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Introducing the Admissions Team

Obtaining acceptance to a Canadian post-secondary institution can be very challenging, particularly at the graduate level where admissions are highly competitive. International students sometimes find this process difficult to navigate due to the vast amount of programs to choose from, complexity of the application process and, in many cases, necessity to secure the support of a faculty member. The Admissions team, operating within the Department of Academic Relations and Admissions, has been established to ensure that fully-funded, highly qualified Saudi students are well-informed and prepared for this phase of their academic journey. The Admissions team assists King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP) students with all matters relating to admissions at Canadian technical institutes, colleges and universities to achieve its main objective of increasing success rates among Saudi scholarship applicants.

The Admissions/Academic Liaison Officers (ALOs) assist KASP graduate* students by:

- Recommending post-secondary institutions based on academic decree, language abilities, and scholarship regulations
- Equipping them with detailed information related to academic admissions
- Notarizing and submitting official documents to institutions to complete applications
- Advising those who need to take prerequisite courses and/or language testing
- Reviewing and following up on applications
- Providing tips for contacting supervisors and guidelines for writing a CV/Statement of Intent
- Informing the student’s Supervisor of KASP and the process of requesting Bench Fees.

*KASP graduate students are the primary focus of the team’s efforts; however ALOs often provide assistance to undergraduate students.

The Admissions team is keen to provide the best possible support to KASP students and therefore liaising with representatives from post-secondary institutions is sought as an important foundation for the team’s initiatives. On a daily basis ALOs work closely with international and admissions offices, Deans, and faculty members who may be interested to learn more about the scholarship program. It is also a key responsibility of the Admissions team to stay up-to-date of new pathway, bridging and academic programs, changes in undergraduate and graduate admissions requirements and application processes, as well as on-campus support services available to international students.

The Admissions team aims to increase the opportunities for Saudi scholarship students to study within Canada. Doing so will enrich the diversity of the student population and facilitate the internationalization and growth of Canada’s academic institutions – all while educating Saudi Arabia’s future leaders.
Admissions Challenges

Saudi Arabia supports Canada in its quest to be an internationally-renowned leader in education. To this end, Canada must be responsive to the needs of its students and international partners. The SACB solicits the support of Canadian academic institutions to overcome the following admissions challenges and enable KASP to thrive:

**Graduate Programs:**

- There is an insufficient number of foundation or qualifying programs for graduate students, as well as a lack of pathways from ESL schools leading to graduate programs directly.

- Spaces and the availability of supervisors are very limited.

**Student Retention**

While there has been an increase in the overall number of Saudi students travelling to Canada to pursue higher studies, the share of graduate students has declined since 2011. As seen in the figures below, due to limited capacity and the rigorous nature of admissions requirements, the SACB also reports a growing exodus of scholarship students who, upon completion of ESL studies, are transferring to other countries – many are travelling to Canada’s greatest competitors: Australia, the UK, and USA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations

The SACB recommends the establishment of more qualifying, pathway and foundation programs, the implementation of a conditional admission policy, and an increased capacity, particularly in graduate programs, to counteract student retention problems. If the aforementioned admissions-issues are remedied, Canadian institutions will undoubtedly see an increase in the recruitment and retention of highly qualified international students.

Issuance of Conditional Admission to Graduate Students:

The SACB proposes a policy of conditional admission for qualified graduate students who fall short of meeting the language proficiency requirement for full acceptance.

If implemented, international students could attend ESL and continue through to their academic program in a seamless progression – all while at the same institution. This policy will ensure international students meet the academic and language standards as set by the institution into which the student is seeking admission and ease their transition from ESL to academic studies.

Thank You.

The Admissions team expresses sincere thanks and gratitude to Canadian post-secondary institutions for the continuing support they have provided to Saudi scholarship students. The team’s ALOs look forward to building upon the strengths of existing relationships with Canadian universities and colleges and promoting cultural and educational relations between Saudi Arabia and Canada in the years ahead.
Contact Information

We invite you to visit the Saudi Arabian Cultural Bureau in Ottawa and encourage you to contact the Department of Academic Relations and Admissions for more information.

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