the economy needs.

By fully funding enrolment expansion and current unfunded domestic students, Ontario can better respond to changing demographics and increased demand from Ontario high school students.