

# Post-Secondary Education Choices and Labour Market Outcomes of High School Graduates in the Atlantic Provinces

## Nova Scotia

April 2024

### Introduction

This summary presents key findings from a study conducted by NB-IRDT on graduate outcomes in the Atlantic provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia.

- 1) The **post-secondary education choices** of high school graduates.
- 2) The **mobility and retention** of high school and post-secondary graduates.
- 3) The **labour market outcomes** (employment and income) of high school and post-secondary graduates.

This summary presents results for the province of **Nova Scotia** from 2015 until 2020.

*Findings for New Brunswick and for Newfoundland and Labrador are presented separately in province-specific summary reports.*

### Highlights

**Two-thirds** of NS high school graduates pursue college or university somewhere in Canada.

The majority of these graduates choose to stay and study in NS:

Local University	Local College
81%	92%

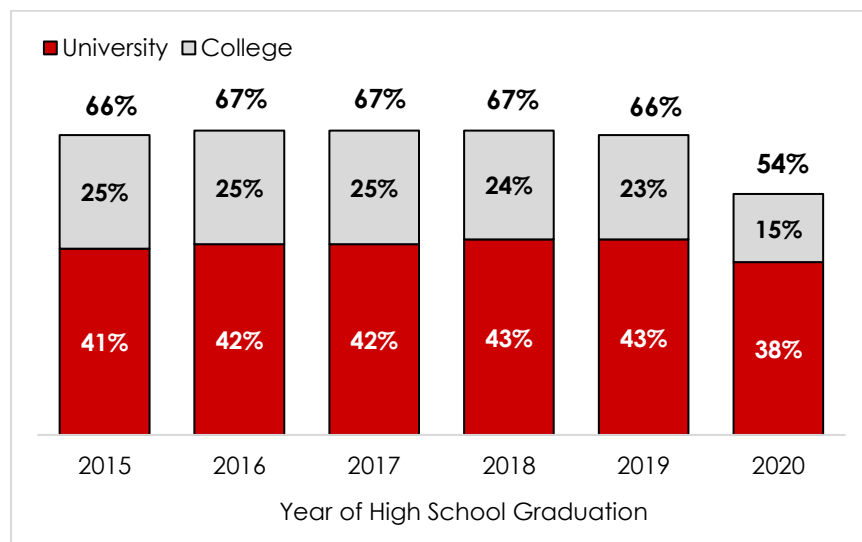
1 year after graduating from high school, college or university, the majority (**86-90%**) of NS graduates are still living in the province.

Of the graduates who are employed after graduating, many (**84-95%**) have jobs in NS.

This project was undertaken by the New Brunswick Institute for Research, Data and Training (NB-IRDT) at the request of the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET). The opinions, results and conclusions reported in this paper are those of the authors and are independent from the funding sources. The views expressed in this study do not necessarily represent those of CAMET or their partners. Funding for this project was provided by CAMET.

## Post-Secondary Education Choices of NS High School Graduates

### Transitions to Higher Education



The graph on the left shows that around **two-thirds (~66%)** of NS high school graduates choose to pursue either a public university or public college somewhere in Canada.

Transitions appear lower in 2020 due to limited data on more recent graduating cohorts.\*

\*Note: Postsecondary Student Information System (PSIS) data are only available until April 2021. Since this study looks at transitions to higher education up to 2 years after high school graduation, it is possible students from these cohorts have yet to enroll.

### When and where do Nova Scotians go for college and university?

#### NS Graduates Pursuing University

**81%** go to a university in NS.

10% go to another Atlantic province.

9% go elsewhere in Canada.

**94%** enroll within 6 months of high school graduation

6% enroll 6 months – 2 years after high school graduation.

#### NS Graduates Pursuing College

**92%** go to a college in NS.

8% go elsewhere in Canada (The Atlantic region is included due to small sample sizes).

**70%** enroll within 6 months of high school graduation.

30% enroll 6 months – 2 years after high school graduation.

These statistics suggest that the majority of students who choose to pursue further education prefer to stay and study in their home province of NS – with many deciding to do so immediately following high school graduation.

## Retention of High School and Post-Secondary Graduates

### How many graduates stay in Nova Scotia?

The table to the right shows the retention rates of NS graduates who attended high school and/or post-secondary education in their home province of NS.

The highest retention rate 1 year after graduating is among college graduates – with **90%** choosing to stay in the province.

2015 – 2019 graduating cohorts, combined			
	High school graduates*	College graduates	University graduates
<b>1 year after graduating</b>	86%	<b>90%</b>	86%
<b>3 years after graduating</b>	83%	<b>87%</b>	84%

\* High school graduates who are not pursuing further education.

That being said, all three groups see a slight decline in retention rates 1 to 3 years after graduating. While 3-year retention is still fairly high, it is worth noting that more graduates appear to be leaving the province over time.

## Labour Market Outcomes of Graduates in NS

### How many employed graduates are working in Nova Scotia?

2015 – 2019 graduating cohorts, combined			
	High school graduates*	College graduates	University graduates
<b>1 year after graduating</b>	<b>95%</b>	92%	84%
<b>3 years after graduating</b>	91%	<b>90%</b>	82%

\* High school graduates who are not pursuing further education

Here, we see that the majority of NS high school and college graduates who have a job are working in their home province.

The relatively lower rate of local employment among university graduates may reflect greater employment-related mobility among this group.

## Income

After graduating, NS university graduates earn the highest median income, followed by college graduates and then by high school graduates – with each seeing income growth over time.

	High school	College	University
<b>1 year after graduating</b>	\$15,000	\$29,000	\$35,000
<b>3 years after graduating</b>	\$22,000	\$37,000	\$47,000

2021 Constant Dollars

## **Key Takeaways**

Overall, findings suggest that NS graduates exhibit ties to their home province.

Those who pursue higher education often choose to do so within NS – and those who study in NS tend to stay and work in NS after they graduate, contributing to the local economy as members of the local labour force.

### **How to cite this product:**

McDonald, T., & Miah, P. (2024). Post-secondary education choices and labour market outcomes of high school graduates in the Atlantic Provinces: New Brunswick. Fredericton, NB: New Brunswick Institute for Research, Data and Training.