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Participation in Postsecondary Education: Graduates, Continuers and Drop Outs, Results from YITS Cycle 4



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**Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics
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Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued cooperation and goodwill.

Acronyms

CEGEP	Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel
HRSDC	Human Resources and Social Development Canada
LFS	Labour Force Survey
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
PSE	Postsecondary education
STC	Statistics Canada
YITS	Youth in transition Survey

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1. Introduction

The benefits of pursuing postsecondary education have been widely documented. Benefits are not limited to higher wages only, but extend to wider issues, such as health, employment stability and labour flexibility. At the socio economic level, a qualified work force is linked to higher productivity, innovation, civic engagement and economic growth. More importantly, however, the future of the Canadian economy is dependant on a continuous inflow of qualified workers to compete in the global/knowledge economy.

Understanding the process for obtaining postsecondary education and the factors affecting it is vital for ensuring that the needs for graduates in the Canadian economy are met. The ability to pinpoint groups of individuals who are at risk of not obtaining a postsecondary education allows for targeted interventions to assist them in increasing their human capital. Those who do decide to pursue postsecondary education may face barriers that may affect completion, and these need to be addressed.

The analysis for this report is based on data from the Youth in Transition Survey (YITS). The survey was designed by Human Resources and Social Development Canada and Statistics Canada. YITS is a longitudinal survey, which collects information on educational and labour market pathways of a sample of young Canadians in the 18 to 20 age group in 1999. They were interviewed four times since the implementation of the survey, in 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2006. In this report, the data used are from the first four cycles and describe where they stood in their school to work pathway in December 2005 when they were 24 to 26 years of age.¹

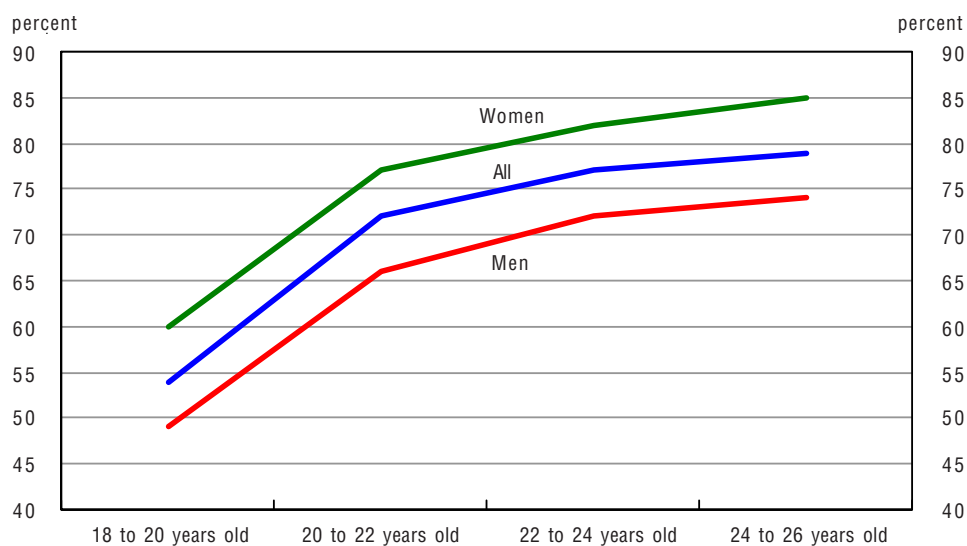
Previous research on postsecondary participation of Canadian youth found that no one factor can fully account for who goes on to postsecondary education (Barr-Telford and al. 2003). There was, instead, a wide variety of characteristics which distinguish youth who undertake postsecondary education from those who do not. This report will examine demographic and family characteristics, high school engagement, academic performance, and first year postsecondary experience of those who attended postsecondary education and those who did not or dropped out.

2. Participation in postsecondary education

The proportion of youth who participated in postsecondary education increases as they get older. In December 1999, when they were 18 to 20 years old and many of them were still attending high school, 54% of youth had already attended postsecondary education. Over the next six years, participation rate increased steadily to reach almost 80% in December 2005. Since access to university happens generally at an older age, this increase is mainly attributable to the growth in university participation rate. It almost doubled over the period, while participation rate to both college/CEGEP and other PSE institution grew by 3 percentage points.

Between December 2003 and 2005 however, when youth were reaching their mid twenties, fewer of them joined the ranks of postsecondary students indicating that the participation rate was probably levelling off.

Chart 1
Cumulative rate of postsecondary participation



Starting from 1999, more women than men had attended PSE. By December 2005, 85% of them had participated compared to 74% of men. However, the gap between them did not widen as they aged: in 1999, there was already an 11 points difference in participation rate between men and women (49% and 60% respectively).

Demographic factors

Two other characteristics seemed to have an impact on PSE participation: visible minority and the type of community of which they were residents. Visible minority youth were more likely to participate in postsecondary education, particularly in university.

Table 1

Postsecondary participation of young adults aged 24 to 26 in December 2005, by selected demographic characteristics

	Participation rate	Type of institution attended			Type of university program	
	Attended postsecondary education percent	Attended other postsecondary institution percent	Attended college/Cegep percent	Attended university percent	Bachelors percent	Graduate students percent
All	79	17	33	50	87	13
Demographic factors						
Visible minority						
Visible minority	87	11	27	62	87	13 ^E
Not a visible minority	78	17	34	49	86	14
Type of community						
Rural	65	20	40	40	90	10 ^E
Urban	82	16	32	52	86	14
Gender						
Men	74	18	33	49	88	12
Women	85	15	33	52	86	14
Province						
Newfoundland and Labrador	83	19	23	58	94	6 ^E
Prince Edward Island	75	18 ^E	25 ^E	57	95	F
Nova Scotia	81	11	31	58	89	11 ^E
New Brunswick	78	17	32	52	91	9
Quebec	79	14	38	48	79	21
Ontario	83	9	40	51	89	11
Manitoba	72	15	24	61	93	7 ^E
Saskatchewan	76	26	16	58	87	F
Alberta	71	28	24	48	91	9 ^E
British Columbia	80	33	20	47	87	13 ^E
Canada	79	17	33	50	87	13

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

Overall, the proportion of youth from rural communities who attended postsecondary institutions was smaller than the proportion of those from urban communities, especially at the university level. Education costs were likely considered in light of proximity of the institution. As well, youth who chose postsecondary education were more likely to attend a college/CEGEP or other type of institution rather than a university.

Provincially, Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador had the highest participation of their youth in postsecondary education, while Alberta had the lowest. In a previous study of the same cohort (Shaienks and al., 2006) the attractiveness of the labour market and the low unemployment rate were mentioned as factors explaining the high drop out rate in high school in Alberta. These factors could potentially also explain the low postsecondary education participation rate in that province. British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec had the lowest participation rates in university programs while Quebec and Ontario had the highest participation in college/CEGEP programs.

Family factors

Family structure, parental educational attainment and parental values towards postsecondary education can all affect postsecondary participation and attainment. A higher proportion of youth who lived with both parents during high school continued their studies after high school (83%) compared to youth living in another family structure (71%).

The proportion of youth who participated in postsecondary education increased as parental education increased. Furthermore, of those participating in postsecondary education, the proportion of them attending university goes up as parental education increases, in comparison with college/CEGEP.

Table 2

Postsecondary participation rate of youth aged 24 to 26 in December 2005, by selected family characteristics

	Participation rate		Type of institution attended			Type of university program	
	Never attended post-secondary education	Attended post-secondary education	Attended other postsecondary institution	Attended college/Cegep	Attended university	Bachelors	Graduate students
	percent	percent	percent	percent	percent	percent	percent
All	21	79	17	33	50	87	13
Family characteristics							
Family structure¹							
Living with both birth parents	17	83	15	31	54	87	13
Other	29	71	22	38	40	86	14
Highest educational attainment of parents							
Less than high school	37	63	24	43	32	85	F
High school diploma	31	69	22	40	37	90	10
Some postsecondary education	18	82	21	35	43	92	8 ^E
Postsecondary certificate/diploma	10	90	12	28	60	85	15
Parent's opinion on the importance of pursuing education after the high school							
Important	16	84	15	32	53	86	14
Not important	52	48	34	42	24	90	10 ^E

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

1. The family structure is the structure that was present when the respondent was in high school.

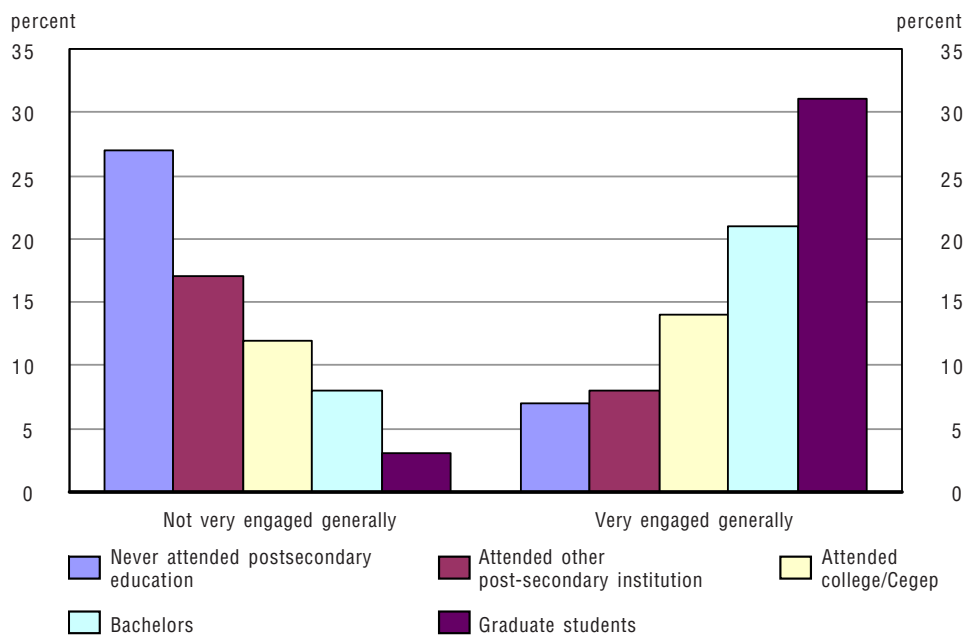
The value that parents place on education also appeared to influence postsecondary education participation. Participation rate of youth whose parents thought postsecondary education was important was almost two times higher (84%) than those whose parents thought it was not important (48%). Among those who attended postsecondary education, more than twice as many went to university compared to those whose parents thought postsecondary education was not important.

High school engagement and academic performance

Positive interactions in high school, both academically and socially, were related to continued participation in education at the postsecondary level. Measures of school engagement includes participation in academic life (e.g., number of hours spent on homework, schoolwork performed, impressions concerning the value of education), and social life (e.g., sense of belonging, being able to count on the support of friends, ease in making friends).

Chart 2

High school engagement of youth and postsecondary status



Higher proportions of youth who reported high social and academic engagement in high school attended postsecondary education than others. More than 20% of youth who attempted a bachelor degree in university reported being very engaged in high school compared to 7% of those who did not pursue postsecondary studies. This increased to 31% for students who undertook graduate studies.

Academic and social engagement scales

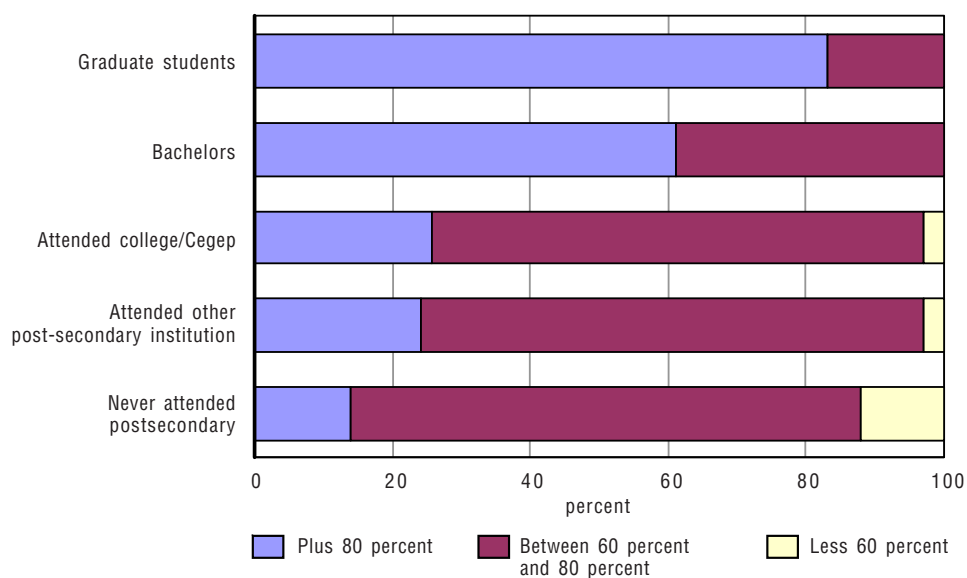
Academic engagement scale: This variable was derived using the respondents' levels of agreement with the following statements: I got along well with teachers; I did as little work as possible - I just wanted to get by; I paid attention to the teacher; I was interested in what I was learning in class; I completed my homework on time; I thought that many of the things we were learning in class were useless; and, school was often a waste of time. It also included the number of times per month the respondent reported skipping class without permission.

Social engagement scale: This variable was derived using the respondents' levels of agreement with the following statements: I felt like an outsider at school or like I was left out of things at school; I was treated with as much respect as other students in my class; I had friends at school whom I could talk to about personal things; and, people at school were interested in what I had to say.

Good grades in high school had a major impact on postsecondary education, and more so for university than for college or CEGEP programs. This was not surprising as entrance requirements for postsecondary schooling are tied to high school marks. The majority (93%) of those who reported an overall high school average of more than 80 percent participated in postsecondary schooling. Conversely, among youth who had an average of 60% or less, over a third managed to pursue postsecondary education, mainly in college/CEGEP or other non-university postsecondary institution (Table B6 in appendix).

Chart 3

Postsecondary status of youth and grade average in high school



Almost 85% of youth who undertook graduate studies reported an overall average of 80 percent or more in high school. That proportion was around 25% for students who attended CEGEP, college and other post secondary institution. On the other hand, amongst youth who did not pursue postsecondary schooling, only 14% had a high school average of 80 percent or more.

Postsecondary experiences

The transition from high school to postsecondary education is not an easy one. Positive attitude and sense of belonging during first year of postsecondary education is critical in the decision to continue or to drop out. The first PSE experience was positive for the majority of youth who attended college or university.

Table 3

Attitude and sense of belonging during first year of postsecondary education of youth aged 24 to 26 in December 2005, by their postsecondary status

	Participation rate	Type of institution attended			Type of university program	
	Attended postsecondary education percent	Attended other postsecondary institution percent	Attended college/Cegep percent	Attended university percent	Bachelors percent	Graduate students percent
Attitude and sense of belonging during 1st year of postsecondary education						
I participated in a program or workshop to help me adjust to first-year PSE	16	14	14	18	18	18
I never or rarely miss deadlines	84	87	77	87	87	92
I never thought about dropping out	72	77	68	72	71	79
There were people at school I could talk to about personal things (Agree/strongly agree)	79	78	77	81	81	85
I felt I had found the right program for me (Agree/strongly agree)	75	85	75	71	70	78
First year helped me get a better idea of my future plans (agree/strongly agree)	81	90	84	76	76	76
First year gave me skills that would help me in the job market (Agree/strongly agree)	72	88	79	61	60	63
During first year, I was sure of the type of work I would like to have in the future (Agree/strongly agree)	62	79	69	52	51	51
Grade average during first year of postsecondary education						
90% or above	10	20	10	6	4	11 ^E
80% to 89%	28	39	27	25	23	37
70% to 79%	41	27	40	46	47	44
60% to 69%	17	11	16	19	21	7 ^E
under 60%	4	3 ^E	7	4	4	F
Average weekly hours spent studying						
Less than 3 hours	15	26	18	10	9	5 ^E
4 to 14 hours	56	51	60	54	56	48
15 to 30 hours	25	19	19	31	30	38
more than 30 hours	4	3 ^E	3	5	4	10 ^E

^E use with caution

^F too unreliable to be published

Postsecondary programs in CEGEP, college and other postsecondary institution are generally more technical and labour market oriented. Not surprisingly, many youth attending those programs reported that the first year gave them skills to help them in the job market and to better develop their future plans. They also reported gaining some insights about the type of work/career they would like to have.

University students were less concerned about labour market skills in their first year. Among them, graduate students were the most likely to report that in their first year they felt that they had chosen the right program, they were not thinking of dropping out and they did not miss deadlines. They were also more likely to say that their grade average in first year of their program was fairly good and that they spent many hours per week studying.

3. Dropping out of postsecondary education

Demographic characteristics

Ideally, all those capable of pursuing postsecondary education should be able to do so. However, it is also as essential to ensure that those who do enter complete it. Among the 963,000 individuals who were 18 to 20 years of age in December 1999 and participated in postsecondary education by December 2005, roughly 143,600 dropped out. This represented an overall postsecondary education dropout rate of 15%.

Definitions of Postsecondary Education (PSE) Status

Participated in Postsecondary Education encompasses all of the following groups:

A Postsecondary Education Graduate is someone who graduated from a postsecondary institution and includes both graduate continuers and graduate non-continuers;

A Postsecondary Education Graduate Continuer is someone who has already graduated from a postsecondary institution and is still pursuing education at a postsecondary institution.

A Postsecondary Education Graduate Non-Continuer is someone who has graduated from a postsecondary institution and is not pursuing education in a postsecondary institution.

A Postsecondary Education Continuer is someone who is attending a Postsecondary Education institution but has not yet graduated.

A Postsecondary Education Dropout is someone who has attended postsecondary education but is no longer pursuing it and has never graduated from a Postsecondary Education institution.

The rate of completion of postsecondary education was the highest in Prince Edward Island (76%) and lowest in Saskatchewan and British Columbia (both at 55%). Conversely, the dropout rates were the lowest in Prince Edward Island (9%) and highest in Quebec (17%), Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia (all at 16%). While Prince Edward Island had the highest graduation rate and the lowest dropout rate, it had the lowest rate of students pursuing further postsecondary education (8% compared to 20% for Quebec –the province with the highest proportion)².

Fewer youth of visible minorities had graduated from postsecondary education by December 2005 compared to others (52% and 61% respectively), (Table 4). This is explained by the fact that more of them chose university level education which takes longer to complete. Members of visible minority as well as non members dropped from postsecondary education in similar proportion.

Although a similar proportion of both rural and urban students have graduated from postsecondary education by December 2005, rural students were less likely to have gone into further education (11% compared to 17% for urban students) and more likely to have dropped out (20% compared to 14% for urban students).

Graduation rates also varied depending on the age of the respondent in December of 2005 with 66% of those at age 26 having graduated compared to 53% at age 24. Noticeably, dropout rates remained stable (at 15%) for respondents at different ages, suggesting that dropping out occurred before 24 years of age.

Table 4

Postsecondary education status of youth aged 24 to 26 in December 2005, by province, visible minority, community type and age

	Graduates continuers	Graduates	Continuers	Drop out
	percent	percent	percent	percent
All	16	60	9	15
Demographic factors				
Province				
Newfoundland and Labrador	12 ^E	63	11 ^E	14 ^E
Prince Edward Island	8 ^E	76	8 ^E	9 ^E
Nova Scotia	14	61	8 ^E	16
New Brunswick	9	67	11 ^E	12 ^E
Quebec	20	58	6	17
Ontario	14	61	11	14
Manitoba	14	58	12	16
Saskatchewan	19 ^E	55	12	15
Alberta	13	60	11	16
British Columbia	19	55	10	16
Gender				
Men	14	57	11	17
Women	17	62	7	13
Visible minority				
Visible minority	18	52	15	15
Not a visible minority	16	61	8	15
Type of community				
Rural	11	63	7	20
Urban	17	59	10	14
Age				
24	19	53	12	15
25	16	60	9	15
26	13	66	6	15

^E use with caution

The previous section has shown that women were more likely to enter postsecondary education, but they were also more likely to have completed it in the 6-year time frame covered by the survey. By December 2005, 54% graduates were women. In addition, among those who have graduated and pursued further education, 57% were represented by females. Not surprisingly, since women represented the majority of those with completed postsecondary education, men were the majority among continuers and dropouts (58% and 54% respectively) (Table C1).

A vast majority of postsecondary education graduates (87%) and graduate continuers (95%) reported having no children as of December 2005. Among dropouts, a lesser proportion (76%) had no children. Among dropouts, 90% had no children in December 2003. This indicates that the arrival of children might be a factor behind dropping out.

Table 5

Postsecondary education status of youth aged 24 to 26 in December 2005, by selected demographic characteristics

	Graduates continuers	Graduates	Continuers	Drop out
	percent	percent	percent	percent
All	100	100	100	100
Kids in cycle 4				
With kids	5 ^E	13	12	24
Without kids	95	87	88	76
Kids in cycle 2				
With kids	2 ^E	4	6	10
Without kids	98	96	94	90
Student loan				
Yes	64	57	62	52
No	36	43	38	48
Job status				
Full-time	51	89	55	87
Part-time	49	11	45	13

^E use with caution

Student loans were a popular method of financing postsecondary education for students. Nearly six-out-of-ten of those with completed postsecondary education or those studying reported student loans. Only about half of dropouts had student loans.

Over half of those who were working and in postsecondary education were working full-time. Among graduates no longer in education, 89% were working full-time. A similar proportion of dropouts also reported working full-time (87%).

Family characteristics

Students come from a variety of family backgrounds in terms of family structure, parental education and parental aspirations for them. The type of a family structure they have grown up is considered an important determinant of their educational outcomes. A larger proportion of students who were living with both parents during high school have completed postsecondary education by December 2005 compared to those from other-family types (79% and 67% respectively when taking into account the graduates continuers and the graduates). Also, a smaller proportion of them left postsecondary education before completion (13% compared to 20% of student from other-family types) (Table 6).

Educational attainment of parents, which is often used as a proxy for estimating the family's socio-economic status, has been well documented determinant in children's schooling behavior. As discussed in the previous section, children of parents with higher educational attainment were more likely to pursue postsecondary education. However, graduation rates and drop out rates did not differ significantly between students whose parents held various educational attainments.

Table 6

Postsecondary education status of youth aged 24 to 26 in December 2005, by selected family characteristics

	Graduates continuers	Graduates	Continuers	Drop out
	percent	percent	percent	percent
All	16	60	9	15
Family characteristics				
Family structure¹				
Living with both birth parents	17	62	8	13
Other	14	53	13	20
Highest educational attainment of parents				
Less than high school	15 ^E	61	6 ^E	18
High school diploma	12	60	8	20
Some postsecondary education	14	60	10	16
Postsecondary certificate/diploma	18	59	10	12
Parent's opinion on the importance of pursuing education after the high school				
Important	17	60	9	14
Not important	10	59	10 ^E	21

^E use with caution

1. The family structure is the structure that was present when the respondent was in high school.

Parental opinion about importance of postsecondary education mattered for entrance into postsecondary education and for graduation rates (77% and 69% when graduates continuers and graduates are considered together). On the other hand, students whose parents perceived postsecondary education to be important were less likely to have dropped out (14% compared to 21% for students whose parents did not perceive postsecondary education as important).

High school engagement and academic performance

The importance of positive high school engagement on the decision to pursue postsecondary education has already been illustrated in the previous section. All three measures of high school engagement (general, academic and social) had a positive association with graduation.

A higher proportion of graduates pursuing further education reported very high engagement while in high school (24%) as compared to the other three groups (Table 7). Surprisingly, the highest proportion of those not very engaged was found among continuers. The distributions of engagement for continuers and dropouts were very similar.

Learning strategies develop early, often before postsecondary education. When asked about how much time they spent on homework while in high school, only half of postsecondary education dropouts reported to have spent more than three hours per week on homework, compared to 72% of continuing graduates.

Table 7

High school engagement and academic performance of youth aged 24 to 26 in December 2005, by postsecondary education status

	Graduates continuers	Graduates	Continuers	Drop out
	percent	percent	percent	percent
High school engagement indicators				
General engagement in high school				
Not very engaged	8	10	18	14
Engaged	68	72	72	75
Very engaged	24	18	11	11
High school engagement				
Not very engaged	8	10	17	16
Engaged	72	72	73	73
Very engaged	21	18	11	11
Social high school engagement				
Not very engaged	9	10	17	14
Engaged	68	71	70	73
Very engaged	23	19	13	13
How many hours each week did you spend on homework outside class, during free periods and at home				
3 hours or less	28	36	39	50
more than 3 hours	72	64	61	50
Academic performance				
Grade average in high school				
90% to 100%	15	8	5 ^E	3 ^E
80% to 89%	46	39	25	24
70% to 79%	31	40	48	48
60% to 69%	8	12	20	22
59% and less	F	1	4 ^E	2 ^E

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

Self reported marks in high school also showed a predicted pattern. Among graduates continuing their education, 61% reported their average high school marks in the 80 to 100 percent range. This compared to only 27% of dropouts. However, this still represented a significant proportion of capable students dropping out of postsecondary education. About 20% of both continuers and dropouts had average marks of 60 to 69 percent in high school.

Postsecondary education experience

It has been noted earlier in this section that dropping out of postsecondary occurs early in the process. Therefore, it is important to look at first year postsecondary experience to identify some of the factors contributing to either graduation or dropping out.

Table 8

Attitude and sense of belonging during first year of postsecondary education of youth aged 24 to 26 in December 2005, by postsecondary education status

	Graduates continuers	Graduates	Continuers	Drop out
	percent	percent	percent	percent
Attitude and sense of belonging during first year of postsecondary education				
I participated in a program or workshop to help me adjust to first-year postsecondary education	15	16	16	14
I never or rarely miss deadlines	90	87	72	70
I never thought about dropping out	74	76	66	55
There were people at school I could talk to about personal things (Agree/strongly agree)	82	81	71	72
I felt I had found the right program for me (Agree/strongly agree)	76	79	69	62
First year helped me get a better idea of my future plans (agree/strongly agree)	79	83	83	74
First year gave me skills that would help me in the job market (Agree/strongly agree)	69	75	67	63
During first year, I was sure of the type of work I would like to have in the future (Agree/strongly agree)	56	66	58	55
Grade average during first year of postsecondary education				
90% or above	11	11	7 ^E	5
80% to 89%	33	31	23	15
70% to 79%	43	41	39	41
60% to 69%	11	14	26	25
50% to 59%	2 ^E	2	4 ^E	7
under 50%	x	1 ^E	F	6 ^E
Average weekly hours spent studying				
Less than 3 hours	10	14	14	26
4 to 14 hours	53	55	57	59
15 to 30 hours	31	27	26	12
more than 30 hours	6 ^E	4 ^E	2 ^E	3 ^E

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^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

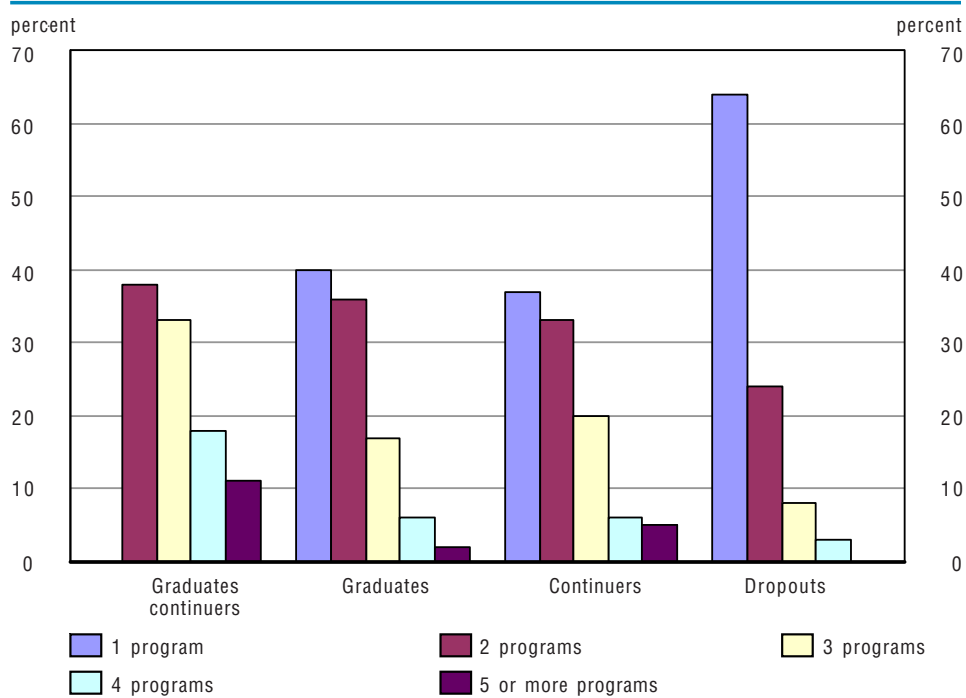
In their first year postsecondary education experience, leavers were already struggling in terms of meeting deadlines, academic performance and study behavior (Table 8). Compared to graduates and graduate continuers more dropouts felt they had not found the right program. On average they spent less time studying which was also reflected in their overall grade average. Consequently, more of them were thinking about leaving postsecondary education in their first year.

Number of programs

Most postsecondary education graduates and those pursuing further education have attempted multiple programs. On the other hand, 64% of dropouts attended only one program (Chart 4), a much higher proportion than for other postsecondary education participants. This suggests that dropping out occurs early in the postsecondary education process. As shown before, a high proportion of dropouts reported lack of program fit during their first year of post-secondary education. For a third of them changing programs might be a way of looking for a better program fit as opposed to dropping out.

Chart 4

Postsecondary education status by number of programs attempted



Reasons for dropping out of postsecondary education

In order to further understand the reasons for dropping out of postsecondary education, two groups of dropouts were analyzed separately: those who borrowed to finance their studies and those that did not.

Among those who did borrow money to finance their postsecondary education, the most often reported reasons for leaving their studies prematurely (Table 9) were the fact that they did not like their program, or not having enough money (both at 18%), and the desire to work (17%).

The most frequently reported reasons for leaving postsecondary education among those who did not borrow money were: not liking the program (29%), wanting to work (15%) and lack of money (13%). Reporting lack of money among those who did not borrow could have been a case of either debt aversion or inability to access student loans.

Table 9
Main reason for dropping out of post-secondary education of youth aged 24 to 26, by uptake of student loans

	Borrowed to finance postsecondary education	Never borrowed to finance postsecondary education
	percent	percent
Reported reasons	100	100
Not enough money	18	13
Wanted to work	17 ^E	15
Marks too low	7 ^E	6 ^E
Didn't like it / not for me	18	29
To change schools or programs	3 ^E	5 ^E
Only missing a few credits, not worth continuing	F	F
Wanted a break	F	F
To travel	X	F
Pregnant / carrying for own child	5 ^E	2 ^E
Own health	5 ^E	3 ^E
Other reason	18	21

X suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

4. Summary

As they get older, a higher proportion of youth followed by YITS through their transitions attend postsecondary education. At their first interview in December 1999 when they were 18 to 20 years-old, 54% of them had attempted a program in a postsecondary institution. Six years later in December 2005, this participation rate was reaching almost 80%. There were however, indications that participation was levelling off as they got to be 24 to 26 years of age.

Among those who attended postsecondary education, 75% had graduated when interviewed in December 2005, of which 16% were pursuing further studies. Some 9% had not graduated but were still in postsecondary education and 15% had dropped out.

More women than men had participated in postsecondary education and their participation rate was higher for both university and college. A higher proportion of them had completed between 24 and 26 years of age and a smaller proportion had dropped out.

Visible minority youth were more likely to participate to postsecondary education, especially in university. There were no differences however, in terms of their likelihood of dropping out.

Whether the student was from a rural or urban community was also a determinant factor in postsecondary participation. This was especially true for university level education, which suggested that proximity of a college more than a university influence their decision. A higher proportion of rural students dropped out compared to urban students. Rural students were also less likely to have gone into further education after completing a first diploma.

The family structure, the parental educational attainment and the parental values towards postsecondary education were all related to postsecondary participation. The proportion of youth who participated in postsecondary increased as parental education increased. The dropout rates were lower for those whose parents think that pursuing education was important.

Youth who were engaged in high school were more likely to attend postsecondary education. A much higher proportion of postsecondary education dropouts reported lower levels on high school engagement scales.

Good marks in high school help youth participate in postsecondary education. Almost 85% of youth who undertook graduate studies reported an overall average of 80 percent or more in high school. Among youth who reported a grade average of 60 percent or less, over a third attended postsecondary education. In December 2005, over three quarters of them had graduated or were still pursuing a program. On the other hand, a significant proportion of youth with good high school marks dropped out of postsecondary education.

The first year experience was positive for the majority of youth who attended college or university. However, in the first year, dropouts were already struggling in terms of meeting deadlines, academic performance and studying patterns. Compared to graduates and graduates continuers, more drop outs felt they had not found the right program. On average, they spent less time studying which was also reflected in their overall grade average. Consequently, more of them were thinking about leaving PSE in their first year.

The uptake of multiple programs while in postsecondary education was common. However, despite the fact that dropouts were more likely to have reported problems with program fit, a small proportion of them attempted multiple programs before dropping out.

Appendix A

What is the Youth in Transition Survey (YITS)?

The Youth in Transition Survey is a Canadian longitudinal survey designed to examine the patterns of, and influences on, major transitions in young people's lives, particularly with respect to education, training and work.

Following a major consultation process with key stakeholders across Canada, ten broad objectives were developed for YITS. They are as follows:

1. to examine key transitions in the lives of youth, such as the transition from high school to postsecondary schooling and the initial transition from schooling to the labour market;
2. to better understand educational and labour market pathways and the factors influencing these pathways;
3. to identify educational and occupational pathways that provide a smoother transition to the labour market;
4. to examine the incidence, characteristics, factors and effects of leaving school;
5. to understand the impact of school effects on educational and occupational outcomes;
6. to examine the contribution of work experience programs, part-time jobs, and volunteer activities to skill development and transition to the labour market;
7. to study the attitudes, behaviours, and skills of young people entering the labour market;
8. to gain a better understanding of the determinants of postsecondary entry and postsecondary retention, including education financing;
9. to better understand the role of educational and labour market aspirations and expectations in investment in further education and career choice; and,
10. to explore the educational and occupational pathways of various subgroups, particularly youth "at risk".

In order to address these objectives in a timely fashion, it was decided to collect data from two age groups of youth in the first cycle of the survey in 2000. One began its participation at age 15 and the other at ages 18 to 20. Both cohorts were asked to provide a range of information on their education and employment experiences as well as information on their personal characteristics including, for example, their educational aspirations. The younger group also participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), an internationally

recognized test to evaluate the knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics, and science. Furthermore, an interview was conducted with their parents and a questionnaire was administered to their school principals.

In total, almost 30,000 youth aged 15, and more than 22,000 youth aged 18 to 20 from the ten provinces participated in the first cycle of YITS in 2000. Analysis for both cohorts was presented in different publications available to download for free through the Internet at www.statcan.ca.

Follow-up interviews with the YITS participants took place in 2002, 2004 and 2006. At the time of their last interview, the two cohorts were aged 21 and 24 to 26 respectively.

YITS Methodology

Target Population

YITS has two target populations: a cohort of individuals who were 18 to 20 years old on December 31, 1999 and a cohort of students who were 15 years-old on December 31, 1999. This section deals more specifically with the older cohort, which constitute the subject of this report.

Sample Design

The target population for the 18 to 20 year-old cohort comprises residents of the ten provinces of Canada who were born between 1979 and 1981. These individuals turned 18 to 20 during 1999, the reference year for cycle 1.

The design implemented for the 18 to 20 year-old cohort is based on certain groups of households that were in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) between January 1997 and December 1999. Individuals who were full-time members of the armed forces and persons living on Indian reserves or in northern and remote areas are excluded from LFS and were therefore also excluded from this cohort. From these LFS households, a sample of individuals, born between 1979 and 1981 or those estimated to be between 18 to 20 years of age during 1999, was selected.

The sample consisted of 29,164 18- to 20-year-olds in cycle 1. In total, 23,594 (80.9%) individuals responded in cycle 1. Respondents who refused to share their data were taken out of the sample for cycle 2, which reduced it to 22,378. In the following cycles the response rates were 83.9% in cycle 2, 78.9% in cycle 3 and 83.8% in cycle 4. The sample went from 18,779 in cycle 3 to 14,753 in cycle 4. For cycle 5, 12,360 young adults will constitute the YITS sample.

Data Collection

While separate data collection strategies were employed for each of the cohorts in cycle 1, the same data collection strategy was used for both cohorts in cycle 2. Data collection usually occurs between mid-January and mid-June using computer assisted telephone interviewing.

The following table shows the response rates by province and cycle.

Table A.1

Response rates, cycles 1, 2, 3 and 4

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 4	Longitudinal
Number of respondents	22,378	18,743	14,753	12,360	12,360
	percent	percent	percent	percent	percent
Canada	76.7	83.8	78.7	83.8	42.4
Newfoundland and Labrador	84.9	83.0	78.3	81.8	45.1
Prince Edward Island	81.0	82.4	80.0	86.8	46.4
Nova Scotia	80.6	81.9	79.6	86.7	45.5
New Brunswick	76.3	75.6	79.2	85.2	38.9
Quebec	75.0	85.8	80.4	85.9	44.5
Ontario	75.4	86.4	75.8	81.1	40.1
Manitoba	81.7	86.5	78.1	89.9	49.6
Saskatchewan	82.0	82.9	86.4	83.5	49.1
Alberta	73.7	80.2	83.3	81.3	40.0
British Columbia	71.6	79.8	73.0	81.7	34.1

Appendix B

Table B.1

Postsecondary participation rate of youth in December 1999, 2001, 2003 and 2005 by gender

	Men	Women	All
Estimated total number of youth who were 18 to 20 years old in December 1999 in Canada	624,000	596,000	1,220,000
	percent	percent	percent
December 1999			
18 to 20 years old			
Never attended postsecondary education	51	40	46
Attended postsecondary education	49	60	54
Attended university	19	24	21
Attended college/CEGEP	20	26	23
Attended other postsecondary institution	10	10	10
December 2001			
20 to 22 years old			
Never attended postsecondary education	34	23	28
Attended postsecondary education	66	77	72
Attended university	30	37	33
Attended college/CEGEP	24	28	26
Attended other postsecondary institution	12	12	12
December 2003			
22 to 24 years old			
Never attended postsecondary education	28	18	23
Attended postsecondary education	72	82	77
Attended university	34	41	37
Attended college/CEGEP	25	28	26
Attended other postsecondary institution	13	13	13
December 2005			
24 to 26 years old			
Never attended postsecondary education	26	15	21
Attended postsecondary education	74	85	79
Attended university	36	44	40
Attended college/CEGEP	25	28	26
Attended other postsecondary institution	14	13	13

Note: Youth who attended both College/CEGEP and university are classified as university.

Table B.2

Postsecondary participation of youth aged 24 to 26 in December 2005, by selected demographic characteristics

	Participation rate		Type of institution attended		
	Never attended postsecondary education	Attended postsecondary education	Attended university	Attended college/Cegep	Attended other postsecondary institution
	percent	percent	percent	percent	percent
Demographic factors	21	79	50	33	17
Marital status					
Married/common law	23	77	44	37	19
Single	19	81	54	30	15
Kids in cycle 4					
With kids	37	63	25	46	29
Without kids	17	83	55	30	15
Kids in cycle 2					
With kids	46	54	15	49	37
Without kids	19	81	53	32	16
Visible minority					
Visible minority	13	87	62	27	11
Not a visible minority	22	78	49	34	17
Type of community					
Rural	35	65	40	40	20
Urban	18	82	52	32	16
Gender					
Men	26	74	49	33	18
Women	15	85	52	33	15
Age					
24	22	78	50	33	17
25	21	79	50	33	16
26	18	82	51	32	17
Province					
Newfoundland and Labrador	17	83	58	23	19
Prince Edward Island	25	75	57	25 ^E	18 ^E
Nova Scotia	19	81	58	31	11
New Brunswick	22	78	52	32	17
Quebec	21	79	48	38	14
Ontario	17	83	51	40	9
Manitoba	28	72	61	24	15
Saskatchewan	24	76	58	16	26
Alberta	29	71	48	24	28
British Columbia	20	80	47	20	33

^E use with caution

Table B.3

Postsecondary participation of youth aged 24 to 26 in December 2005, by selected demographic characteristics

	Participation rate			Type of institution attended		
	All	Never attended postsecondary education	Attended postsecondary education	Attended university	Attended college/Cegep	Attended other postsecondary institution
	percent	percent	percent	percent	percent	percent
Demographic factors	100	100	100	100	100	100
Marital status						
Married/common law	35	39	34	29	38	38
Single	65	61	66	71	62	62
Kids in cycle 4						
With kids	17	32	14	7	19	24
Without kids	83	68	86	93	81	76
Kids in cycle 2						
With kids	7	17	5	1	8	11
Without kids	93	83	95	99	92	89
Type of community						
Rural	17	30	14	11	17	17
Urban	83	70	86	89	83	83
Student loan						
Yes	57	...	57	61	54	53
No	43	...	43	39	46	47
Job status						
Full time	83	88	81	77	85	87
Part time	17	12	19	23	15	13
Province						
Newfoundland and Labrador	2	1	2	2	1	2
Prince Edward Island	0	1	0	1 ^E	0	0 ^E
Nova Scotia	3	3	3	4	3	2
New Brunswick	2	2	2	2	2	2 ^E
Quebec	25	25	25	24	28	21
Ontario	36	29	38	38	46	20
Manitoba	3	4	3	4	2	3
Saskatchewan	3	4	3	3	1	5
Alberta	13	18	13	11	8	19
British Columbia	13	12	11	12	8	25

... not applicable

^E use with caution

Table B.4

Highest level of university attempted by youth aged 24 to 26 in December 2005, by selected demographic characteristics

	Attended university	Bachelors	Graduates students
	percent	percent	percent
Demographic factors	100	100	100
Province			
Newfoundland and Labrador	2	2	1
Prince Edward Island	1	1	0
Nova Scotia	4	4	3
New Brunswick	2	2	2
Quebec	24	20	36
Ontario	38	41	35
Manitoba	4	4	2
Saskatchewan	3	4	4
Alberta	11	11	7
British Columbia	12	12	11
Kids cycle 4			
With kids	7	6	4
Without kids	93	94	96
Borrowed			
Yes	61	62	64
No	39	38	36
Job status			
Full time	77	79	53
Part time	23	21	47
Type of community			
Rural	11	11	8
Urban	89	89	92
Gender			
Men	46	46	41
Women	54	54	59

Table B.5

Postsecondary attendance of youth aged 24 to 26 in December 2005, by selected family characteristics

	Participation rate			Type of institution attended		
	All	Never attended postsecondary education	Attended postsecondary education	Attended university	Attended college/Cegep	Attended other postsecondary institution
	percent	percent	percent	percent	percent	percent
Family characteristics	100	100	100	100	100	100
Family structure¹						
Living with both birth parents	72	62	75	80	72	67
Other	28	38	25	20	28	33
Highest educational attainment of parents						
Less than high school	11	21	8	5	11	13
High school diploma	28	44	24	17	29	33
Some postsecondary education	8	7	8	7	9	11
Postsecondary certificate/diploma	54	28	60	71	51	44
Parent's opinion on the importance of pursuing education after the high school						
Important	87	67	92	96	90	84
Not important	13	33	8	4	10	16

1. The family structure is the structure that was present when the respondent was in high school.

Table B.6

Postsecondary attendance of youth aged 24 to 26 in December 2005, by high school engagement and academic performance

	Participation rate		Type of institution attended		
	Never attended postsecondary education	Attended postsecondary education	Attended university	Attended college/ Cegep	Attended other postsecondary institution
	percent	percent	percent	percent	percent
High school engagement indicators					
General high school engagement					
Not very engaged	39	61	36	38	27
Engaged	19	81	49	34	17
Very engaged	10	90	66	26	8
Academic high school engagement					
Not very engaged	39	61	35	39	26
Engaged	19	81	50	34	17
Very engaged	12	88	64	26	10
Social high school engagement					
Not very engaged	37	63	38	38	24
Engaged	19	81	50	33	17
Very engaged	12	88	60	30	10
How many hours each week did you spend on homework outside class, during free periods and at home					
3 hours or less	29	71	37	40	23
More than 3 hours	14	86	59	29	12
Academic performance					
Grade average in high school					
90% to 100%	6 ^E	94	87	7 ^E	6 ^E
80% to 89%	8	92	69	22	10
70% to 79%	19	81	40	42	18
60% to 69%	40	60	17	48	35
59% and less	66	34	16 ^E	52	32

^E use with caution

Appendix C

Table C.1

Postsecondary status of youth aged 24 to 26 in December 2005, by selected demographic characteristics

	All	Graduates continuers	Graduates	Continuers	Drop out
	percent	percent	percent	percent	percent
Demographic factors	100	100	100	100	100
Marital status					
Married/common law	34	22	38	21	38
Single	66	78	62	79	62
Kids in cycle 2					
With kids	5	2 ^E	4	6 ^E	10 ^E
Without kids	95	98	96	94	90
Visible minority					
Visible minority	13	15	11	20	13
Not a visible minority	87	85	89	80	87
Type of community					
Rural	14	9	15	10	18
Urban	86	91	85	90	82
Gender					
Men	48	43	46	58	54
Women	52	57	54	42	46
Age					
24	33	38	29	44	33
25	33	33	33	33	33
26	34	28	37	23	33

^E use with caution

Table C.2

Postsecondary status of youth aged 24 to 26 in December 2005, by selected family characteristics

	All	Graduates continuers	Graduates	Continuers	Drop out
	percent	percent	percent	percent	percent
Family characteristics	100	100	100	100	100
Family structure¹					
Living with both birth parents	75	78	78	65	67
Other	25	22	22	35	33
Highest educational attainment of parents					
Less than high school	8	8 ^E	9	5 ^E	10
High school diploma	24	17	24	21	32
Some postsecondary education	8	7	8	9	9
Postsecondary certificate/diploma	60	69	60	65	49
Parent's opinion on the importance of pursuing education after the high school					
Important	92	95	92	92	89
Not important	8	5	8	8 ^E	11

^E use with caution

1. The family structure is the structure that was present when the respondent was in high school.

Table C.3

Postsecondary status of youth aged 24 to 26 in December 2005, by high school engagement and academic performance

	Graduate continuers	Graduates	Continuers	Drop out
	percent	percent	percent	percent
High school engagement indicators				
General engagement in high school				
Not very engaged	12	53	15	20
Engaged	15	60	9	16
Very engaged	22	63	6	9
High school engagement				
Not very engaged	11	53	14	22
Engaged	16	60	9	15
Very engaged	20	64	6	10
Social high school engagement				
Not very engaged	13	53	14	20
Engaged	15	60	9	16
Very engaged	20	63	6	11
How many hours each week did you spend on homework outside class, during free periods and at home				
3 hours or less	12	58	10	20
More than 3 hours	18	61	9	12
Academic performance				
Grade average in high school				
90% to 100%	29	60	5 ^E	6 ^E
80% to 89%	20	64	6	10
70% to 79%	12	59	11	18
60% to 69%	9	52	13	25
59% and less	F	52	21 ^E	21 ^E

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

Table C.4

Postsecondary status of youth aged 24 to 26 in December 2005 by their attitude and sense of belonging during first year of postsecondary education

	Graduates continuers	Graduates	Continuers	Drop out
	percent	percent	percent	percent
	100	100	100	100
Attitude and sense of belonging during first year of postsecondary education				
I participated in a program or workshop to help me adjust to first-year PSE	15	62	9	13
I never or rarely miss deadlines	17	62	8	13
I never thought about dropping out	16	63	9	12
There were people at school I could talk to about personal things (Agree/strongly agree)	17	61	8	14
I felt I had found the right program for me (Agree/strongly agree)	16	63	9	12
First year helped me get a better idea of my future plans (agree/strongly agree)	15	61	10	14
First year gave me skills that would help me in the job market (Agree/strongly agree)	15	63	9	13
During first year, I was sure of the type of work I would like to have in the future (Agree/strongly agree)	14	64	9	13
Grade average during first year of postsecondary education				
90% or above	18	66	7 ^E	8 ^E
80 to 89%	19	66	7	8
70 to 79%	17	60	9	15
60 to 69%	11	52	14	23
50 to 59%	9 ^E	44	12 ^E	34
under 50%	x	25 ^E	F	60
Average weekly hours spent studying				
Less than 3 hours	10	55	9	26
4 to 14 hours	15	59	10	16
15 to 30 hours	20	63	10	7
more than 30 hours	21	61	5 ^E	12 ^E

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

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Endnotes

1. Appendix A provides supplementary information about the survey.
2. Students who graduate from CEGEP in Québec with a general diploma and pursue in university are considered graduate continuers, which inflates this proportion for Québec. It reflects a difference in the school system in that province more so than an actual difference.

Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics

Research Papers

Cumulative index

Statistics Canada's **Division of Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics** develops surveys, provides statistics and conducts research and analysis relevant to current issues in its three areas of responsibility.

The **Culture Statistics Program** creates and disseminates timely and comprehensive information on the culture sector in Canada. The program manages a dozen regular census surveys and databanks to produce data that support policy decision and program management requirements. Issues include the economic impact of culture, the consumption of culture goods and services, government, personal and corporate spending on culture, the culture labour market, and international trade of culture goods and services. Analysis is also published in *Focus on Culture* (87-004-XIE, free, <http://www.statcan.ca/bsolc/english/bsolc?catno=87-004-X>).

The **Tourism Statistics Program** provides information on domestic and international tourism. The program covers the Canadian Travel Survey and the International Travel Survey. Together, these surveys shed light on the volume and characteristics of trips and travellers to, from and within Canada.

The **Centre for Education Statistics** develops and delivers a comprehensive program of pan-Canadian education statistics and analysis in order to support policy decisions and program management, and to ensure that accurate and relevant information concerning education is available to the Canadian public and to other educational stakeholders. The Centre conducts fifteen institutional and over ten household education surveys. Analysis is also published in *Education Matters* (81-004-XIE, free, <http://www.statcan.ca/bsolc/english/bsolc?catno=81-004-X>), and in the *Analytical Studies Branch research paper series* (11F0019MIE, free, <http://www.statcan.ca/bsolc/english/bsolc?catno=11F0019M>).

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81-595-MIE2004015	Working and Training: First Results of the 2003 Adult Education and Training Survey
81-595-MIE2004016	Class of 2000: Profile of Postsecondary Graduates and Student Debt
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81-595-MIE2004020	Culture Goods Trade Estimates: Methodology and Technical Notes
81-595-MIE2004021	Canadian Framework for Culture Statistics
81-595-MIE2004022	Summary public school indicators for the provinces and territories, 1996-1997 to 2002-2003
81-595-MIE2004023	Economic Contribution of Culture in Canada
81-595-MIE2004024	Economic Contributions of the Culture Sector in Ontario
81-595-MIE2004025	Economic Contribution of the Culture Sector in Canada – A Provincial Perspective
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81-595-MIE2005027	Salaries and salary scales of full-time teaching staff at Canadian universities, 2002-2003: final report
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81-595-MIE2005031	Salaries and salary scales of full-time teaching staff at Canadian universities, 2003-2004: final report
81-595-MIE2005032	Survey of Earned Doctorates: A Profile of Doctoral Degree Recipients
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