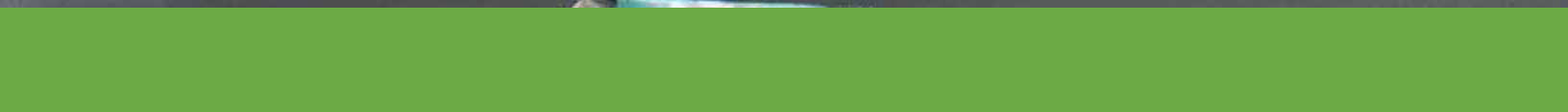
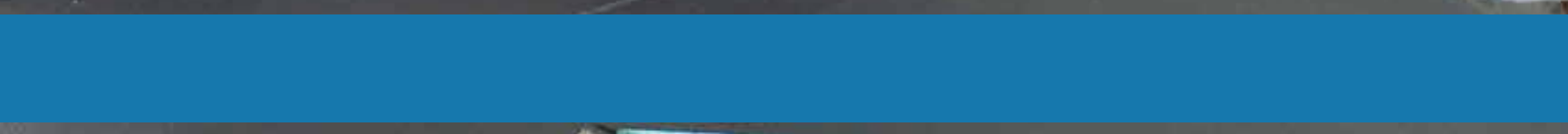
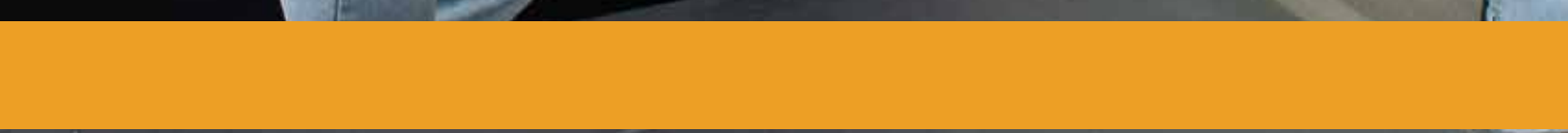


INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

Survey Report 2024





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Introduction





This report explores research conducted by the Cape Breton Island Centre for Immigration (CBICI) to understand current and recently graduated international student perspectives on living in Cape Breton - Unama'ki.

CBICI surveyed both current international students in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) as well as international graduates of universities and colleges in the CBRM between January 15 and January 31, 2024. The survey was promoted via CBICI Facebook and Instagram pages as well as on campus at Cape Breton University where staff of CBICI handed out business cards with a QR code to complete the survey online. All survey participants were entered to win one of two \$100 prepaid Visa gift cards to encourage survey completion.

The international student survey received 305 responses while the international graduate survey received 73 responses for a combined total of 378 responses. This report focuses on the international student experience.

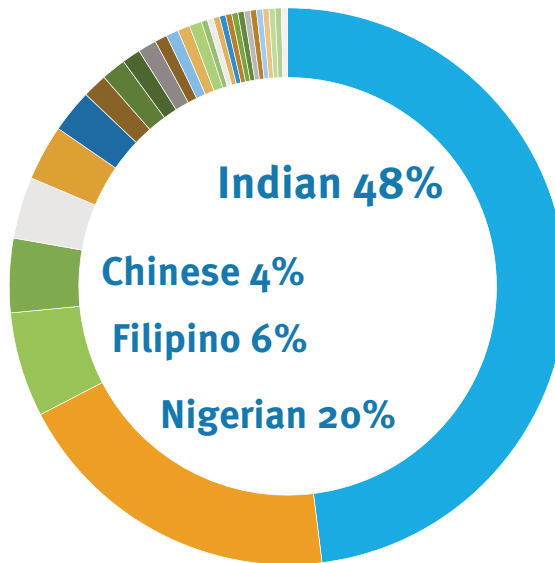
CBICI's ongoing survey work provides a multi-year, high-level overview of the experience of international students and graduates in Cape Breton and allows for comparison year over year of the benefits and challenges of studying and living in Cape Breton as experienced by students and graduates. This information allows CBICI to develop programming and offer supports that align with the current needs of the international student and graduate population in Cape Breton, as well as to advocate for key policy changes that will have a positive impact on the student and graduate experience.

Demographics

Nationality

Of 279 responses to this question, 48% identified as Indian. Students identifying as Nigerian (20%), Filipino (6%), and Chinese (4%) made up the next largest groups by nationality.

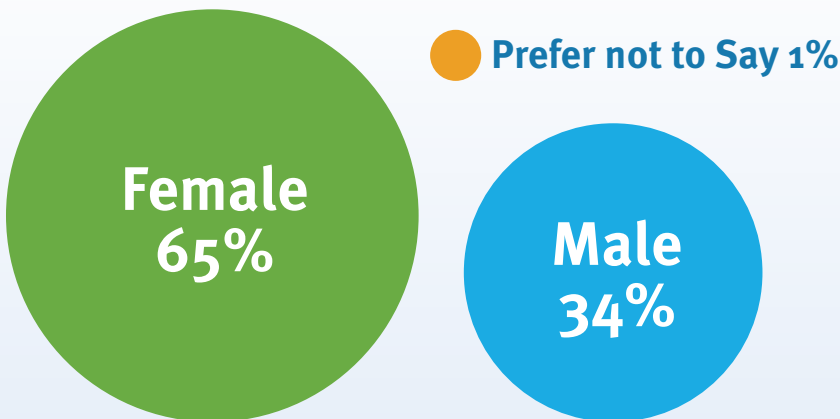
- Indian
- Nigerian
- Filipino
- Chinese
- Vietnamese
- Bangladeshi
- Nepalese
- Sri Lankan
- Brazilian
- Kenyan
- Colombian
- Pakistani
- Nigerian
- Jamaican
- Ecuadorean
- Rwandan
- Mexican
- Malaysian
- Honduran
- Guatemalan
- Ghanaian
- Georgian
- Dominican
- Cuban
- Canadian
- Cameroonian
- Barbadian
- Austrian
- Argentine



The proportion of Indian students as a part of the larger student population has reduced significantly since 2019, when 84% of students identified as Indian (in 2023, almost 70% identified as Indian).

Gender

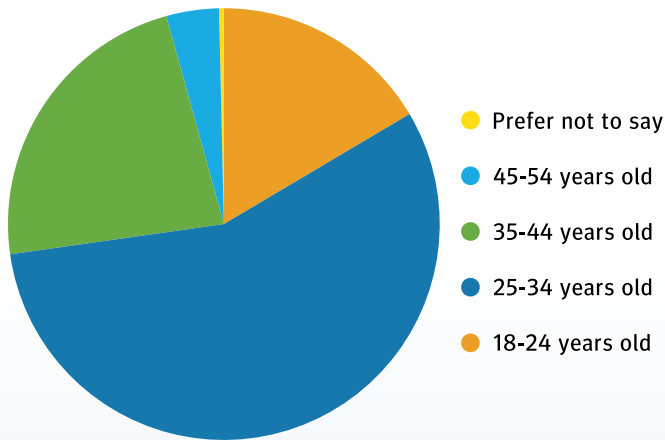
Of 279 responses, 65% of respondents identified as female, representing a continued increase in the percentage of female-identifying students at CBU (57% in 2023 and 42% in 2019).





Age

Of 279 responses, the largest age bracket was 25-34 at 56%, with 35-44 the next largest at 23%. The 35-44 age bracket increased by 6% over 2023 (from 17%).



Marital Status

Of 279 responses, 45% indicated they were single, and 53% indicated they were married or in a common law relationship. Of those who indicated they were married or in a common law relationship, 70% indicated that their spouse was living with them in Canada.

Children

Of 278 responses, 36% indicated that they had children. Of these 99 respondents, they had on average 1.7 children. The majority indicated that their children were living with them in Canada at 71%.

Study

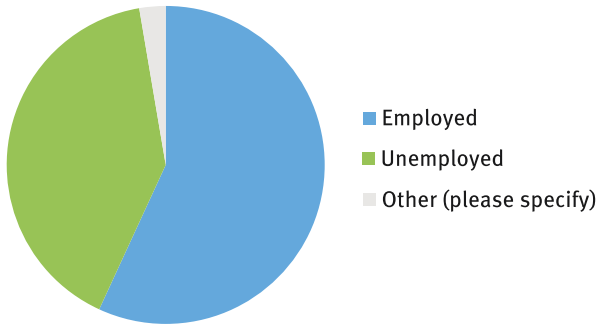
The vast majority of the 278 respondents to the question, (where are you studying,) were enrolled at Cape Breton University (almost 98%). Almost 2% were enrolled at NSCC.

77% of students enrolled at CBU were taking a Post-Baccalaureate Diploma program.

Immigration

96% of respondents indicated they were planning to apply for a Post Graduate Work Permit, and 86% indicated they were interested in applying for Permanent Residency (out of 262 responses to both questions).

Employment



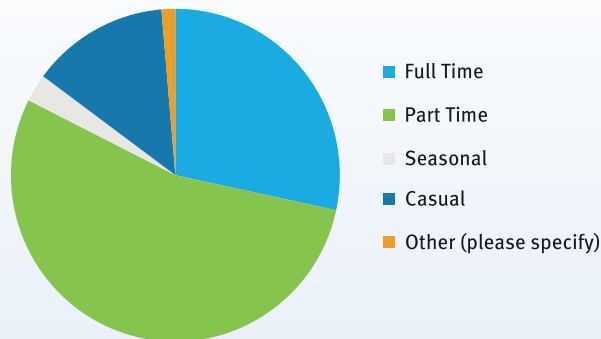
Employment Status

Of 262 respondents to the question “are you currently employed”, 57% indicated that they were employed, while 40% indicated that they were unemployed. This is a slight shift from 2023 survey data in which 53% indicated they were employed, and 46 indicated they were unemployed – this is a marginal 4% increase in employment and 6% decrease in unemployment.

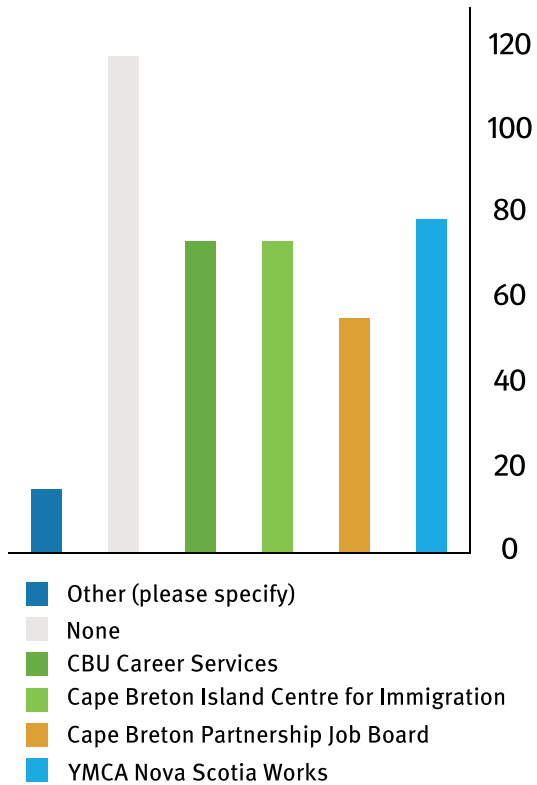
On average, it took 3.4 months for survey respondents to find employment.

Employment Type

Of 148 employed survey respondents, 24% were working multiple jobs, and 76% were working only one job. Of those who worked multiple jobs, 83% were working two jobs.



Employment Supports Utilized



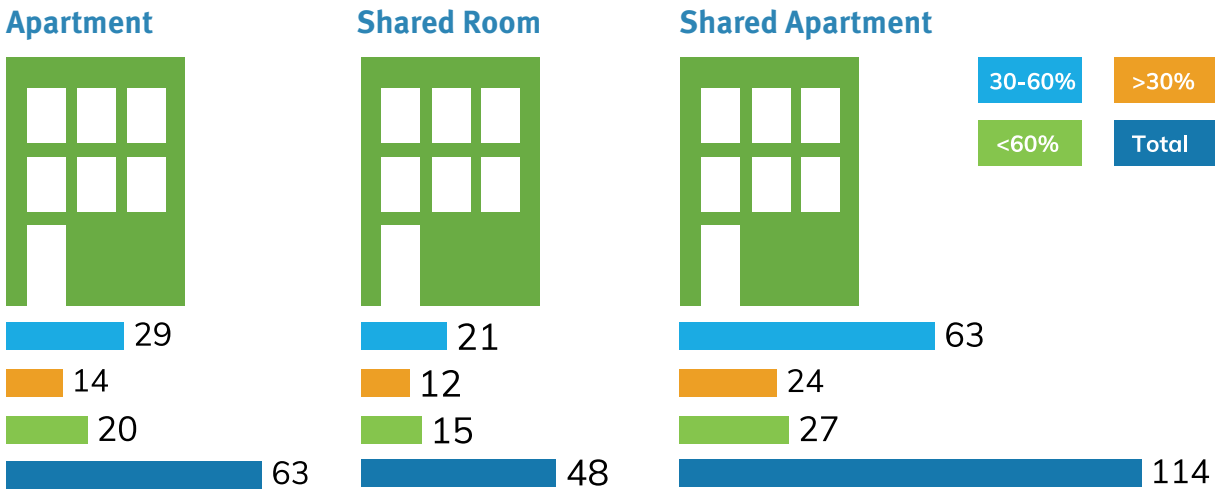
Of those survey respondents who were employed, 39% were working in a field related to their experience or education and 58% were not.

There was a slight increase in the number of respondents who accessed CBICI’s services, which was 26% in 2023, and 29% in 2024.



Housing

Housing Situation vs % Before Tax Income Spent on Housing



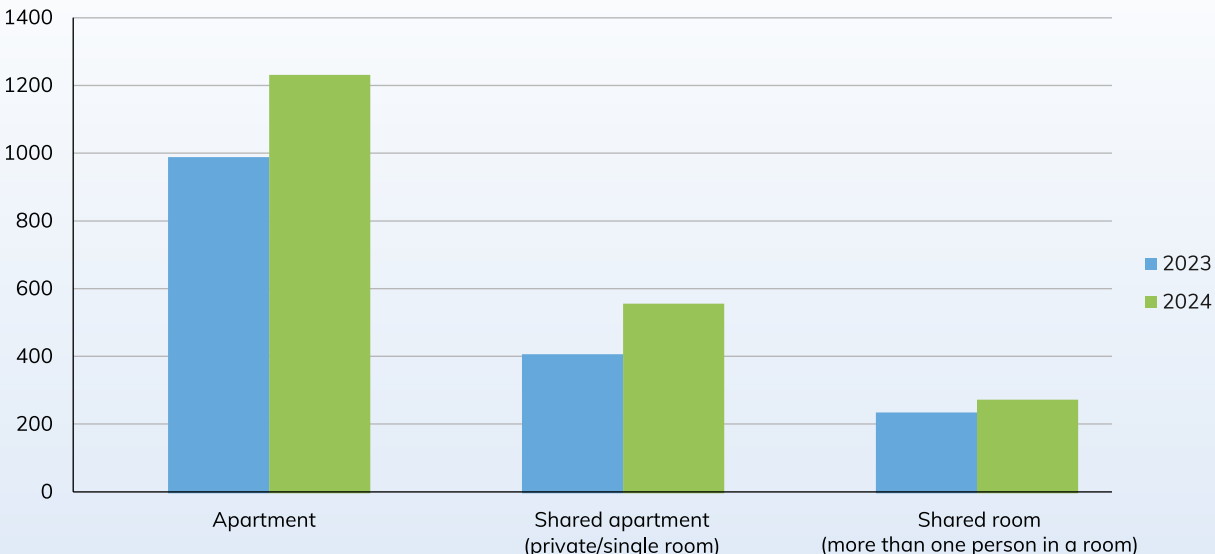
In 2024, of 254 respondents to the question, (where are you living,) 45% lived in a shared apartment with their own room, 19% were living in a shared room (more than one person in a room), 26% had their own apartment, and 7% rented an entire home.

The proportion of respondents who were sharing a room (more than one person in a room) dropped 10% from 2023 to 2024.

The CMHC defines housing as affordable with it costs less than 30% of a household's before-tax income. Out of 225 respondents, 28% were paying more than 60% of their household income in rent.

When added to respondents paying 30-60%, survey results show that 78% of respondents were paying rent that is defined as unaffordable.

Average Rent Cost Comparison



Comparing 2023 and 2024 survey results, average rental prices increased significantly – for those renting their own apartment, or renting a private room, rental costs increased 18 to 20%. For those renting in a shared room, rental costs increased 7%.

Happy in Current Residence



Yes
64%

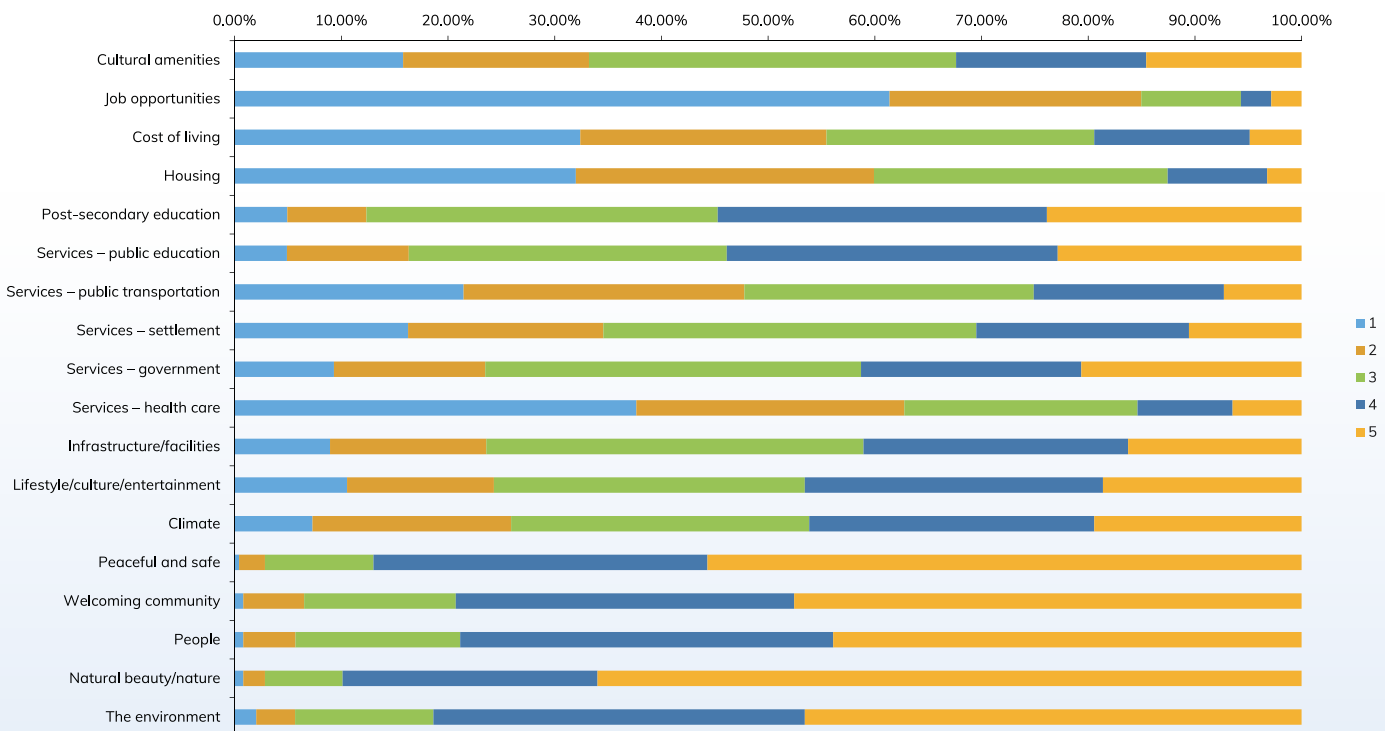


No
36%

Of the 251 respondents to the question, “Are you happy with your current residence?” 64% indicated they were happy, and 36% indicated they were not. This is consistent with 2023 survey data, as well as the areas of concern respondents had with regard to housing.

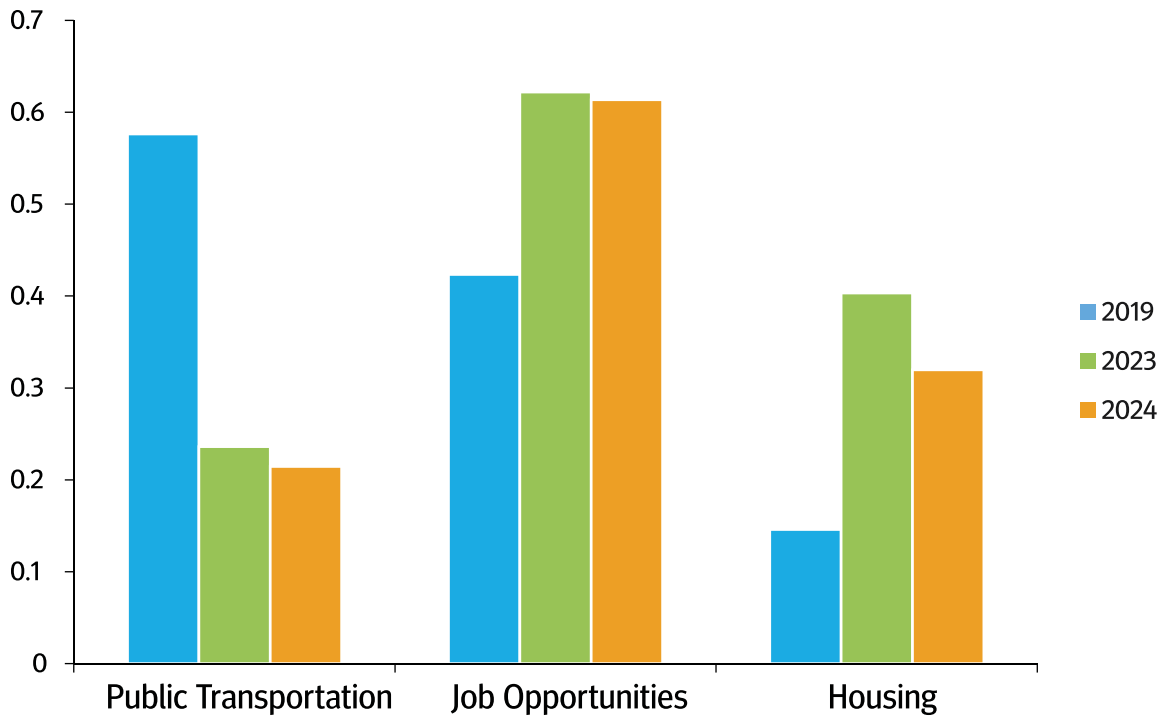
Out of 91 respondents to the follow up question, “What are you unhappy with?” the biggest concern was again the cost of rent, with 37 respondents indicating that rent was too high. 28 respondents to this question were concerned about the condition of their housing, from infrastructure, heat, to issues with vermin.

Retention



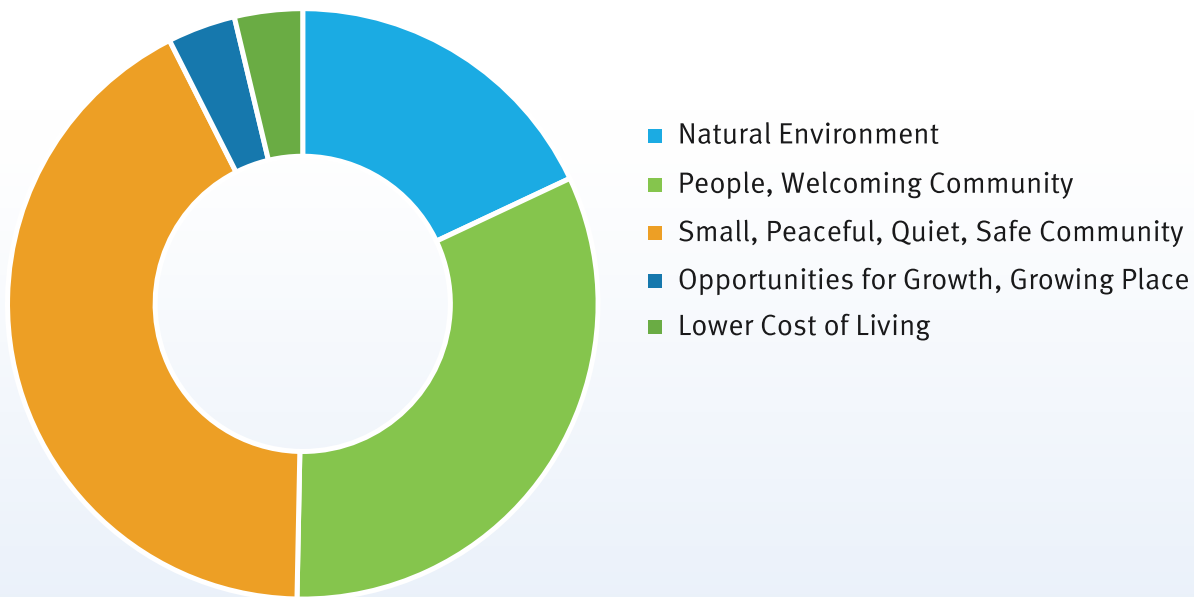
*Participants were asked to rate each item on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating disliking the item, and 5 indicating liking the item a lot.

Least Liked Aspect of Living in Cape Breton Comparison



2024 results were consistent with 2023, showing that employment continues to be the biggest area of concern for international students, with housing the second largest area of concern.

Reasons to Stay in Cape Breton 2024



Consistent with 2023 survey results, international student respondents indicated that the natural environment and Cape Breton’s welcoming community were the top reasons to stay on-Island.

