

# **Post-Graduation Earnings of NBCC Graduates:**

## 2015 to 2017 Graduate Cohorts



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## **Project Title**

Post-graduation earnings of NBCC graduates: 2015 to 2017 graduate cohorts

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## Executive Summary

This report investigates the post-secondary decisions and outcomes of New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) graduates. The presence of a post-secondary institution can be a valuable contributor to the economy of the region in which it is located. The expenditures and employment of post-secondary institutions directly contribute to local GDP, while the graduates contribute to the growth of the supply of skilled labour available to the regional economy. Put together, these play a role in a region's economic growth.

NBCC is an integral part of New Brunswick (NB), and, once graduated, NBCC students who choose to remain local become an important element in workforce development. Therefore, studying these graduates' outcomes is not only beneficial to NBCC for designing in-house policies for students but also to the province in determining how to better serve such an important demographic.

This study reports on the post-graduation median earnings of NBCC graduates by their demographic and background characteristics. It looks at the median earnings of graduates 1, 2, and 3 years after graduation.

## Highlight of Findings

- At least 90 percent of median total incomes for male and female graduates are earnings from paid employment.
- For the overall sample, earnings 1 year after graduation remained stable between 2015 and 2016 and increased between 2016 and 2017 (in 2021 purchasing power).
- By 3 years following graduation, NBCC graduates have a total income that is on par with the 1-year post-graduation income of NB university graduates.
- By demographic characteristics, male NBCC graduates report about 6 to 8 percent more total income than female NBCC graduates 1 year after graduation, and this income gap increases with years since graduation.
  - International students report incomes between 8 to 16 percent more than domestic graduates from NBCC 1 year after graduation. However, the sample of international students is small relative to the sample of domestic students, and as such no major conclusions can be made.
- By field of study, graduates of programs in Math, Computer, and Information Sciences usually have the highest median incomes: between \$35,000 and \$41,000 1 year after graduation (all incomes are in 2021 purchasing power).

- Architecture, Engineering, and Related Technologies graduates display the highest income growth, with a 27 percent increase in income between their first and third year since graduation.
- Graduates of programs in Arts, Communication, and Humanities have the lowest median incomes and lowest income growth among all fields of study. One year after graduation, these graduates report incomes between \$23,000 and \$28,100, and their reported incomes grow 2 percent between the first and third year since graduation.

## Background and Introduction

A survey of 2020 graduates of NBCC shows that about 90 percent of graduates are employed within 1 year of graduation, and 90 percent are employed in New Brunswick (NB) (Prairie Research Associates, 2022). With a median age of 27, New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) graduates comprise an age group of interest for a province like NB, which has an aging population and increased youth outmigration. The high retention rates and consequent economic contribution of NBCC graduates are therefore important for the province.

The economic benefit of NBCC to the province lies, in part, in the human capital of its alumni. For instance, over 2500 of the graduates of the 2019/20 class were employed in NB after graduation, supporting an estimated 4079 full-time equivalent jobs and over \$200 million in wages (NBCC & Stiletto, 2021). Household spending of this group, induced by economic activity, equates to over \$150 million, with \$87.5 million in total taxes. Overall, NBCC's alumni have boosted provincial GDP by an estimated \$7.2 billion and have supported over 70,000 jobs in the province (NBCC & Stiletto, 2021).

This report presents the post-graduation earnings of NBCC graduates by their demographic and background characteristics 1, 2, and 3 years after graduation.

There are six NBCC campuses in NB. The Moncton and Saint John campuses are located in the province's two largest cities and offer full- and part-time programs, online programs, and apprenticeship training in the following fields: Applied and Media Arts, Business Administration, Civil Engineering Technology, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Health, Hospitality and Tourism, Information Technology, Social Sciences, and Trades. These two campuses have the largest student populations of the NBCC campuses. The Saint John campus has over 1500 students enrolled in programs, and the Moncton campus has over 1400 students enrolled.

Based on student population size, the Miramichi and Fredericton campuses are smaller. Together, these campuses host fewer than 1000 students at a given time. The Fredericton campus, located in NB's capital city, is the newest of the NBCC campuses and offers fewer programs than the Saint John and Moncton locations. Here, students can complete programs in Business Administration, Civil Engineering Technology, Health, Information Technology, and Social Sciences. The Miramichi campus offers fewer programs<sup>1</sup> than the Fredericton location and is the only campus to offer academic programs in the field of Environment and Marine Systems.

The smallest NBCC campuses are the Saint Andrews and Woodstock campuses, with just over 250 students enrolled in programs at each campus at a given time. These campuses offer the fewest programs, all of which fall within the fields of Business Administration, Health, Information Technology, Social Sciences, and Trades.

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<sup>1</sup> The Miramichi campus offers programs in the fields of Applied and Media Arts, Business Administration, Environment and Marine Systems, Health, Informational Technology, Social Sciences, and Trades.

Each year, about 2000 students graduate with a credential from NBCC. A little over 70 percent of those credentials go to graduates in the fields of Business, Management, and Public Management; Architecture, Engineering, and Related Fields; or Health and Related Fields.<sup>2</sup>

As NBCC continues to expand its program offerings, it is important to see how its graduates perform in the labour market following completion of their studies.

This study's results are obtained by matching data available in the Postsecondary Student Information System (PSIS) to the T1 Family File (T1FF) collected from tax returns. Linking these two data sets is key for determining the earnings of NBCC graduates. The longitudinal nature of the T1FF is helpful, as it allows these graduates' earnings to be tracked over time.

The rest of this report is divided into the following sections: Data and Methodology, Results, and Conclusions.

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<sup>2</sup> These estimates are based on data provided by NBCC and housed on NB-IRDT's secure platform.



## Data and Methodology

### Data

This report assesses the earnings of NBCC graduates from 2015 to 2017. It uses linked data from the university and college registrar data available in the Postsecondary Student Information System (PSIS) and tax records available in the T1 Family File from 2011 to 2017. These data sets are available through Statistics Canada's Educational and Labour Market Longitudinal Platform (ELMLP). The longitudinal nature of the three data sets in the ELMLP allows for the analysis of those enrolled in or graduated from post-secondary institutions or trade programs in Canada. We do not consider apprentices in this report.

#### **Postsecondary Student Information System (PSIS)**

The PSIS is a national data set that provides information on enrollments and graduates from all publicly funded post-secondary institutions in Canada. It contains longitudinal student records that enable analysis of post-secondary issues including enrollment, persistence, graduation, and program change.

There are some limitations to using the PSIS to assess student outcomes. First, programs which are offered remotely cannot be identified. This limitation is especially important as more educators switch to remote learning. Second, the PSIS does not contain information on the specific NBCC campus attended. Graduates are only listed as NBCC graduates as opposed to graduates from a specific NBCC campus location.

This analysis concerns only students who graduated from NBCC between 2015 and 2017. As such, individuals who have not completed their programs are excluded from analysis.

#### **T1 Family File**

The T1 Family File contains tax records derived from T1 income tax returns. Tax returns are filed in the spring of the year after the reference year, so that tax records in the 2017 tax year, for example, are filed by April of 2018. The T1 Family File contains demographic and geographic characteristics such as age and province of residence as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the tax year, as well as earnings information for census families, working-age individuals, and seniors.

When the PSIS is linked with the T1 Family File, a post-secondary graduate's income over time can be assessed.

## Methodology

This report links university and college data in the PSIS and tax records in the T1 Family File to analyze post-graduation earnings of NBCC graduates who completed their credentials between 2015 and 2017.

Total income is taxable income minus deductions as reported on an individual's tax return. It includes income from all taxable sources, including non-market income. For the remainder of the report, the term "income" is used to refer to this measure. "Earnings" refers to the part of total income generated through paid employment, primarily from wages and salaries. For both income and earnings, no taxes are deducted; as such, these are pre-tax measures of income and earnings.

It should be noted that tax data are made available up until 2018, and PSIS college data for NB colleges are available from Statistics Canada for 2015 graduates onwards. As such, this report only discusses the incomes and earnings of 2015 to 2017 NBCC graduate cohorts. All income and earnings information has been converted into 2021 purchasing power using the All-items Consumer Price Index (Year=100).<sup>3</sup>

Descriptive statistics on median incomes and earnings are presented for graduates by their demographic and background characteristics. While registrar data list NBCC graduate data by their campus, the PSIS data set unfortunately does not. As such, this report shows median earnings for all NBCC graduates, but we cannot investigate earnings of graduates stratified by campus attended.

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<sup>3</sup> The 2021 value of median earnings for NBCC graduates is calculated by dividing the All-items 2021 value by the year of interest and multiplying by the current income value. The All-items Consumer Price Index (CPI) is available through Statistics Canada: [Table 18-10-0005-01 Consumer Price Index, annual average, not seasonally adjusted](#).

# Results

## Overall

Tables 1 to 3 present the total incomes of NBCC graduates 1, 2, and 3 years after graduation by their graduation year (cohort).

For the overall graduate sample, median incomes remain fairly consistent 1 year after graduation for the 2015 and 2016 graduate cohorts, but relative to the 2015 and 2016 cohort of graduates, graduates in the 2017 cohort have a median income that is about 6 to 13 percent higher. This could be due to compositional changes in programs for the most recent cohort of graduates in our study and/or growth in business activity leading to an increased labour demand within the same amount of time. It should be noted that in the 2018 tax year,<sup>4</sup> median incomes for all three cohorts could indicate an increase in demand for labour that occurs in that tax year. Incomes in this tax year rise noticeably and allow the most recent cohort in the sample – the 2017 cohort – to earn within close range to earlier cohorts despite only 1 year passing since graduation.

Incomes for NBCC graduates rise as the years since graduation increase. For the overall sample of 2015 graduates, median incomes for the overall cohort 3 years after graduation are about 17 percent higher compared to the cohort's 1-year post-graduation incomes. For those who graduated in 2016, incomes in the second year since graduation are about 10 percent higher than median incomes in the first year after graduation.

For each graduate cohort 1 year after graduation, male graduates have 6 to 8 percent higher median incomes than female graduates, while international graduates have 8 to 16 percent higher median incomes than domestic students. It should be noted, though, that a large majority of NBCC students are domestic (i.e., Canadian citizens or permanent residents).

**Table 1: Median Total Income of NBCC Graduates (2015 Cohort of Graduates)**

	<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>	<b>3 Years After Graduation</b>
<b>Overall</b>	\$32,312	\$35,074	\$37,894
<b>Male</b>	\$33,525	\$37,463	\$41,185
<b>Female</b>	\$31,320	\$32,685	\$35,028
<b>Domestic</b>	\$32,312	\$34,966	\$37,788
<b>International</b>	\$37,385	\$38,875	\$43,626

Notes: 2021 constant dollars

<sup>4</sup> For the 2015 cohort, this is 3 years after graduation; for the 2016 cohort, this is 2 years after graduation; and for the 2017 cohort, this is 1 year after graduation.

**Table 2: Median Total Income of NBCC Graduates (2016 Cohort of Graduates)**

	<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>
<b>Overall</b>	\$32,685	\$35,878
<b>Male</b>	\$33,554	\$39,168
<b>Female</b>	\$31,599	\$33,330
<b>Domestic</b>	\$32,685	\$35,878
<b>International</b>	\$35,183	\$35,028

Notes: 2021 constant dollars

**Table 3: Median Total Income of NBCC Graduates (2017 Cohort of Graduates)**

	<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>
<b>Overall</b>	\$35,241
<b>Male</b>	\$36,515
<b>Female</b>	\$33,755
<b>Domestic</b>	\$35,135
<b>International</b>	\$39,805

Notes: 2021 constant dollars

For those New Brunswickers who attend and graduate from a university in NB and remain in the province after graduation, their 1-year post-graduation earnings are generally on par with an NBCC graduate's 3-year post-graduation earnings (Tables 1 and 4). It should be noted that this sample of NB-university-educated and NB-residing graduates includes post-graduate degree holders (i.e., those with master's and PhD degrees).

**Table 4: Median Income of New Brunswickers Who Graduate from a University in NB and Work in NB**

	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Income 1 Year After Graduation</b>	\$38,396	\$39,782	\$39,132	\$37,917	\$38,157	\$38,549
<b>Income 3 Years After Graduation</b>	\$49,990	\$52,121	\$50,950	\$51,254	\$52,118	
<b>Income 5 Years After Graduation</b>	\$59,772	\$61,461	\$60,185			

Source: *Boco et al. (2023)*.

As discussed in the Methodology, total income includes both earnings and self-employment income. The T1 Family File reports employment income, or earnings. According to the T1 Family File, employment income is income reported from employers on T4 slips and includes all paid employment income (i.e., wages, salaries, and commissions) before deductions. Total income, on the other hand, is income from all sources before deductions as reported on tax returns.

Overall, median employment income accounts for between 89 to 100 percent of NBCC graduates' median total income. Tables 5 to 7 show that male graduates have about 90 percent of their median total income come from paid employment while female graduates are at about 93 percent. International students have more than 97 percent of their income come from paid employment while domestic graduates are at about 92 percent.

Over time, the importance of employment income remains stable. Each year after graduation, the median graduates (male, female, domestic, and international) receive about 90 percent or more of their income from paid employment.

**Table 5: Proportion of Median Total Income from Employment Income (2015 Cohort of NBCC Graduates)**

	<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>	<b>3 Years After Graduation</b>
<b>Overall</b>	92%	90%	92%
<b>Male</b>	91%	90%	91%
<b>Female</b>	93%	94%	94%
<b>Domestic</b>	92%	90%	92%
<b>International</b>	100%	100%	99%

Notes: 2021 constant dollars

**Table 6: Proportion of Median Total Income from Employment Income (2016 Cohort of NBCC Graduates)**

	<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>
<b>Overall</b>	93%	92%
<b>Male</b>	92%	89%
<b>Female</b>	94%	91%
<b>Domestic</b>	93%	92%
<b>International</b>	97%	98%

Notes: 2021 constant dollars

**Table 7: Proportion of Median Total Income from Employment Income (2017 Cohort of NBCC Graduates)**

	<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>
<b>Overall</b>	93%
<b>Male</b>	92%
<b>Female</b>	94%
<b>Domestic</b>	93%
<b>International</b>	98%

Notes: 2021 constant dollars

### Field of Study<sup>5</sup>

Graduates of programs in Math, Computer, and Information Sciences usually have the highest median incomes: between \$35,000 and \$41,000 1 year after graduation (Table 11). Close to 40 percent of graduates each year finish with a credential in Architecture, Engineering, and Related Technologies; graduates of this field display the highest earnings growth, with a 27 percent increase in income between their first and third year since graduation (Table 12).

Graduates of programs in Arts, Communication, and Humanities have the lowest median incomes and lowest income growth among all fields of study: between \$23,000 and \$28,100 1 year after graduation, with reported incomes growing 2 percent between the first and third year since graduation (Table 8). However, students in these programs are only a small share of graduates. Less than 4 percent of total NBCC graduates finish with a credential within the field of Arts, Communication, and Humanities.

**Table 8: Median Total Income of NBCC Graduates (Arts, Communication, and Humanities Graduates)**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	\$28,011	\$23,021	\$27,917
<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>	\$24,215	\$27,174	
<b>3 Years After Graduation</b>	\$28,554		

Notes: 2021 constant dollars

<sup>5</sup> Earnings for graduates in the fields of Education, Physical and Life Sciences, and Agriculture, Natural Resources and Conservation could not be released, as the counts behind their median income values were below sample size minimums required by Statistics Canada.

**Table 9: Median Total Income of NBCC Graduates (Social Sciences Graduates)**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	\$28,232	\$26,387	\$30,676
<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>	\$28,993	\$29,084	
<b>3 Years After Graduation</b>	\$31,419		

Notes: 2021 constant dollars

**Table 10: Median Total Income of NBCC Graduates (Business, Management, and Public Administration Graduates)**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	\$30,107	\$31,165	\$32,906
<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>	\$32,034	\$34,285	
<b>3 Years After Graduation</b>	\$34,816		

Notes: 2021 constant dollars

**Table 11: Median Total Income of NBCC Graduates (Math, Computer, and Information Sciences Graduates)**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	\$38,157	\$35,509	\$40,124
<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>	\$38,332	\$40,548	
<b>3 Years After Graduation</b>	\$42,246		

Notes: 2021 constant dollars

**Table 12: Median Total Income of NBCC Graduates (Architecture, Engineering, and Related Technologies Graduates)**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	\$32,753	\$33,880	\$36,939
<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>	\$37,246	\$39,593	
<b>3 Years After Graduation</b>	\$41,610		

Notes: 2021 constant dollars

**Table 13: Median Total Income of NBCC Graduates (Health and Related Fields Graduates)**

	2015	2016	2017
<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	\$36,613	\$37,137	\$39,062
<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>	\$39,635	\$38,107	
<b>3 Years After Graduation</b>	\$41,610		

Notes: 2021 constant dollars

**Table 14: Median Total Income of NBCC Graduates (Other/Unclassified Graduates)**

	2015	2016	2017
<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	\$30,548	\$24,975	\$30,995
<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>	\$32,577	\$29,721	
<b>3 Years After Graduation</b>	\$31,526		

Notes: 2021 constant dollars

The importance of self-employment income is often lowest among graduates from Business, Management, and Public Administration programs and Health and Related Fields (Tables 17 and 20, respectively). Between 93 and 97 percent of graduates' median total income in these fields comes from employment income. On the other hand, Arts, Communication, and Humanities graduates have the lowest proportion of median total income come from paid employment.

**Table 15 Proportion of Median Total Income from Employment Income (Arts, Communication, and Humanities NBCC Graduates)**

	2015	2016	2017
<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	89%	25%*	61%
<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>	90%	81%	
<b>3 Years After Graduation</b>	80%		

Note: 2021 constant dollars

\*Due to the small sample size of this group, it is not unusual that the median value is an outlier relative to other cohorts.

**Table 16: Proportion of Median Total Income from Employment Income (Social Sciences NBCC Graduates)**

	2015	2016	2017
<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	97%	89%	92%
<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>	92%	87%	
<b>3 Years After Graduation</b>	96%		

Note: 2021 constant dollars



**Table 17: Proportion of Median Total Income from Employment Income (Business, Management, and Public Administration NBCC Graduates)**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	96%	95%	93%
<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>	95%	94%	
<b>3 Years After Graduation</b>	95%		

*Note: 2021 constant dollars*

**Table 18: Proportion of Median Total Income from Employment Income (Math, Computer, and Information Sciences NBCC Graduates)**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	90%	94%	96%
<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>	94%	98%	
<b>3 Years After Graduation</b>	98%		

*Note: 2021 constant dollars*

**Table 19: Proportion of Median Total Income from Employment Income (Architecture, Engineering, and Related Technologies NBCC Graduates)**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	89%	92%	93%
<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>	88%	89%	
<b>3 Years After Graduation</b>	91%		

*Note: 2021 constant dollars*

**Table 20: Proportion of Median Total Income from Employment Income (Health and Related Fields NBCC Graduates)**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	96%	97%	95%
<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>	95%	93%	
<b>3 Years After Graduation</b>	95%		

*Note: 2021 constant dollars*

**Table 21: Proportion of Median Total Income from Employment Income (Other/Unclassified NBCC Graduates)**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>1 Year After Graduation</b>	91%	94%	92%
<b>2 Years After Graduation</b>	79%	81%	
<b>3 Years After Graduation</b>	98%		

*Note: 2021 constant dollars*

## Conclusions

This study reports on the post-graduation median incomes of NBCC graduates by their demographic and background characteristics. It reports median income and median earnings 1, 2, and 3 years after graduation for three annual cohorts (2015, 2016, and 2017) of NBCC graduates.

Overall, the results show that graduates from NBCC experience growth in real incomes in the first few years after graduation and that a large proportion of incomes received come from paid employment (i.e., wages and salaries). However, there is substantial variation in earnings and earnings growth by personal characteristics and field of study.

As more years of data become available, longer-term patterns in earnings levels and earnings growth for NBCC graduates will be able to be analyzed, including analysis of earnings relative to graduates of university programs.

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