



International Institute for
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

INTERNATIONAL
INSTITUTE FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL
STUDIES

IIES

NEWSLETTER

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ABOUT US

OUR VISION

The vision of the International Institute for Environmental Studies (IIES) is to become a global leader in advancing research, policy, and collaboration on complex environmental issues.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the IIES is to bring together scientists and policy experts from institutions worldwide to advance collaboration in environmental science, management, and sustainability studies through research, education, and knowledge exchange among its member institutions and partners in government and industry.

Through a variety of annual public events, the Institute aims to facilitate international collaboration on common environmental goals and to convey the outcomes of the research of its members to governmental and industrial partners and to the public at large.

FOUR PILLARS OF THE INSTITUTE

The IIES annual workshops typically focus around four general themes to narrow down the broad topic of the environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

The relationships between people and their environment, promotion of human health and well-being, and maintaining healthy and safe communities.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

The commitment of organizations and government to the laws, regulations, and other policy mechanisms concerning environmental issues.

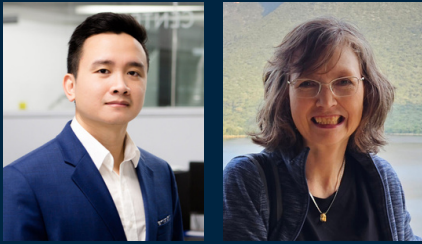
ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESSES

The processes related to the interaction of natural resources with humans and their environment.

GREEN & NOVEL TECHNOLOGY

The technology and science that helps to reduce human impact on the natural environment.





OPENING REMARKS

PROFESSOR HUY DANG, TRENT UNIVERSITY

PROFESSOR MARGARET GRAHAM, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

The 2026 UNESCO Higher Education Global Trends Report highlights a significant turning point in global higher education, with enrolment rising to 269 million students in 2024, up from 100 million in 2020. International mobility has also tripled, amid regional disparities that favour a few major destination countries over the rest of the world. Other inequalities persist in access, funding, and mobility. Fewer than 3% of students participate in international mobility, while many institutions face funding pressures, threats to core academic values, and a consistent need to transition in the era of digital transformation and artificial intelligence. A gender gap was also noted at the doctoral level and in senior academic leadership positions.

In this context, the IIES continues to promote a stronger and transboundary collaboration framework in global higher education, crossing disciplines and national borders. The 10th IIES Workshop on Science & Policy and the 9th Graduate Student Forum (June 2026) in the scenic South of France will offer an opportunity to (re)connect, collaborate, and develop ambitious research and training initiatives. This annual event, centred on the theme “Environment, Economy & Society”, brings together over 100 researchers at different career stages from 12 countries. To alleviate financial barriers and support the development of future leaders, the IIES proudly offers 20 travel awards to graduate students attending the meeting and provides accommodations for attendees from the IIES partner institutions.

In this newsletter, we are pleased to announce that our network is expanding with new members. We welcome EcotoQ and Laval Université (Québec, Canada) as the 31st and 32nd partner institutions, and we have created the first IIES-EcotoQ International Research Collaboration Award. We congratulate Frédérique Warren (MSc student, INRS) on her exceptional achievements in advancing international research outreach in environmental sciences and policy. We also congratulate Minh Duong (PhD candidate, Trent University) on receiving the prestigious High-Level Scientific Fellowship from the Embassy of France in Canada and Campus France. This funding recognizes the research potential of graduate students and early-career researchers in fields of high priority for both nations. The success story of Queen Elizabeth Scholar Scott Stebbing (MSc student, Trent University) during his exchange at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology further highlights the benefits of international mobility for professional and academic development, as well as for building friendships and strengthening people-to-people ties.

From this edition, the IIES newsletter will feature researchers who have made significant contributions to their fields through their inspiring career trajectories. This initiative aims to foster exchange and collaboration, showcase research excellence within the IIES network, and share professional journeys. We welcome suggestions and nominations from the IIES community for future candidates.

We are always grateful for the contributions of all partners, researchers, and students to the IIES's activities. The IIES will continue to advance global initiatives that address the triple planetary crisis, environmental and climate stewardship, and the Sustainable Development Goals. More information on future initiatives will be shared as they unfold. In the meantime, we wish you all the best for the upcoming summer season.



MEMBER NEWS



Participants gather at the joint EcotoQ-Ecobim international workshop held in June 2023 in Quebec City, Canada.

ECOTOQ

IIES 31TH MEMBER

The IIES is thrilled to welcome its newest member, EcotoQ in Quebec City, Canada. This new partnership agreement between the IIES and EcotoQ, formalized in December 2025, aims to build a long-term synergistic relationship that fosters collaborative research, promotes training opportunities, and enhances the international reach of work in ecotoxicology and environmental sciences.

From Isbath Sanni, Coordinator of EcotoQ:

"Joining the IIES network marks an important step for EcotoQ. This partnership will enhance our international collaboration in environmental science and ecotoxicology, promote knowledge sharing, and create new opportunities for students and researchers. Together, we aspire to advance innovative research and amplify the global impact of our work."

ABOUT ECOTOQ, CANADA

Funded by the Fonds de recherche du Québec, EcotoQ is a strategic cluster of Canadian and international researchers in ecotoxicology. It is the only academic group in Quebec dedicated exclusively to documenting the presence and fate of environmental contaminants, and to studying their effects on flora and fauna.

As such, they are dedicated to facilitating access for governments, the general public, and the media to Quebec's best expertise on various environmental issues.

With over 50 regular members from 12 universities and 1 college, upwards of 70 collaborating members and hundreds of student members, EcotoQ is a unique gathering of international subject matter experts in environmental chemistry, biology and environmental engineering. EcotoQ provides its members with key services in research collaboration, networking, infrastructure sharing, student training, data management, and knowledge dissemination in ecotoxicology.

The research conducted by EcotoQ's members focuses on anthropogenic contaminants in air, water and soils from urban, industrial, agricultural, and pristine environments; from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of the St. Lawrence; from southern Quebec to the Arctic.

To learn more about EcotoQ and its members, visit their website:

[ECOTOQ WEBSITE](#)



MEMBER NEWS



UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL

IIES 32ND MEMBER

The IIES gladly welcomes its newest member, Université Laval in Québec City, Canada. In May 2026, the membership agreement between the IIES and Université Laval was officially signed.

This new partnership will enhance knowledge exchange and collaborative innovation as well as expand opportunities for student and researcher mobility with initiatives such as the Queen Elizabeth Scholars Program, through which one Université Laval student is currently receiving funding to work on an environmental research project at Phenikaa University in Vietnam.

ABOUT UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL

Set in the heart of Québec City, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Université Laval is a public research university previously known as the Séminaire de Québec founded by François de Montmorency-Laval, the first Bishop of New France. Established in 1663, Université Laval is the oldest post-secondary institution and the first French-language university in Canada. It is recognized for its strong commitment to innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and societal impact. The university stands out for its leadership in nordicity and sustainability research, as well as its vibrant research community spanning health, environment, and advanced materials.

[CONTINUE READING ONLINE](#)



Aerial view of Université Laval's main campus in Québec City, Canada.

From Professor Dominic Larivière, Chemistry Department Chair at Université Laval:

“Joining the IIES network represents a natural extension of Université Laval’s commitment to collaborative, interdisciplinary research. We look forward to advancing innovative solutions to pressing environmental challenges alongside our international partners.”

“Environmental research at Université Laval is a core strength, with a particular emphasis on: climate change and northern ecosystems (Arctic and sub-Arctic research), sustainable development and resource management, green chemistry and clean technologies, biodiversity conservation, and environmental health.”



RESEARCHER SPOTLIGHT

CLAUDE FORTIN

**PROFESSOR, INRS
CO-DIRECTOR, ECOTOQ**

Claude Fortin is a professor at the Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS), co-director of EcotoQ and co-chair of the steering committee on the presence of contaminants from mining in the Oujé-Bougoumou region, representing the Cree community. We sat down with Claude to learn more about his career path and his work.

“I have had a very non-linear academic and career path. But I think that made me aware of the difficulties that people encounter when they’re talking to someone from a different discipline. And that has been very useful, I think, in my career.”



Claude Fortin, professor at the Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS) & co-director of EcotoQ.

“I did my undergraduate studies at McGill (Montreal, Canada) in chemical engineering. After getting my degree, I realized it was not exactly what I wanted to do. I chose chemical engineering based on the false premise that it would be about chemistry but applied to industry. In addition to this, the economic context at the time was that there was a recession and no one was hiring. And I realized I had spent four years studying something for companies that don’t want to hire me. That’s why I decided that from that moment on, I’d do what I’d like to do for myself.”

“So, I started thinking about what could be my next step. And I came across the person who became my mentor, Professor Peter Campbell, at INRS. And he convinced me to do a master’s on a project in the field of analytical chemistry but applied to ecotoxicology. And I loved it! I decided to stay on and do a PhD, which included more ecotoxicology, working with algae.”



RESEARCHER SPOTLIGHT

CONTINUED



Professor Claude Fortin collecting field samples from sediment porewater peepers.

“So, I wasn’t really an engineer, wasn’t really a chemist, wasn’t really a biologist either. But I managed to acquire all the knowledge required to apply it to my project.”

“After that, I did a postdoc in France in radioecology. I had applied to a position at Environment Canada before going off for my postdoc. And after two years, I got a phone call that there was finally an opening. They offered me a job and I accepted. So, I moved back to Canada in Ottawa to work for an environmental regulator. So again, something else different. And shortly after, there was a position open at INRS, and to my own surprise, they hired me. And I’ve been there since 2003.”

“What is required to have success in research in general? It is to be consistent and to have a direction and keep pushing in that direction.”

“So, I’ve tried not to spread myself too thin on radically different projects. They might be individually different, but they all go towards the same direction so that helps build your reputation and expertise without diluting it.”

“You need to identify what makes you want to go to work every morning and focus on that and develop your expertise and avoid the bandwagon effect. There are trends sometimes in research. People are working all on one topic and then they jump to another. In the long run, that doesn’t help you develop your expertise in a niche. So, find your niche and foster it. At some point your expertise will be needed for that niche, but if you’ve just spread yourself over dozens of topics, you’ll be just one person in the crowd.”

“And the other factor behind my own successes, I think, was that I was lucky to have a great mentor, Peter Campbell. That helped me a lot in the beginning of my career and, well, throughout my entire career, actually. But it was very helpful at the start of my career. I basically hit the ground running. When I arrived, he included me in co-supervising students and added me on grant applications. So, things started very swiftly. That gave me momentum.”

[CONTINUE READING ONLINE](#)



INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION FOR A PLANET IN BALANCE

MAGNA MEETING 2026

MAY 5-7, 2026 | RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

The IIES was represented at the annual Magna Meeting of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences (ABC) by Co-director Professor Huy Dang.

Hosted at the Museum of Tomorrow in Rio de Janeiro, the Academy's largest annual gathering brought together leading scientists from Brazil and abroad to examine the central role of the oceans in shaping the future of the planet under the theme "*Ocean of Tomorrow: Science for a Planet in Balance*".



IIES Co-director Professor Huy Dang giving a talk in the plenary session with Professor Carlos Eduardo de Rezende (UENF, third from left) and Professor Jorge Eduardo Marcovecchio (UFASTA, fourth from left), coordinated by Professor Luana Pinho (UERJ, second from left).

The meeting highlights the importance of the global ocean in climate regulation, supporting biodiversity, and providing resources for food, biotechnology, renewable energy, and technological advancement. The ocean also faces growing threats from overfishing, pollution, changing climate patterns, and the expansion of deep-sea resource exploration, all of which would compromise the ocean's role in sustaining life on Earth.

There were also discussions and debates on the legal, political and social instruments to safeguard the Ocean and thus the future of Humanity.

Professor Huy Dang delivered a talk in the plenary session on "*From land to ocean: The actions of the Triple Planetary Crisis*", which emphasized the interconnectedness of Earth systems and the influence of our societies on the fragile balances of almost all ecosystems. The discussion also affirmed the pressing needs and opportunities for genuine collaboration between scientists and governments to develop comprehensive partnership frameworks, as environmental and climate issues are not constrained by national boundaries.

The event was an opportunity for the IIES to demonstrate its leadership in facilitating international research and training, particularly given that several Brazilian institutions are members of the network, including the Federal University of Ceará and the National Institute of Science & Technology on Continent-Ocean Materials Transfer. Brazilian researchers and students were encouraged to participate in ongoing initiatives led by the IIES, including the prestigious Queen Elizabeth Scholar Program.



STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

HIGH-LEVEL SCIENTIFIC FELLOWSHIP

IIES MEMBERS COLLABORATION



The Embassy of France in Canada has partnered with Campus France to offer the High-Level Scientific Fellowship to facilitate and strengthen scientific collaborations between researchers in France and Canada in fields of priority for both nations.

The IIES has had the opportunity to support connections between Trent University and the University of Toulon to advance fundamental and applied research in Ocean and Polar Sciences. This prestigious fellowship has been awarded to Minh Thao Nguyen Duong (PhD candidate, Trent University), allowing her to start a research internship with Professor Stéphane Mounier at the University of Toulon on the environmental impacts of critical minerals on biodiversity and marine ecology of the French southern coast.

MEET THE FELLOW: MINH DUONG

"I am truly honoured to be selected for the High-Level Scientific Fellowship. This is an excellent opportunity to join the Chemistry of Marine Environments team at the Mediterranean Institute of Oceanology in Toulon, France. Connecting the Continent that is the focus of my PhD to the Ocean allows me to evaluate the environmental cycle and impacts of rare earth elements from a more comprehensive perspective. I look forward to working with Dr. Stéphane Mounier from the University of Toulon."

[CONTINUE READING ONLINE](#)



Minh Duong, PhD candidate at Trent University and awardee of the High Level Scientific Fellowship to conduct research at the University of Toulon next fall.

"These opportunities are particularly important for students and early-career researchers, as they accelerate personal and professional growth by challenging us beyond our comfort zones, developing adaptability and intercultural skills, and giving us a more nuanced understanding of how science informs real-world policy and sustainability solutions."

"Collaborations across borders foster innovation by combining complementary expertise, building global networks that lead to long-term partnerships, and preparing researchers to tackle complex environmental issues that transcend national boundaries."

"I saw this fellowship as a valuable opportunity to step outside my comfort zone and challenge myself with hands-on field sampling in a marine environment, specifically in the open sea. Combining cultural immersion with new scientific skills in oceanography and marine geochemistry made this opportunity uniquely compelling."



STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

2025 R.D.E. AWARD WINNER

BRITTANY WELSH

PHD CANDIDATE,
TRENT UNIVERSITY

Established by the IIES in 2025 to honour the enduring contributions of its founding director, Professor Emeritus R. Douglas Evans, *the R. Douglas Evans Award for International Research and Collaboration* recognizes Trent Environmental and Life Sciences (EnLS) graduate students with outstanding achievements in international environmental research partnerships.

The 2025 award was granted to Brittany Welsh, a Trent PhD candidate studying the distribution and fate of microplastics in lake catchments in Muskoka-Haliburton (Ontario, Canada).

Throughout her PhD, Brittany showcased her efforts to establish international collaborations through her research visits at *the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences* and *the University of Koblenz-Landau* in Germany. Moreover, Brittany has shared her work at global conferences and guest lectured at the *University of Koblenz-Landau*. Beyond academic circles, she has engaged in science communication through national media outlets including CBC Radio, The Globe and Mail, Random Acts of Green, and the Narwhal.

“As a fourth-year PhD candidate at Trent University, my research is rooted in addressing global environmental challenges through cross-border collaboration and policy-relevant science, goals that closely mirror the mission of IIES.”



Brittany Welsh, PhD candidate in the EnLS Program at Trent University and winner of *the 2025 R. Douglas Evans Award for International Research and Collaboration*.

“I would encourage students to seek out international opportunities whenever possible. Even a short research visit can lead to long-term collaborations, new ways of thinking, and research that has a broader impact than you might imagine when first starting.”

Her innovative research and commitment to improving environmental policy culminated in discussions with the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Canada’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Through her past and current work, Brittany Welsh embodies the core values at the heart of *the R. Douglas Evans Award*.

Read the full article on our website to learn more about Brittany’s journey to becoming a young global environmental leader.

[CONTINUE READING ONLINE](#)



QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOLARS (QES) PROGRAM

The Canadian Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarship provides full funding for student exchanges, allowing scholars to work on environmental research projects abroad.

Over four years (2025-2028), the IIES will award 24 scholarships valued at up to \$13,000 to students to support their exchange internships on environmental research projects, as part of our United Global Plan of Action for One Health and One Climate initiative. Of these 24 scholarships, 16 will be granted to Canadian students to work abroad for at least 2 months. The remaining 8 scholarships will be awarded to international students who wish to work at Canadian institutions.

Faculty members from eligible institutions who wish to host a fully funded student are encouraged to submit their proposed research projects on our website.

ANNUAL APPLICATION DEADLINES

PROJECT PHASE	SPRING SESSION	SUMMER SESSION	FALL SESSION
Proposed Projects by Faculty	March 1	July 1	November 1
Student Applications to Projects	April 1	August 1	December 1



Helene Engler, a PhD candidate from the University of Edinburgh and a 2025 recipient of the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship.

Students are encouraged to submit their applications on our website, where several research projects are already available, or to contact potential host supervisors at IIES member institutions.

This prestigious award is open to graduate students and researchers from a variety of disciplines (including STEM, humanities and economics) whose research aligns with the scope of the project presented on our website.

APPLY TODAY!



STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

QES SCHOLAR

SCOTT STEBBING

MASTER'S STUDENT,
TRENT UNIVERSITY

"In the second year of my MSc. at Trent University (Canada), I was awarded the opportunity to come to Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HCMUT) in Vietnam with the QES scholarship program.

This project significantly broadened my experience as I assisted with water sampling across the Mekong Delta, a region many times larger than my study site back in Canada. More than that, however, it challenged me to step out of my comfort zone, as I have never travelled outside North America, let alone on my own.

I wanted to test myself within a new environment and demonstrate my willingness to get involved with fieldwork, even if doing so involves some separation from my support network back in Peterborough."



Queen Elizabeth Scholar Scott Stebbing making Rice Cakes with members of Tri Nguyen's Family in Tien Giang (Mekong Delta), in preparation for the Lunar New Year

"I hoped to gain field experience in a region vastly different from what I am accustomed to, while also contributing to environmental research initiatives."

"The last 100 days have passed in a blur, and I am sad to be leaving. The QES scholarship has allowed me to meet new friends and colleagues from around the world and experience life in Vietnam; while supported financially, administratively, and personally. This exchange has forced me to adapt in ways I hadn't foreseen and learn how to find peace and calm even amid chaotic and loud surroundings."

[CONTINUE READING ONLINE](#)



Image: Scott Stebbing standing near a rice field in the Northern part of the Dong Thap Province, Vietnam.

IIES NOTICE BOARD

ASSEMBLÉE DE LA TERRE

UNIVERSITÉ DE TOULON, FRANCE

Rewrite the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to place all living beings at the heart of global priorities: this is the ambition carried by the Earth Assemblies (Assemblée de la Terre), launched by several countries as a continuation of United Nations work. As spaces for exchange and reflection, they provide an opportunity to discuss reshaping the SDGs in an ecocentric way in preparation for the 2030 Earth Summit.

In France, the Earth Assembly is coordinated by *Caroline Regad* and *Cédric Riott*, professors at the University of Toulon and experts in the UN Harmony with Nature programme. These Assemblies combine civic awareness and scientific rigor to develop balanced proposals that match the scale of the challenges.

On **July 3, 2026**, the Earth Assembly – France presents the outcomes of its first year of work related to Nature.

Register online for free using the link below:

THE WORLD CAFÉ

UNIVERSITÉ DE TOULON, FRANCE

In line with General Assembly resolutions and the UN Secretary-General's reports on Harmony with Nature, Mother Earth Assemblies are being established around the world, bringing together the scientific rigor of academic institutions, research centers, as well as ancestral knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, and civil society organizations expertise.

As hubs for dialogue and reflection, the Mother Earth Assemblies aim to rewrite the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from an ecocentric perspective. The official launch of these newly formed Assemblies took place in France on July 2, 2025, at the University of Toulon. The goal is to build sustainable solutions to face the challenges of the 21st century.

The World Café on **June 17, 2026**, is an opportunity to collectively participate in the debates, sharing diverse perspectives on several thematic challenges regarding the future of the SDGs.

If you are interested, please contact: info@ii-es.com



REGISTER NOW



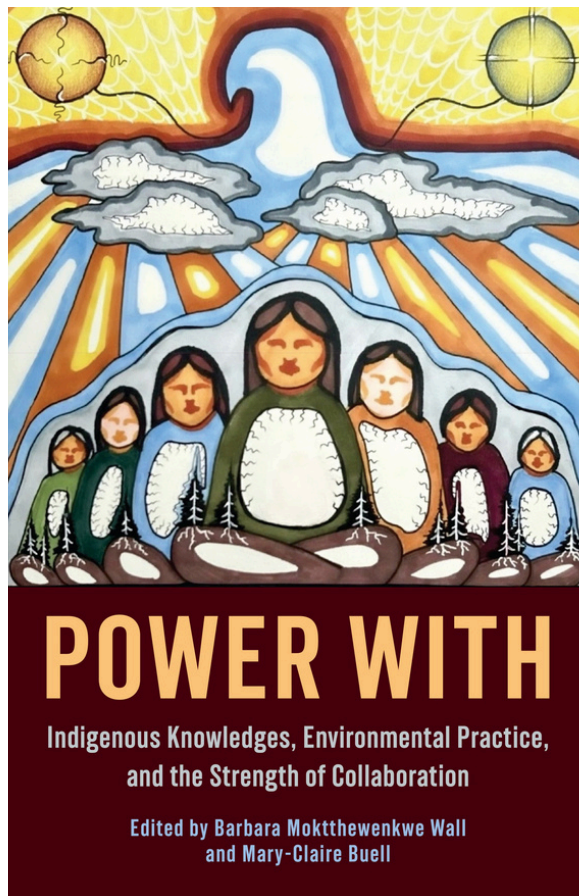
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POWER WITH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES, ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICE, AND THE STRENGTH OF COLLABORATION

TRENT UNIVERSITY, CANADA

Trent University Professors Barbara Moktthewenkwe Wall & Mary-Claire Buell share the forthcoming release of their new book.

“Power With: Indigenous Knowledges, Environmental Practice, and the Strength of Collaboration” calls for a paradigm shift in environmental science and education. This groundbreaking collection advocates for ethical and effective collaborations between Indigenous Peoples and communities and environmental practitioners working at the intersection of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, and Eurocentric environmental sciences. Through case studies grounded in community-based research and dialogue from a gathering of contributing authors, this volume asks urgent questions: How does the status quo in environmental sciences support ongoing colonial impacts? How can we stand with Indigenous science? And how can collaborative work at the intersection of Indigenous and Eurocentric sciences help address “wicked problems,” such as conservation and sustainability in the context of the climate crisis?



Cover of *Power With: Indigenous Knowledges, Environmental Practice, and the Strength of Collaboration* by Barbara Moktthewenkwe Wall & Mary-Claire Buell

[LEARN MORE](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

SUMMER-FALL 2026



Image: Field Demonstration by Professor Craig Sheridan (University of the Witwatersrand) during the 8th International Graduate Student Forum in South Africa.

10TH ANNUAL SCIENCE & POLICY WORKSHOP & 9TH INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT FORUM

TOULON, FRANCE | JUNE 14-20, 2026

The 10th Annual IIES Workshop on Science & Policy and 9th International Graduate Student Forum will be hosted at the University of Toulon in Toulon and on the Ile de Porquerolles in France from June 14-20, 2026.

ONLINE SEMINAR SERIES

ONLINE | FALL 2026

Our future online lecture series is still in planning. Please keep checking our website for updates.

QES PROGRAM INFORMATION SESSIONS

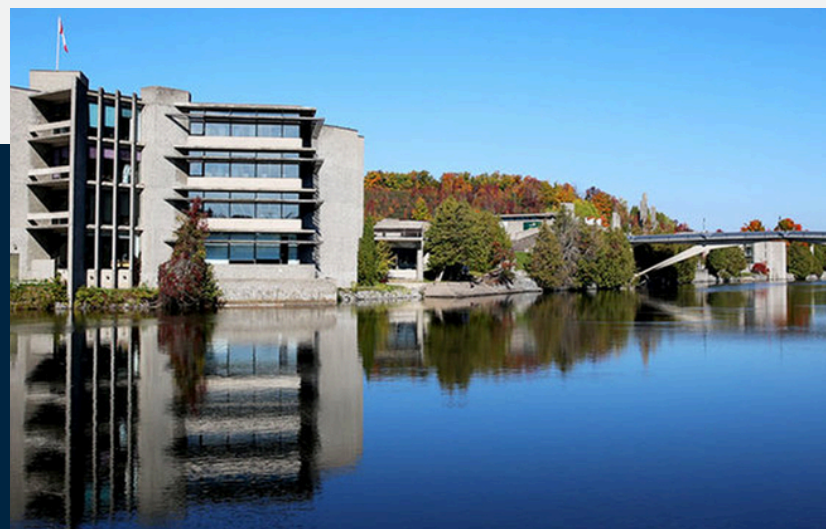
TRENT UNIVERSITY | FALL 2026

ONLINE | FALL 2026

The IIES will be hosting free in-person and online information sessions for students and faculty interested in learning more about student exchange opportunities through the QES project. These sessions will cover current opportunities, eligibility requirements, host requirements and funding details.

Stay tuned for information on how to register.

Image: Trent University campus in Peterborough, Ontario.



GET MORE INFORMATION

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Thank you for your interest in the International Institute for Environmental Studies. We look forward to collaborating with you.

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