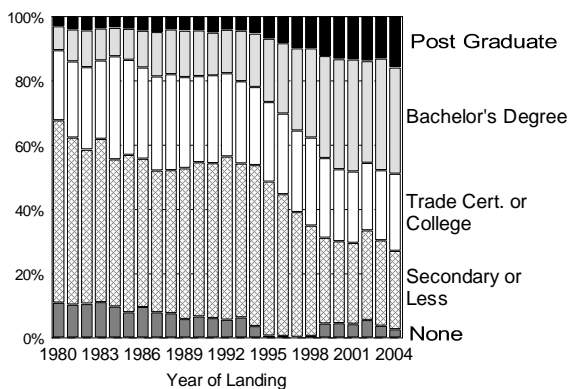


Special Feature: Education Level of Recent Immigrants

The overall education levels of recent immigrants have improved significantly over the last two decades. One of the reasons for this trend was the increasing proportion of immigrants admitted under the skilled worker classes, as in these classes immigrants are selected under a points system where education qualification is the most important criterion. Another reason is that education levels have been improving globally, especially in the developing countries, where a majority of recent Canadian immigrants originate.

Over the last 25 years, the number of immigrants, at the time of their arrival, who possessed some post secondary education has been increasing, while those who only had secondary or less education has been declining. The percentage of B.C. immigrants aged 20 and older who possessed no education qualification at arrival has declined from 11 per cent in 1980 to less than 5 per cent in the last few years. On the other hand, the percentage that possessed a university education has increased from 17 per cent in 1980 to more than 50 per cent in recent years. The proportion of immigrants who had a trade school certificate or post secondary training from a non-university institution has remained relatively constant over the period. Similar trends are also observed in other provinces.

B.C. Immigrants Aged 20+ by Education Levels

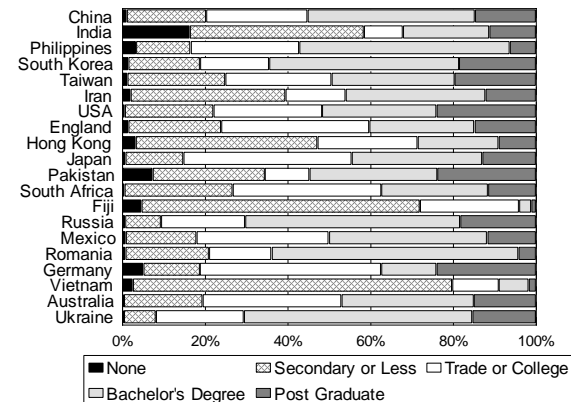


Female immigrants to B.C. tended to have lower education levels than their male counterparts. There were proportionally more female immigrants who arrived with no education or with

below high school levels. Also, more male than female immigrants had a university education. However, there were relatively more female immigrants with a trade school or non-university post secondary education.

There are significant variations in the education levels when comparing immigrants coming from different countries. The top 20 sources of immigrants to B.C. during the five-year period 2000–2004 accounted for about 84 per cent of all landings in the province. Amongst these top sources, immigrants from Russian and Ukraine were more likely to possess a post-secondary education while those from Fiji, Vietnam and Hong Kong were more likely to have only a secondary or lower education.

B.C. Immigrants By Top 20 Sources By Education Landed 200-2004



As mentioned earlier, independent skilled-worker immigrants tend to have higher education qualifications over other classes of immigrants due to the points system. Hence, source countries that have higher concentration of skilled-worker immigrants tended to show higher overall education qualifications. Data show that business immigrants are the next most highly educated group, followed by family immigrants. Refugee immigrants tended to possess, at the time of landing, the lowest education levels among all immigrants. During the 2000–2004 period, the proportion who possessed higher than secondary education was 93.3 per cent for skilled-worker immigrants, 48.2 per cent for business immigrants, 52.0 per cent for family immigrants, and 37.7 per cent for refugees.