

Pathways to Prosperity 2025

Connecting Sectors, Building Bridges:

Supporting International Students and Graduates in Career Success

Presenter Group 1:

NSCC, EduNova & EnPoint Partnership

- EnPoint – Chantal Brine
- NSCC – Ashley Pinsent
- EduNova – Jisun Ryu

Presenter Group 2:

Dalhousie University & ISANS Partnership

- Dalhousie – Ilie Soloviow
- ISANS – Ewa Olczuk
- International Graduate – Abigail Taylor

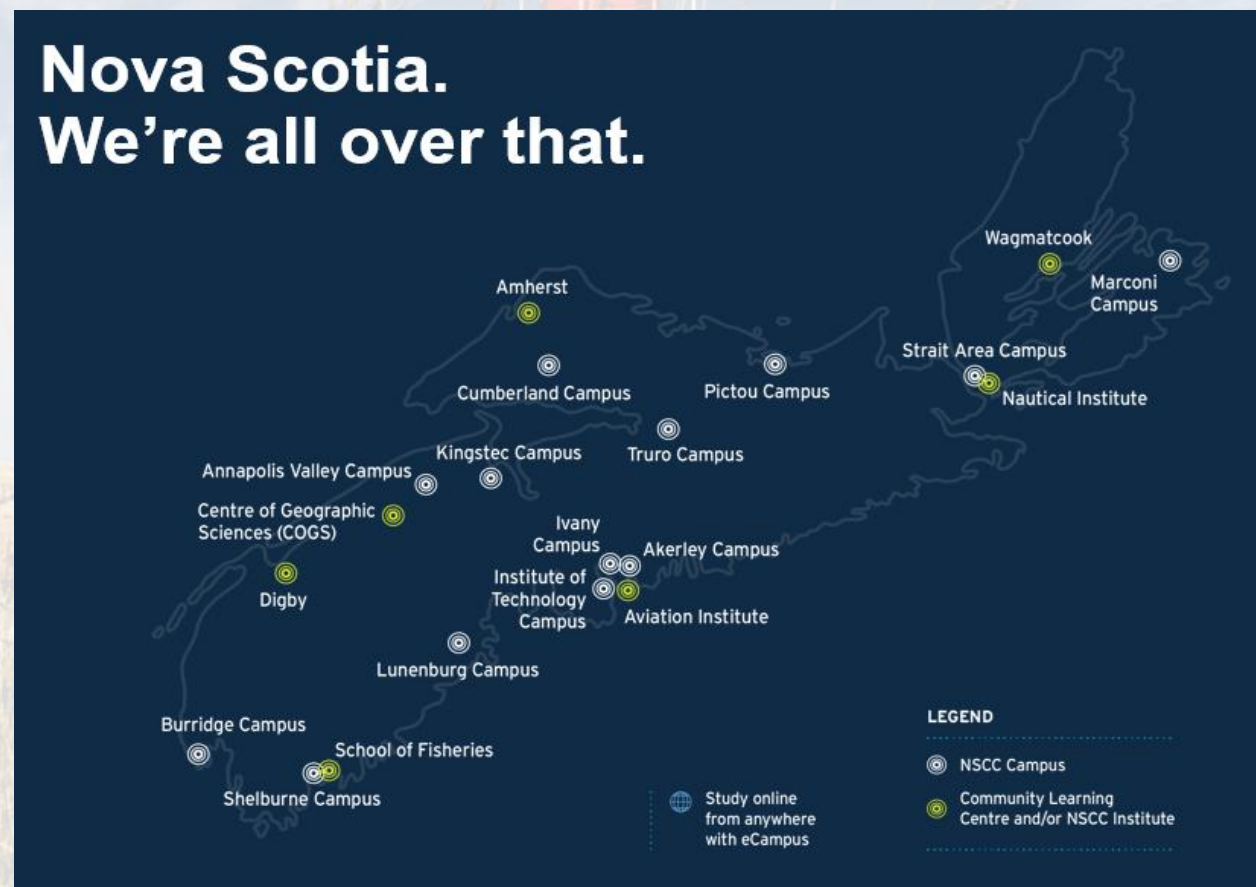
PJILA'SI (WELCOME)

We acknowledge we are in Mi'kma'ki – the unceded territory and ancestral homeland of the Mi'kmaq Nation. Our relationship is based on a series of Peace and Friendship treaties between the Mi'kmaq Nation and the Crown, dating back to 1725.

In Nova Scotia we recognize that We are all Treaty People.

About Nova Scotia Community College

- Celebrated 25 years in 2021
- 14 campuses across Nova Scotia
- 543 international students / 10,843 students total (Oct. 1, 2025)
- International students tend to be mature with previous post-secondary education and work experience.
- Programs developed to support international students to stay in Nova Scotia.



About EduNova

- Co-operative of K-12, language, and post-secondary education providers in Nova Scotia that work together to bring students from all over the world to Nova Scotia - to study, stay and thrive.
- Advocates for international education in Nova Scotia.
- Offer programs focused on recruitment and retention of international students in Nova Scotia.
- More info here: <https://studynovascotia.ca/>

Our Post-Secondary Education Members



About EnPoint

- Born in response to provincial needs to retain early stage talent and passion,
- On a mission to support 1 million people in connecting their passion to career,
- Through, mentorship software, program design, and training and career development workshops
- Working with PSEs, nonprofits, and employers to create high-impact mentorship programs that support participants in building confidence, skills, and connections
- More info: <https://getenpoint.com/>



Context: International Student Retention Strategy (pre-2024)

- 11 universities, 1 college
- ~29K employers in province - that need talented people, most are less than 100 employees
- 2013 Ivany Report - Now or Never: An Urgent Call to Action for Nova Scotians
 - Retention of international students
- Population growth needed
- Encourage settlement outside Halifax
- Focus on welcoming communities
 - = Collaboration a must



Collaborative Solutions

Turning challenges into opportunity:

Program highlights:

- The BEST Conference *
- Study & Stay™
- Pathway to Stay

All require:

- Multi-stakeholder participation
- Student and employer focus
- Iterative approach
- Consistent, diverse opportunities for student and employer engagement



STUDY AND STAY™ CONNECT

Students from 22-26 countries, 800+ Alumni (2016-2025), 103 Capstone graduates(2024-2025), 84.6% Retention rate (Capstone Cohort 8 Survey, 2025), 400+ Foundations participants, Entrepreneurship bootcamp & 21 pitch award winners (2024), 96 Mentors (2024-2025), 40+ speakers (2024-2025), 100+ community, government, & industry partners



FOUNDATIONS

- Open to all years of study, offering micro-credentials, webinars, and mentorship.
- Recommended levels based on year of study
- 400+ Active users. Open to all international students at a NS post-secondary institution
- 20+ Workshops and Webinars delivered annually.



CAPSTONE

- 100 final-year international students per year selected from across NS
- Supported more than 800 international students
- Focuses on 1v1 mentorship, IDI debrief, and networking
- **84.6% of Cohort 8 alumni remained in Nova Scotia.**
- **Strong evidence of long-term retention and workforce integration.**



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Focus on building an entrepreneurial mindset and skills, immigration support, networking, and professionalism
- Boot camp workshops, pitch development, and Panel discussion,
- Pitch competition in the Summer - \$20,000 Prize funds (2023-2024)
- Strengthens Nova Scotia's profile as a hub for international talent and innovation.

Program Milestones



BEST Conference and Career Fair



Entrepreneurship Summer Bootcamp



Study and Stay™ Retreat



Study and Stay™ Networking Event



Study and Stay™ Capstone Graduation

Pathway to Stay

- Developed as a way to bring the learning of Study and Stay™ to more international students at NSCC
- Partnership with EnPoint
- Program open to all international students at NSCC
 - included: employer panels, reverse job fairs, meaningful employer engagement, webinars, workshops, intercultural learning, EAL support, 1:1 meetings with career strategist, group career mentoring, and 1:1 alumni-to-student mentorship
- Both interactive and self-paced, non-credit
- Partnered with BHER in 2023 to bring the program to students at Dalhousie and NSCC
 - ~900 enrolled; 376 completed
 - Students from engineering, IT, computer science, business, business, tourism, health professions, applied sciences

*The Pathway to Stay program has proven to be an invaluable asset in propelling my career forward. The program **provided a comprehensive suite of resources for career development**, including showcases, workshops, bootcamps, and sessions.*

*These are available both online and in-person, **catering to the diverse needs of university and college students.***

I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to project team for their unwavering support and efforts in orchestrating and coordinating this remarkable program.

- [Guillermo Jimenez Iriarte](#)

Shared Successes and Impacts: Employers

Pathway to Stay

- Over 100 employers and community leaders involved in a variety of ways
 - Panelists - knowledge sharing
 - Networking events
 - Both repeat & new employers
- Connection to DEI and building inclusive organizations and/or industries
 - Learning first-hand experiences of immigrants from diverse cultures
- Introductions to PSE and community groups that help bridge connections to early-stage talent
- Opportunities for more and deeper engagement pre-WIL

Study and Stay™ CONNECT

- **630+ mentors and employers** aware of benefits that international students bring to communities and workplaces.
 - Mentors - as champions & ambassadors
 - Panelists/ Presenters - knowledge sharing
 - Career fair & Networking events
 - Sponsors
 - Both repeat & new employers
- **102** community, government, and industry partners.
- Give back as a “new” mentor or a “returning” mentor; help build a supportive community.
- Expand and strengthen professional network within a diverse and engaged mentor community (e.g., Mentor event & Workshops)

Successes and Impacts: Students/Institutions- Study and Stay™

Capstone isn't just helpful - it's transformative.

Average program satisfaction score:
4.6 out of 5

Capstone builds more than skills - it builds confidence.

Average confidence rating:
4.6 out of 5

Capstone is more than a program - it's a launchpad.

73% of Capstone participants
employed after graduation



Lessons, Observations & Take-aways

- Early days - awareness building is key (students and mentors/employers)
- Student buy-in & sustained engagement
- Ensuring similar definitions of success
- Challenges creating WIL opportunities at the college level
- Employers generally keen to be engaged
- Challenging employer perspectives on hiring international students
- Collaboration is key
- Openness to new ideas and approaches
- Needs based programming is fundamental—and needs change
- Learning as we go, evolving programs along the way



Let's Keep the Conversation Going



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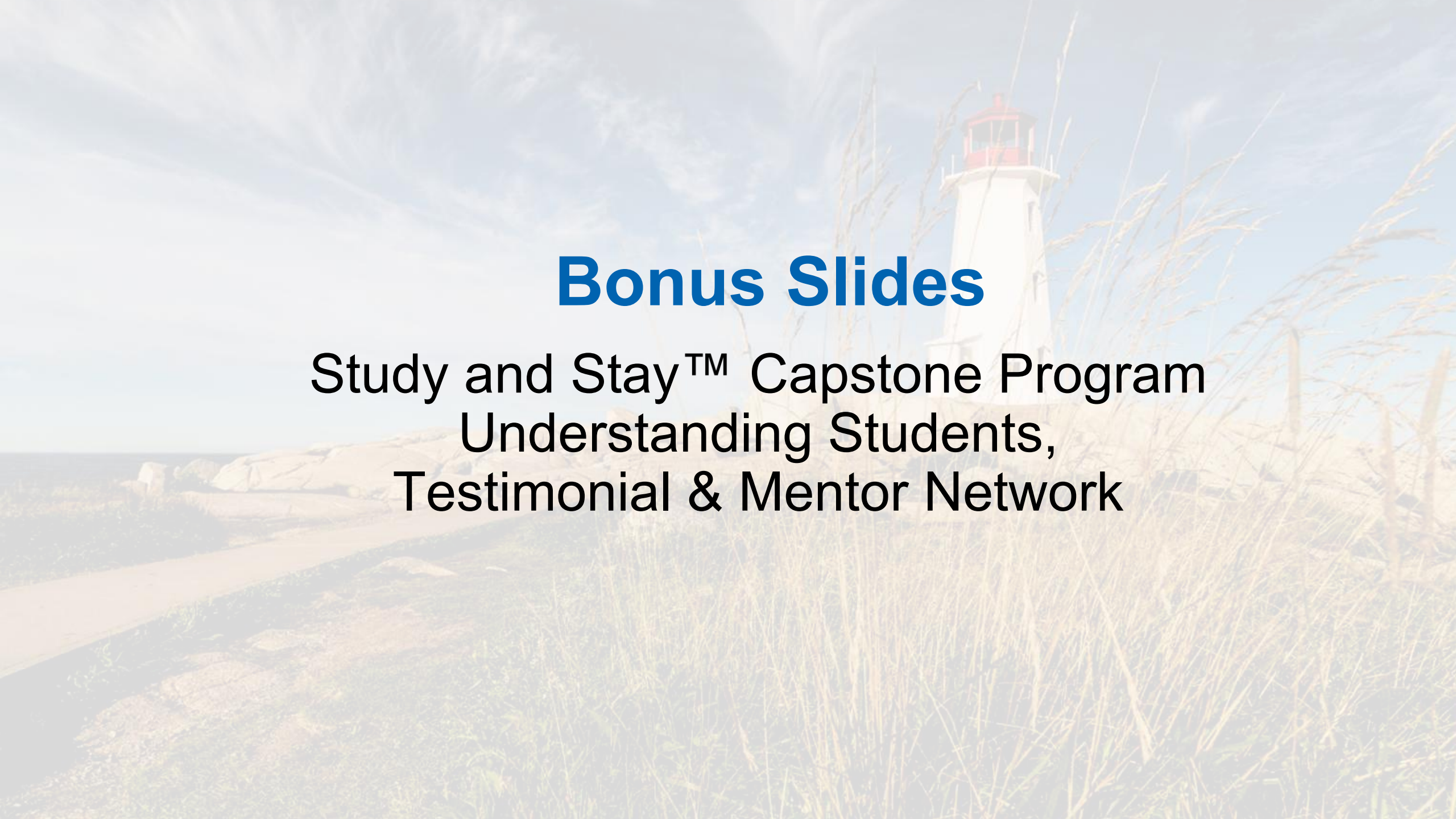
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Thank you!



Bonus Slides

**Study and Stay™ Capstone Program
Understanding Students,
Testimonial & Mentor Network**

Understanding Students

- Mentorship – **64.46%**
- Immigration Support: Pathways to Permanent Residency – **57.85%**
- Resume writing and support – **54.55%**
- Networking and developing professional networks – **53.72%**
- Building a personal brand and marketing yourself/personal pitch – **47.93%**
- Employment sites and where/how to look for work – **42.98%**
- Mock interviews (to help prepare for an interview) – **42.15%**
- Online profiles (i.e. LinkedIn) – **33.06%**
- Professional and workplace communication – **28.10%**
- Labour market: job trends – **27.27%**
- Goal setting: Understanding how to set goals and why this is important to my career – **24.79%**
- Cover letters: design and content – **23.97%**
- Career Resources on and off campus (knowing where and how to access these) – **21.49%**
- Entrepreneurship and starting a business – **20.66%**
- Diversity training and Intercultural communication – **18.18%**

Understanding Students con't

Level of confidence to enter the Nova Scotia workforce (fall 2024)

- 10 – 9.92%
- 9 – 4.13%
- **8 – 24.79%**
- **7 – 25.62%**
- **6 – 14.05%**
- 5 – 10.74%
- 4 – 5.79%
- 3 – 3.31%
- 2 – 0.83%
- 1- 0%

(1 being the lowest/ 10 being the highest)



Mentorship,
workshops, and career-
building strategies gave
me the tools and
guidance I needed to
grow professionally.

What makes Capstone truly
valuable?

connections, guidance, and real-world skills
that set them up for success in Nova Scotia.





Lessons Learned & Insights

- Collaboration is key
 - Cooperation over competition
 - 'Feeder' programs models, e.g. NSCC Pathway to Stay
- Openness to new ideas and approaches
 - Learning as we go, evolving programs along the way
- Listening to students' needs
 - Involving current students and new international graduates in planning
 - e.g. post- COVID need for mental wellness support and career resilience training
- Involving employers early and consistently
 - What do they want and need? How do they want to be engaged?
 - Offering diverse options is key
- Building community is a must
 - e.g. alumni network newer to programming, peer to peer mentorship, more employer:student engagement opportunities



**STUDY
AND
STAY**
NOVA SCOTIA

EduNova
CANADA'S EDUCATION DESTINATION

Dalhousie University - ISANS Partnership

November 25, 2025

Dalhousie University – Ilie Soloviov

Ilie.Soloviov@dal.ca

ISANS – Ewa Olczuk

eolczuk@isans.ca

International graduate – Abigail Taylor



Non-credit Diploma in Professional & Leadership Studies

Pathway to Prosperity - 2025





Welcome!

Dalhousie University

Located in Nova Scotia, Canada (Mi'kma'ki) with four campuses in Halifax and Truro, and satellite locations in Yarmouth and Saint John, New Brunswick, our broad range of academic programs attract and retain a diverse mix of incredible students, scholars, researchers and staff who work together with interdisciplinary perspective and a focus on service.

Our 13 academic Faculties expand understanding through teaching excellence and a drive for discovery that results in more than \$190 million in research funding each year. As Atlantic Canada's primary research-intensive university and a member of the U15 Group of Canadian Universities, our research and innovation includes world-leading researchers working in labs, studios and in the field.

- Agriculture
- Architecture and Planning
- Arts and Social Sciences
- Computer Science
- Dentistry
- Engineering
- Graduate Studies
- Health
- Law
- Management
- Medicine
- Open Learning & Career Development
- Science



DPLS Program – Academics & Structure

The Non-Credit Diploma in Professional and Leadership Studies is a 24 -month, non-credit program designed to give you high-demand leadership skills and hands-on experience. Students complete the Certificate in Strategic Leadership, Certificate in Human Resource Leadership, and choose one of six specializations:

- Agricultural & Farming Operations Management (AFOM)
- Construction Site Management (CSM)
- Sustainable Energy Technologies Management (SETM)
- Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC)
- Data Management for Professionals (DMP)
- English-Medium Instruction (EMI)

The Diploma offers a supportive experience that includes Canadian workplace training, one-on-one career counselling, and job search support led by the ISANS team, culminating in a 4-month work term.



Mandatory Courses

- Leadership Essentials
- Interpersonal & Intercultural Communication
- Management Essentials
- Risk Assessment & Management
- Coaching Skills for Leaders
- Strategic Communications
- Negotiation and Conflict Resolution
- Change Management for Leaders
- ISANS' Courses (6 weeks in-person + online)





Successful Results



127 Applicants



36 Students Admitted



10 Nationalities



18 Students Employed Full-Time in
Permanent Positions



7 Students Employed Full-Time in
Temporary Positions



5 Students Employed Part-Time in
Temporary Positions



6 Students Admitted – Winter 2026



Employers

Shannex™



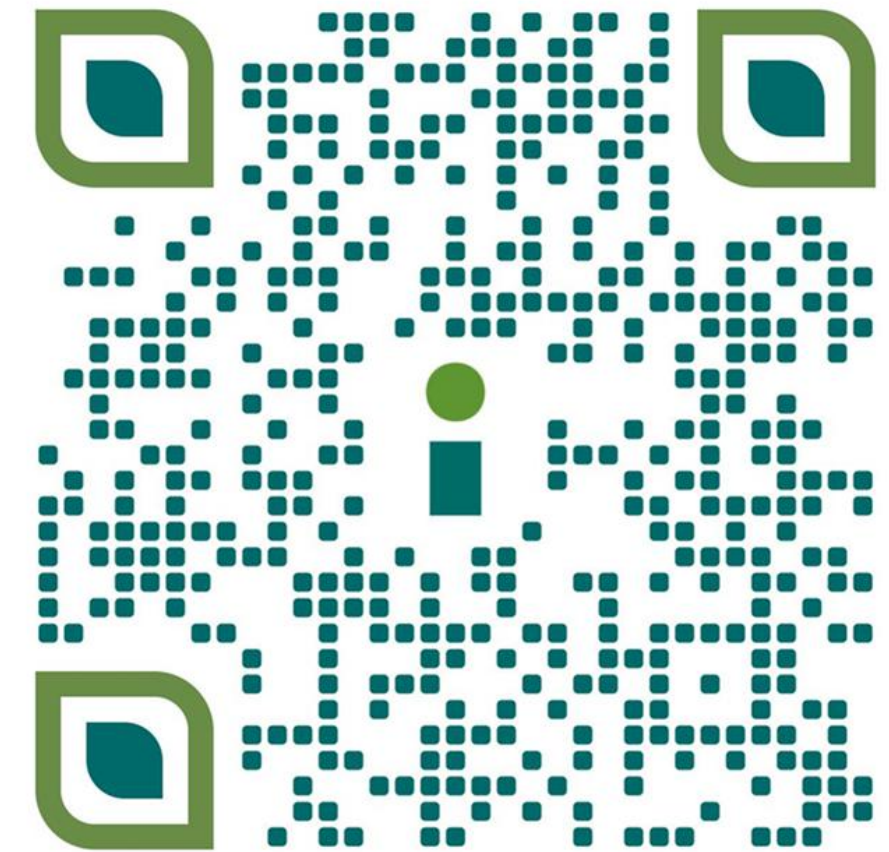
Belong & Grow

**Building
our future
together**



ISANS - Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia

ISANS is a non-profit organization empowering immigrants and refugees to build their futures in Nova Scotia. With over 45 years of experience, we support more than 17,500 newcomers from 180+ countries each year as Atlantic Canada's leading settlement agency.



ISANS – Dalhousie partnership: Supporting International Students



ISANS provides support to international postgraduate students from their first day at the university



International Students main point of contact at ISANS is an **Employment Specialist (ES)**



Employment Assessment and Action Plan for each student for personalized support



Group sessions and one-on-one support and workshops are offered



Referrals to ISANS services and external services (if applicable)



Ongoing support and follow up

Referrals: ISANS Services



- **Job Search Strategies Workshop** and **two self-directed online courses** (all mandatory)
 - **Working in Canada (WIC)**
 - **Canadian Workplace Culture (CWC)**
- **Practice Interview**
- **Job search tools and additional support:** Jobscan, SkillsFirst, Job Search Resource Center (JSCR) support, SkillsMatch.

When applicable additional referrals are sent to:

- **Bridging programs for internationally educated professionals:** Pharmacy, Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Engineering, Accounting



Outcomes

- The ISANS–Dalhousie partnership **enabled international postgraduate students to access ISANS services earlier**, strengthening their job readiness, awareness of community resources, and connection to local employment opportunities.
- ISANS also secured **new funding, enabling continued innovation and extended support** for newcomers and students.
- To date, **12 students from the first two cohorts have completed the program and secured employment—a 100% success rate**. Two additional cohorts are still in progress.
- This collaboration demonstrates the positive impact university–non-profit partnerships can have on students' career success.

Challenges

- Low engagement from some students; some students delay participation in ISANS programming and job search activities until the last minute.
- Limited networking efforts, leading to missed opportunities and increased stress during the job search process.
- International students cannot work full-time during their study period which limits their employment prospects during that time.

International Student/Graduate Experience

Brief Introduction

- International student from Ghana, enrolled in the Winter 2024 cohort Dalhousie Postgraduate Diploma Program in Professional & Leadership studies
- 4 Month Co-op experience with Nova Scotia Power
- Graduated May 2025
- Currently working as a **Business Growth Advisor** at Nova Scotia Power

ISANS Program - My Experience

- Job Search guidance
- Resume and cover letter support
- Interview preparation
- Workplace Integration support

International Student/Graduate Experience

What Clients Enjoyed

- One-on-one employment counselling
- Gaining insight into the psychology behind interviews

What Could Be Better

- Expanding the program to include more post-secondary institutions

Questions



Thank you!

