

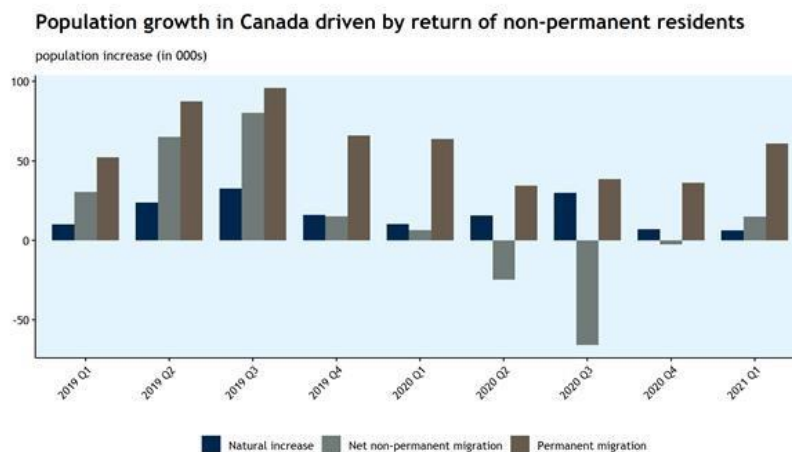
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Canada's population grew strongly in Q1 as international students returned

- Canada's population rebounded in Q1.
- International migration has recovered to pre-pandemic levels.
- The return of international students and increased numbers of post-graduate visa holders were the primary drivers of growth.

Stronger-than-expected international migration lifted Canada's population by 82,000 in the first quarter, the fastest quarterly increase since the pandemic began. The federal government's strong push for new permanent residents resulted in immigration returning to pre-pandemic levels, with most of the increase accounted for by people already temporarily living in the country. There was also a significant increase in temporary residents that kept pace with the outflow of those transitioning to a more permanent status. New study permits issued increased 21,000 (44%) year-over-year, and new post-graduate work visas increased by 24,000 (160%) in the first quarter of 2021. This is good news after seeing Canada's international post-secondary student population fall by 60,000 in 2020.

Even with strong growth in the early months of 2021, the pandemic amounts to a lost year in terms of Canadian population growth. Year-over-year growth was 0.4%. The natural increase in the population (births minus deaths) was just 6,400—the lowest level in recorded history—as a result of both population aging and COVID-19 related loss of life. Even as COVID-19 subsides, the natural increase is likely to continue to decline into the future leaving immigration to make up the shortfall. This puts even more of a spotlight on the federal government's execution of its immigration plan.



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