

New Brunswick

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

2021 High School Graduates Update

Introduction

This summary presents key findings from DataNB's update on 2021 high school graduate outcomes in New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island:

- 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 mean income) of high school and post-secondary graduates.

This summary presents results for the province of **New Brunswick** from 2015 until 2021.

Findings for Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island are presented in [separate summaries](#).

Highlights

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

The majority of these graduates chooses to stay and study in NB:

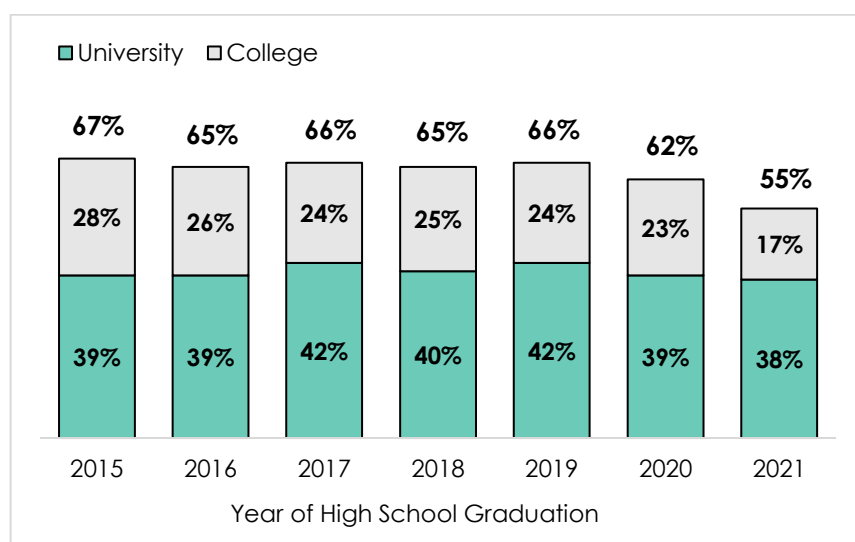
Local University	Local College
74%	90%

1 year after graduating from their highest level of education, most NB graduates (**87-93%**) are still living in the province.

Of the graduates who are employed after graduating, many (**79-96%**) report NB as their province of employment.

Post-Secondary Education Choices of NB High School Graduates

Transitions to Higher Education



2021 Update

While **two-thirds (~64%)** of NB high school graduates pursue higher education at a public university or public college in Canada, the 2021 cohort shows lower transitions – specifically for college enrollments. This is likely due to data limitations.*

**Note: Postsecondary Student Information System (PSIS) data are only available until April 2023, and linkage identifiers are missing for NB college data in particular. Since this study looks at transitions to higher education up to 2 years after high school graduation, it is possible students from the 2021 cohort have yet to enroll.*

When and where do New Brunswickers go for university and college?

NB Graduates Pursuing University

74% go to a university in NB, **17%** attend universities in the other Atlantic provinces, and **9%** enroll elsewhere in Canada.

94% enroll within 6 months of high school graduation.

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

NB Graduates Pursuing College

90% go to a college in NB, with the remaining **10%** studying elsewhere in Canada, including other Atlantic provinces.

73% enroll within 6 months of high school graduation.

27% enroll 6 months to 2 years after high school graduation.

This suggests the majority of students who choose to pursue further education prefers to study in their home province of NB – with many doing so immediately after high school graduation.

2021 Update: In the class of 2021, the share of students choosing to stay in NB for their post-secondary education is similar to the long-term averages presented above. However, this cohort saw a sharp drop in delayed college enrolment – from 28% in 2020 to only 3% in 2021. This is most likely due to the missing college data linkages mentioned above.

Retention of High School and Post-Secondary Graduates

How many graduates stay in New Brunswick?

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

The highest retention rate 1 year after graduating is among college graduates – with **93%** choosing to stay in the province.

2015 - 2021 graduating cohorts, combined			
	High school graduates*	College graduates	University graduates
1 year after graduating	89%	93%	87%
3 years after graduating	85%	89%	82%

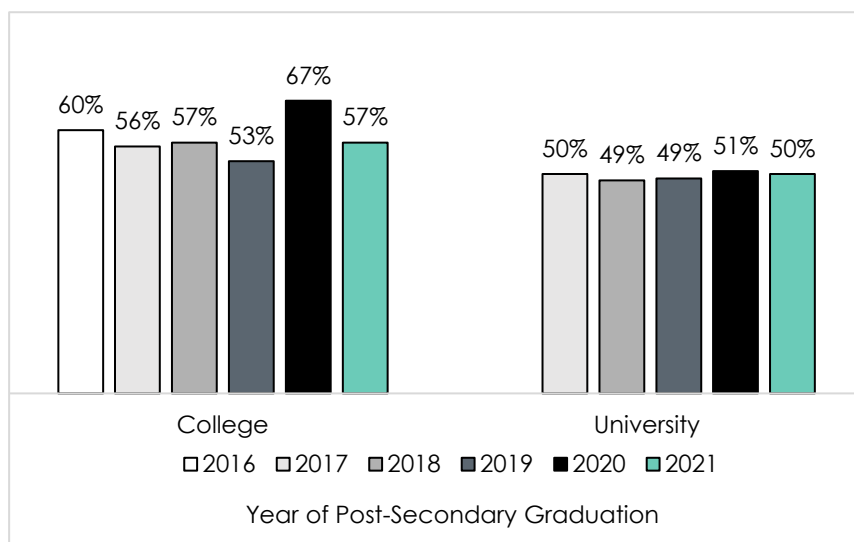
* High school graduates who are not pursuing further education.

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.

2021 Update: Retention rates for the 2021 graduating cohorts are similar to these longer-term averages, though with slightly higher 1-year retention for high school graduates (91%) and higher 3-year retention for college graduates (91%).

Do New Brunswickers Who Study Elsewhere Choose to Return Home?

Return Rates of NBers Studying Out-of-Province



2021 Update

On average, half of NB high school graduates who complete university outside NB and 59% who complete college outside NB return to the province 1 year after graduating. The return rates for the 2021 cohorts are similar to the previous years.

Labour Market Outcomes of Graduates in NB

How many employed graduates work in NB?

2015 - 2021 graduating cohorts, combined			
	High school graduates*	College graduates	University graduates
1 year after graduating	96%	93%	79%
3 years after graduating	92%	91%	74%

* High school graduates who are not pursuing further education

Here, we see that the majority of NB 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.

2021 Update: For the 2021 cohort, the share of graduates employed in their home province of NB is similar to the average. One year after graduating, 96% of 2021 high school graduates, 93% of 2021 college graduates, and 78% of 2021 university graduates are working in NB.

Mean annual income (2021 constant dollars) of graduates in NB

After graduating, NB university graduates earn the highest mean income, followed by college graduates and then by high school graduates who did not pursue higher education – with each group seeing their mean income grow over time, though growth was more pronounced at the higher levels of education.

	High school	College	University
1 year after graduating	\$17,000	\$34,000	\$43,000
3 years after graduating	\$24,000	\$42,000	\$58,000

2021 Update

The 1-year mean incomes of the 2021 graduating cohorts were higher than the longer-term averages:

High school graduates	College graduates	University graduates
\$19,000	\$37,000	\$45,000

While this may be expected, since wages generally rise with inflation, it is good to note that the mean incomes of the 2019 and 2020 cohorts were lower than 2017 and 2018 – at each education level. This may reflect the labour market disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic period, with the incomes of the 2021 cohort representing a return to pre-pandemic patterns.

Key Takeaways

Overall, findings suggest that NB graduates continue to exhibit ties to their home province, even those who leave NB to study elsewhere after graduating high school.

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

As more years of data become available, we will gain a clearer picture of the post-secondary transitions of the high school graduating class of 2021 – particularly for those students who enrolled in public colleges after April 2023.

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