# Changes in Canada's Study Permit Program and Prince Edward Island's Population Slowdown



**Canada's Study Permit Program Faces Changes and Impact**

In January 2024, Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) introduced changes to the study permit program, including a temporary international student cap from 2024 to 2026, supported by the new Provincial Attestation Letter (PAL) system. This year, IRCC aims to approve 292,000 study permits.

Recent data shows significant impacts, including a marked downturn in processed study permits. In March 2024, 33,000 permits were processed, compared to over 70,000 in March 2023. Processing times increased from an average of 9.8 weeks in 2023 to 14.8 weeks by May 2024.

Indian students saw a significant drop in permits, from 28,073 in March 2023 to 4,000 in March 2024. Meanwhile, students from Ghana and Nigeria saw higher proportions of approved permits. Overall, the approval rate fell to 50% in early 2024 from previous years' higher rates.

**Prince Edward Island's Population Growth Slows**

Statistics Canada reported that as of April 1, 2024, Prince Edward Island's population was 177,081, a 3.1% increase from the previous year but just below the national growth rate of 3.2%. Immigration remains strong, with a record 3,674 immigrants arriving from April 2023 to April 2024.

However, the province has experienced a net loss of non-permanent residents and residents moving to other provinces. Additionally, Prince Edward Island recorded more deaths than births over the last 12 months, continuing a trend since late 2021.