From Postsecondary Application to the Labour Market: The Pathways of Under-represented Groups

Prepared by Academica Group Inc.
for the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario

Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario
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Executive Summary

The PSE Outcomes Study was commissioned by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) to explore the pathways of applicants from postsecondary education (PSE) application to the Ontario labour market, and their employment experiences during and after PSE. This report provides statistically reliable Ontario data to supplement the findings of national studies such as the Youth in Transition Survey (YITS). It offers insights into the factors that contribute to postsecondary education participation and persistence, the barriers that impede access to higher learning, and the relationship between educational attainment and labour market outcomes. In particular, the analysis considers the experiences of four groups who are traditionally under-represented in PSE: Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, students whose parents did not complete PSE, and students who delayed their entry into PSE after secondary school.

The results are based on a sample of 45,000 Ontario applicants to college and university who had participated in Academica Group's University and College Applicant Survey™ (UCAS™) between 2005 and 2009, and had agreed to participate in future research. The 4,029 respondents to the PSE Outcomes survey (including 214 French language respondents) yield an overall survey response rate of 9% and a margin of error of +/- 1.55 at the 95% confidence level. Survey respondents were organized into five mutually exclusive postsecondary education pathways, based on the outcome of their initial PSE application:

- "Not offered" respondents did not receive offers of admission following their application to PSE (n=273 or 7% of respondents).
- "Offered/declined" respondents were offered admission to PSE but declined the offer (n=317 or 8% or respondents).
- "Still attending" respondents (also referred to as "current PSE students") were offered admission to PSE and were attending the institution to which they had initially applied when they responded to the PSE Outcomes Survey (n=2,297 or 58% of respondents).
- "Attended/left" respondents (also referred to as "early leavers") were offered admission to PSE but left their postsecondary program prior to completion (n=279 or 7% of respondents).
- "Attended/complete" respondents (also referred to as "PSE graduates") were offered admission to PSE and had completed the postsecondary program to which they applied (n=766 or 19% of respondents).

Overall, 85% of all respondents who received offers of admission accepted the offer, and about three-quarters had a specific occupation or career goal in mind at the time they applied. PSE participation rates[1] were highest among applicants who were younger than 20 when they applied to PSE, never married, with high household incomes, high grade averages, and interested in full-time study. Participation was lower among applicants who were older, from

[1] PSE participation rates are defined as the proportion of applicants who attended PSE in the fall after they applied compared to all applicants – whether they were still attending when they responded to the PSE Outcomes Study, had left their program before completing, or had graduated from their program.

lower household incomes, married or divorced, interested in part-time study, and with lower grade averages. University applicants were more likely than college applicants to accept offers of admission, while college applicants were twice as likely to decline. The overall rate of PSE participation for under-represented applicants (83%) was lower than the participation rate of applicants who did not fall into one of the four groups (88%).

Non-Participation Pathways

"Not Offered" Applicants

At the time of their initial application to PSE, fully half of the "not offered" applicants were 20 or older, and one-third reported incomes less than $30,000. One in five was married with dependent children. This group included a lower proportion of Caucasian applicants, and more Black applicants.[2] Delayed entry applicants were twice as likely as other applicant groups to be in this pathway.

Employment

Close to two-thirds of "not offered" applicants were employed when they responded to the PSE Outcomes Study (63%) and more than half (54%) were combining school with labour market participation – a greater proportion than any other pathway. The "not offered" applicants who were employed full-time reported higher employment earnings than applicants in other pathways, with 30% reporting incomes of $50,000 or more. Delayed entry "not offered" applicants were less likely than other applicants in this pathway to be employed, and much more likely to be looking for another job or to be out of the labour market altogether. Only 12% of "not offered" applicants from the four under-represented groups reported full-time employment earnings of $50,000 or more, compared to close to half of "not offered" applicants who did not fall into one of the under-represented groups. Two-thirds of under-represented applicants in this pathway who were employed full-time had incomes of less than $35,000.

"Offered/Declined" Applicants

Similar to the "not offered" pathway, these applicants were older than applicants who went on to participate in PSE (although half were 19 or younger). They reported lower incomes, and 13% were married with child dependents. They were more likely to have applied to college than university. There were fewer Caucasian, and more Black, applicants within this group, and larger proportions of delayed entry, first-generation PSE, and especially Aboriginal applicants. About two-thirds of these applicants (64%) were employed when they responded to the PSE Outcomes Study.

[2] Black applicants are respondents who described their cultural or racial background as: "Black (for example, African, Haitian, Jamaican, Somali, etc.)".

The single most influential reason for their decision to decline was postponing PSE to another year. This was followed by higher than expected costs, insufficient financial aid, changes in career goals, personal issues, concerns about balancing work with school, gaining employment, feelings of uncertainty about PSE, and concerns about balancing school with family life. "Offered/declined" applicants from the four under-represented groups ascribed significantly greater influence to financial issues – including higher than expected costs and insufficient financial aid – and were also more influenced by not receiving financial aid and distance of the campus from home. Concerns about balancing school and employment were more influential for these applicants, while changes in career goals were less influential. Pregnancy, the least influential factor for most applicants, had significantly greater influence on applicants who delayed applying to PSE.

Employment

Close to two-thirds of "offered/declined" applicants (63%) were employed when they responded to the PSE Outcomes Study. While almost half (47%) were employed and going to school, close to one in 10 was out of the labour market altogether. Those who were working full-time reported lower job satisfaction than other employed applicants, with almost half reporting a mismatch between their job and their career goals (46%). Applicants who initially declined an offer to PSE, but subsequently attended postsecondary education, were considerably more satisfied with their jobs than those who did not pursue any later PSE.

Later PSE Participation

Although grouped into the "not offered" or "offered/declined" pathways based on the outcome of their initial application to PSE, it is noteworthy that applicants from the two "non-participation" pathways were quite likely to report later participation in PSE. At the time they responded to the PSE Outcomes Study, close to half of applicants from both the "not offered" and "offered/declined" pathways reported going on to further PSE, with no significant differences between the pathways. More than one-third of these applicants (36%) were in fact attending a PSE institution in the fall of 2009, and one in 10 had completed another PSE program. Among non-participants who did *not* go on to attend PSE later, the majority indicated plans to pursue PSE study in the future.

Given that respondents to the PSE Outcomes Study had already applied to college or university, they were by definition predisposed to PSE, and the number of respondents who effectively "changed their minds" about attending college or university was very small. Among the few applicants who did not participate in PSE *and* did not plan to pursue PSE in the future (n=15) the most frequently selected reasons for their decision were a preference for work over school, concerns about balancing PSE with employment, concerns about PSE affordability, concerns about managing school with family life, and anxiety about academic success.

PSE Participation Pathways

"Attended/Left" Applicants (Early Leavers)

This pathway included more males, and more students from southwestern Ontario. Early leavers had lower grades than current students or graduates, and 8% had dependent children. Applicants with disabilities were almost twice as likely as other applicant groups to be in the "attended/left" pathway.

Student Support Services

Early leavers made less use of several student support services (library, orientation, recreation facilities, and career services) and were also less satisfied with the services they used (financial aid, orientation, and career services). The exception was services for students with disabilities, which they used more but were similar in their levels of satisfaction. Compared to other students who left PSE prior to completion, those from under-represented groups were more likely to access personal counselling services, prior learning and assessment (PLA), and services for students with disabilities.

School Engagement & Time Use

Early leavers expressed lower levels of agreement that they understood the academic expectations of their program, were encouraged to spend time on coursework, were aware of financial aid services, and were informed about campus social activities. In particular, they were *much* less likely to agree that there was someone at school they could rely on, and that support was available to assist them with homework or non-academic responsibilities. Compared to other PSE participants, early leavers were less likely to frequently participate in school activities, and more than twice as likely to regularly skip classes. Early leavers with disabilities were much less likely to agree that they could access supports for their non-academic responsibilities, and less likely to regularly complete assignments on time.

PSE Financing

Early leavers were somewhat less likely than other PSE participants to draw upon scholarships and bursaries to fund their PSE. Early leavers with disabilities made much less use of personal savings than students without disabilities.

Employment

Three out of five early leavers were employed while they were attending postsecondary education, almost always off-campus. Early leavers with disabilities who were employed at school worked significantly fewer hours than early leavers without disabilities.
About two-thirds of early leavers (67%) were employed at the time they responded to the PSE Outcomes Study, and 45% were in the labour market and going to school. Although the majority of early leavers who were employed full-time reported that their employment was not at

all related to their career goals (56%), they were nevertheless relatively satisfied with their professional lives.

Reasons for Leaving

Two of the three most influential reasons for early school leaving were changes in career goals, and transferring to another postsecondary institution, a finding that reconceptualizes early school leaving less as "dropping out" and more as a deliberate strategy to pursue a specific career direction. The second most influential reason, dislike for the program, may be related to two other highly-ranked factors – lack of connection to school and uncertainty about PSE. Academic factors, including low grades and time management problems, were also relatively influential, as were higher than expected costs. Compared to other early leavers, challenges balancing school and family were much more influential for those from under-represented groups. Health-related problems were also a greater concern, especially for early leavers with disabilities. Early leavers who delayed entry to PSE were more motivated by feelings of disconnectedness from school and higher than expected costs.

"Still attending" Applicants (Current PSE Students)

Current PSE students were more likely to be young (60% were 18 or younger), female, recent applicants to PSE, from Central Ontario, and Chinese or South Asian. Applicants from all four under-represented groups were less likely than non-designated applicants to be in the "still attending" pathway.

Student Support Services

Current PSE students used several services more than other PSE participants (financial aid, orientation, and peer mentoring) and expressed higher levels of satisfaction with many of the services they used (particularly orientation, recreation facilities, academic advising, and career services). Compared to non-designated students, current students from under-represented groups made greater use of financial aid services, personal counselling, Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), and both disability and Aboriginal student services, but were less likely to participate in orientation and recreation programs. They were less satisfied with library services and career services, but considerably more satisfied with PLA.

School Engagement & Time USE

Current PSE students strongly agreed that they understood the academic expectations of their program, were encouraged to spend time on their coursework, had someone to rely on at school for useful information, were aware of financial aid services, and were informed about campus social activities. With the exception of skipping classes, current PSE students reported higher levels of participation in most school activities than early leavers. Current students from under-represented groups were less likely than other students to agree that extracurricular activities were important to student life. Current students with disabilities expressed significantly lower levels of agreement that they had someone to rely on for useful information, and that they

understood the academic expectations of their program. Although current students from under-represented groups were less likely to communicate electronically with their peers on a frequent basis and participate in recreation or sports activities, they reported frequently asking questions in class, working with other students, and talking to instructors about term paper ideas or career plans. Overall, however, they spent less time on academic and other school activities and more time travelling to and from school than non-designated students. Aboriginal, first-generation PSE and current students with disabilities spent more time caring for dependents than students not in these groups.

PSE Financing

While under-represented current students relied slightly less on personal savings than other students, they were more likely to regard personal savings as a major PSE contributor. They had higher participation in government student aid programs, and usually depended on loans for a major part of their PSE funding. They were less likely to be financially supported by parents or family, or to receive scholarships or bursaries.

Employment

About two out of five current students were working while attending school, typically less than 15 hours a week. Current students from under-represented groups were more likely to work off campus than other students, and worked longer hours each week.

"Attended/Complete" Applicants (PSE Graduates)

These applicants were older than other applicants, more likely to be female, and more likely to have applied to college. One in 10 was married, and 8% had dependent children when they completed their program. Applicants who received offers to their first-choice program had a greater likelihood of being in this group. Applicants with disabilities were significantly less likely to be PSE graduates.

Student Support Services

Students who completed their program of study were the most likely to use career services, but the least likely to use tutoring services. They were more satisfied than other students with financial aid services. Under-represented students who completed their programs were more likely to access personal counselling, PLA, services for students with disabilities, financial aid and Aboriginal student services, but less likely to participate in orientation programs.

School Engagement & Time Use

Like current PSE students, PSE graduates expressed strong agreement that they understood the academic expectations of their program, were encouraged to spend time on their coursework, had someone to rely on at school for useful information, and were aware of financial aid services. With the exception of skipping classes, PSE graduates reported higher

levels of participation in school activities than other PSE participants. PSE graduates were the most likely to spend time volunteering while attending school, with half spending up to 10 hours a week on volunteer activities.

While first-generation graduates were less likely than other graduates to strongly agree that they had someone to rely on at school, graduates from under-represented groups agreed more strongly that they could access support for non-academic demands. These graduates were more likely to frequently ask questions in class, but less likely to participate in recreational or sports activities. Compared to other PSE graduates, they spent more time travelling to and from school, and were much more likely to report dependent care obligations.

PSE Financing

PSE graduates were less likely than other PSE participants to identify their parents or family members as major contributors to their PSE funding, but were the most likely to receive scholarships or bursaries (62%). Under-represented PSE graduates were much less likely than other graduates to receive financial support from their family, and were more likely to borrow from private sources to fund their PSE. PSE graduates with disabilities relied more on personal savings than those without disabilities, while larger proportions of first-generation PSE graduates took out student loans.

Employment

Applicants who completed their program of study were the most likely to have been employed while attending postsecondary education, usually working at least 15 hours a week. Although typically employed off-campus, these students were more likely than other PSE participants to work on campus (20%). PSE graduates from under-represented groups were less likely than other graduates to work on-campus, and those with disabilities were much less likely to be employed during PSE.

PSE graduates were the most likely to be employed at the time they responded to the PSE Outcomes Study (72%), and the least likely to be attending school (34%). Three out of five PSE graduates in full-time employment held jobs that were closely related to their career goals, more than any other pathway. These applicants also expressed the highest level of satisfaction with their employment, and reported the highest average employment earnings.

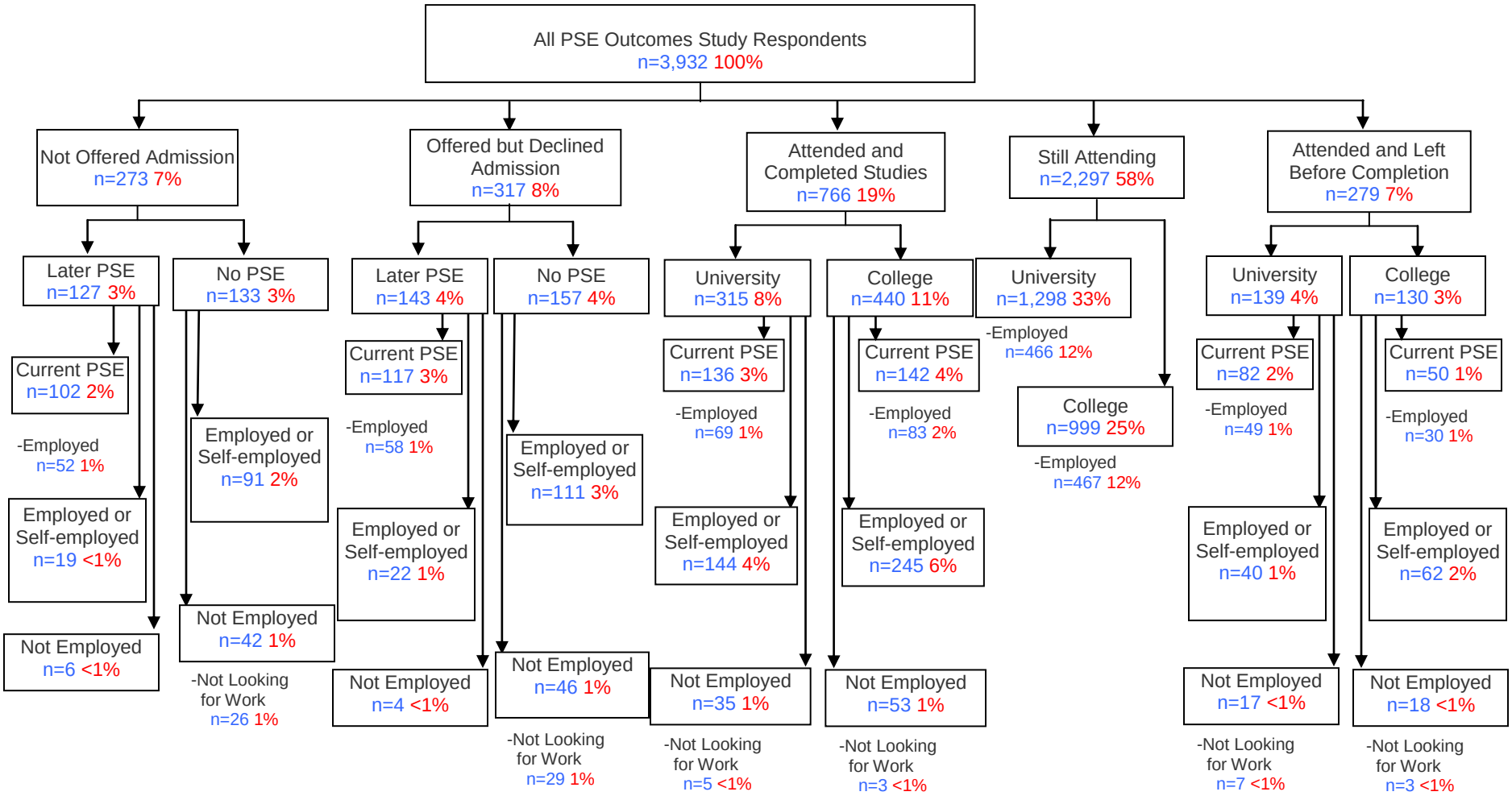
Under-represented applicants who completed their PSE program were less likely than other PSE graduates to be employed in jobs related to their career goals. At the same time, those with disabilities were much more likely than PSE graduates without disabilities to have had a career goal when they began their postsecondary education (92%).

Later PSE Participation

PSE early leavers were quite likely to return to PSE at a later date, with close to half (47%) reporting that they were involved in another PSE program at the time of their participation in the PSE Outcomes Study. There were also high rates of continuing education among PSE graduates, 40% of whom went on to subsequent PSE.

The figure that follows summarizes the PSE and labour market pathways of applicants to postsecondary education during the period 2005 to 2009.

PSE Pathways and Labour Market Participation[3]



[3] The flowchart presents results for respondents who reported attending college or university only. Data for respondents who attended other educational institutions is not captured, given the very small n sizes for these cases. Also, some data is missing for respondents who did not complete the questions about later participation in PSE.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This PSE Outcomes Study was commissioned by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) to track the postsecondary education (PSE) and labour market experiences of applicants to Ontario colleges and universities following their application to PSE. The findings provide a better understanding of the factors that contribute to postsecondary education participation and persistence, the impediments that prevent students from accessing higher learning opportunities, the intentions of students to pursue further education after their initial PSE application, the employment experiences of applicants during and after PSE, and the labour market outcomes associated with different PSE pathways. The analysis offers particular insights into the experiences of four groups who are traditionally under-represented in PSE – Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, students whose parents did not complete PSE, and students who delayed their entry into PSE after secondary school – to assist in the development of targeted policy interventions to reduce barriers and improve access to educational and labour market choices, thereby enabling the full participation of all Ontario's citizens in the economy and in society.

Over the last decade, much has been learned about the pathways taken by young people from education to the labour market, and the factors that affect the critical transitions from school to employment. In 2008, Canadian Policy Research Networks concluded its two-year "Pathways for Youth to the Labour Market" project, which involved eight studies exploring the different paths from secondary school to regular participation in the labour market. Statistics Canada's Youth in Transition Survey (YITS), launched in 2000, offers a rich source of longitudinal data examining the education and achievement, aspirations and expectations, and employment experiences of young people through major transitions in their lives. The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation (CMSF) has produced a series of comprehensive reports on postsecondary access, participation and persistence. These studies and others provide important insights into the barriers facing young adults in pursuing higher education or entering the labour market, enabling the development of innovative new programs, and better targeting of existing programs, to enhance PSE access and persistence and improve labour market participation. Consistently, the studies have found that some groups are more likely to participate in and complete postsecondary education, and that not all groups have equal opportunities to access higher learning. An open and accessible system of postsecondary education is fundamental to a vibrant and equitable democracy, and to ensuring a prosperous and healthy future. Postsecondary education in Ontario should be open and accessible to all who are qualified and willing to participate, regardless of Aboriginal status, disability, parental education levels, or other demographic or socio-economic factors.

Improving educational outcomes for groups that are under-represented in PSE, and enhancing their ability to gain meaningful and productive employment, will have significant implications for Ontario's global competitiveness in a knowledge-based economy. A landmark report released in February 2009 by the University of Toronto's Martin Prosperity Institute declares that Ontario's capacity to compete and prosper in a period of global economic transformation will depend on its ability to harness the creative talents of its people (Martin & Florida, 2009). With 70% of new jobs in the future requiring college or university education, the report urges a dramatic increase in Ontario's postsecondary participation rates. As demographic changes

shrink the pool of secondary school graduates to draw upon for PSE participation, Ontario will need to increase the educational attainment of disadvantaged and under-represented groups in order achieve the increased levels of PSE needed to support a competitive knowledge-based economy.

In the face of labour and skills shortages wrought by impending "baby boomer" retirements and a looming demographic crunch, under-represented groups offer the promise of an available, adaptable and responsive workforce. Most importantly, increased educational achievement and successful labour market outcomes are effective tools to combat poverty and social marginalization, reducing the burden on social services, enhancing personal and community well-being, and strengthening community cohesion.

The PSE Outcomes Study contributes to the growing body of research by providing statistically reliable Ontario data on the higher education and labour market outcomes of applicants to Ontario colleges or universities between 2005 and 2009. The sample was drawn from Academica Group's database of approximately 65,000 applicants to Ontario colleges and universities, who had participated in the University & College Applicant Study™ (UCAS™) between the years of 2005 and 2009 and agreed to future research.

The report is organized in five chapters. The current chapter describes the methodology and summarizes current research on the challenges faced by under-represented groups in accessing higher learning options and entering the labour market. Chapter 2 provides insights into the characteristics, behaviours, attitudes and motivations of the four under-represented applicant groups involved in the study, at the time of their application to postsecondary education in Ontario. Chapter 3 focuses on issues related to postsecondary participation, and compares results for applicants who attended PSE to those who did not – either because they declined an offer of admission or did not receive an offer of admission. Chapter 4 examines persistence in postsecondary education, and explores differences between respondents who completed their original program of study, respondents who left their PSE program prior to completion, and respondents who are currently attending PSE. Chapter 5 looks at the labour market and employment experiences of applicants in relation to their postsecondary education and career goals. The final chapter identifies knowledge gaps and offers recommendations for future research.

Methodology

For more than a decade, Academica Group's UCAS™ study has been providing universities and colleges across Canada with reliable, detailed and comprehensive attitudinal and perceptual applicant research to inform organizational practices and strategies, enable evidence-based decision making, and support institutional strategic enrolment management goals.[4] Each year, approximately 15,000 to 20,000 applicants to Ontario colleges and

[4] Prior to 2008, two different survey instruments were used for college and university applicants: the University Applicant Survey™ (UAS™) and the College Applicant Survey™ (CAS™). In 2008, these instruments were merged into the UCAS™, a single instrument that surveys applicants to both college and university.

universities participate in the online survey, undertaken in partnership with the Ontario Colleges Application Service (OCAS) and participating Ontario universities.

The PSE Outcomes Study involved respondents to UAS™, CAS™, and UCAS™ surveys conducted in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009 who had agreed to participate in future research. To provide assurance that the sample was representative of Ontario's applicant population, the distribution of under-represented groups within this pool of future research participants was compared to the distribution of under-represented groups in the overall 2007-2009 UCAS™ database (including respondents who were not interested in future research), which was judged to be a reasonable approximation of all Ontario applicants to postsecondary education and used as a proxy for the population (*Table 1.1*).[5]

The final sample included all Ontario respondents who identified as Aboriginal, disability, first-generation PSE, and delayed entry (n=25,290), and a random selection of half the respondents who did not fall into any of these four groups (n=19,806), for a total of 44,988 cases.[6] The sample also included 917 French language respondents from under-represented groups and 1,170 French language respondents who did not fall into any group. Under-represented groups were over-sampled in order to increase segment n-sizes and contribute to more robust statistical analysis, and were defined as follows:

- Aboriginal – applicants who self-identified on the UCAS™ survey as Aboriginal persons (First Nations, Métis or Inuit).

- Disability – applicants who considered themselves to be persons with disabilities (physical, mental or learning) at the time they responded to the UCAS™ survey. UCAS™ data under-represents applicants with disabilities, since 2005 and 2007 university applicants were not asked to indicate their disability status.

- First-generation PSE – applicants who reported in the UCAS™ survey that no parent/guardian had completed a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree.
- Delayed entry – applicants who were 20 years of age or older when they participated in the UCAS™ survey, and had no PSE experience.

In total, the 4,029 respondents to the PSE Outcomes survey (including 214 French language respondents) yield an overall survey response rate of 9%, and provide a margin of error of +/- 1.55 at the 95% confidence level.

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[5] College respondents to the 2007, 2008, and 2009 UCAS™ were drawn from a representative sample of all applicants to Ontario colleges, and were therefore representative of the population of college applicants. University respondents to the 2007, 2008, and 2009 UCAS™ were drawn from a nonprobability sample of applicants to participating Ontario universities only, however, the regional distribution of respondents was close to the regional distribution of the Ontario population, improving its representativeness. Respondents to the 2005 and 2006 college and university applicant surveys were determined to be less representative of the postsecondary applicant population than the 2007-2009 database, and were therefore not used for comparison purposes.

[6] For applicants who had participated in the UCAS™ more than once, the *earliest* record was kept in the database.

Survey and sizes and response rates for each group are indicated in Table 1.1. (Note that the under-represented groups are not mutually exclusive, with some respondents reported in more than one group). Despite over-sampling, the response rate among under-represented applicants (8.6%) – and Aboriginal applicants in particular (5.5%) – was lower than the response rate for the non-designated group (9.4%).

Table 1.1 – Sample n Sizes and Response Rates[7]

	Ontario UCAS™ Future Research Sample (2005-2009)	Total UCAS™ Database (2007-2009)	Invited to Participate (n)	Responded (n)	Response Rate
Overall	64,174		44,988	4,029	9.0%
Non-designated	38,884		19,806	1,871	9.4%
Under-represented	25,290		25,182	2,158	8.6%
Aboriginal	1,624		1,599	88	5.5%
Disability	2,932		2,905	260	9.0%
First-generation PSE	19,681		19,618	1,713	8.7%
Delayed entry	5,419		5,383	436	8.1%
	% of Total		% of Total	% of Total	
Non-designated	61%		44%	46%	
Under-represented	39%		56%	54%	
Aboriginal	3%	3%	4%	2%	
Disability	5%	5%	6%	6%	
First-generation PSE	31%	32%	44%	43%	
Delayed entry	8%	8%	12%	11%	

Instrument

The PSE Outcomes Study online instrument was designed to explore the pathways of applicants following their application to PSE. A variety of existing instruments were reviewed in order to develop the survey, including:

- Statistics Canada's Youth in Transition Survey (YITS)
- Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Student Satisfaction Survey
  (2009-2010 KPI + Pilot Version)
- Ontario College Student Engagement Survey (OCSES)
- *Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)*
- *Survey of* Entering Student Engagement (SENSE)
- College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ)
- Freshman Integration and Tracking (FIT) System Partners in Education Inventory (PEI) and Student Experience Inventory (SEI)

[7] Sample n sizes and response rates for under-represented groups are based on original UCAS™ identifier data, and include 97 cases that were later removed for analytic purposes.

- Measuring the Effectiveness of Student Aid (MESA)
- Education Longitudinal Study (ELS)
- Manitoba Survey of Early Leavers
- Seneca College Early Leaver Survey
- British Columbia Short Stay Early Leavers Student Outcomes Survey

Since the sample included applicants from five different years (2005 to 2009), the instrument was programmed to remind respondents to reflect back on their experience immediately following the first year in which they had applied to PSE. (Please see Appendix A for a copy of the instrument.)

The instrument was pre-tested by sending email invitations and a link to the draft survey to 120 future research pool applicants (30 from each of the under-represented groups). The 10 respondents who completed the test survey each received $25. Five respondents were selected to participate in a one-hour follow-up telephone interview, and received an additional $25. These respondents represented the four under-represented groups, and included four males and one female. They had applied to PSE in different years (2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009), and reported a range of PSE experiences. During the interview respondents were asked to complete the survey again, as if they were doing it for the first time, and to read the questions aloud as they progressed through the survey. The interviews helped to identify wording that needed to be clarified or revised, and enabled improvements to the survey to better capture the full range of applicant experiences.

Procedure

Academica Group's proprietary Survey Management System™ (SMS™) software was used to program the instrument in both English and French, issue email invitations and reminder notices, and collect the data. The email invitation to participate included a unique ID and password, along with an embedded link to the online survey. Email invitations were sent on November 23, 2009 for the English survey and December 7, 2009 for the French survey. The first reminder notices were sent between December 4 and 8 for the English survey, and on December 21 for the French survey. A second reminder was sent for the English survey on December 16, and both surveys were taken down on January 4, 2010.
Ten cash prizes were offered as participation incentives: a $500 early bird prize, a $1,000 grand prize, a $500 second prize, two third prizes of $250, and five prizes of $100.

Analytics

A total of 97 surveys were removed from the analysis because respondents did not complete the survey to an acceptable cut-off point that would enable meaningful analysis. In recognition of the possibility that respondents' self-identification may have changed since they initially responded to the UCAS™ survey, the analysis defines Aboriginal applicants and applicants with disabilities according to their responses to the PSE Outcomes instrument, rather than their original UCAS™ responses. This changed the number of cases considered for analysis purposes, which is most apparent in the increased number of applicants with disability, from 260

cases to 363 cases. First-generation PSE and delayed entry respondents were defined according to UCAS™ data.

Respondent data was weighted to correspond to system-level applicant distributions within our UCAS™ database (Table 1.1) as a means of correcting for sampling distortion, which was most pronounced in the over-representation of first-generation PSE respondents. The total responses of applicants who did not belong to any of the under-represented groups (referred to in this report as the "non-designated" group) were weighted up, from 46% to 61%, and the total responses of applicants within the four under-represented groups were weighted down, from 54% to 39%, with the same weighting factor applied to all under-represented cases regardless of the group they fell into.

As shown in Table 1.2, each respondent was organized into one of five mutually exclusive postsecondary education pathways, based on the outcome of their PSE application:
"Not offered" respondents did not receive offers of admission following their application to PSE
"Offered/declined" respondents were offered admission to PSE but declined the offer.
"Attended/left" respondents were offered admission to PSE but left their postsecondary program prior to completion.

"Still attending" respondents were offered admission to PSE and were attending the institution to which they had applied.

"Attended/complete" respondents were offered admission to PSE and had completed the postsecondary program to which they had applied.

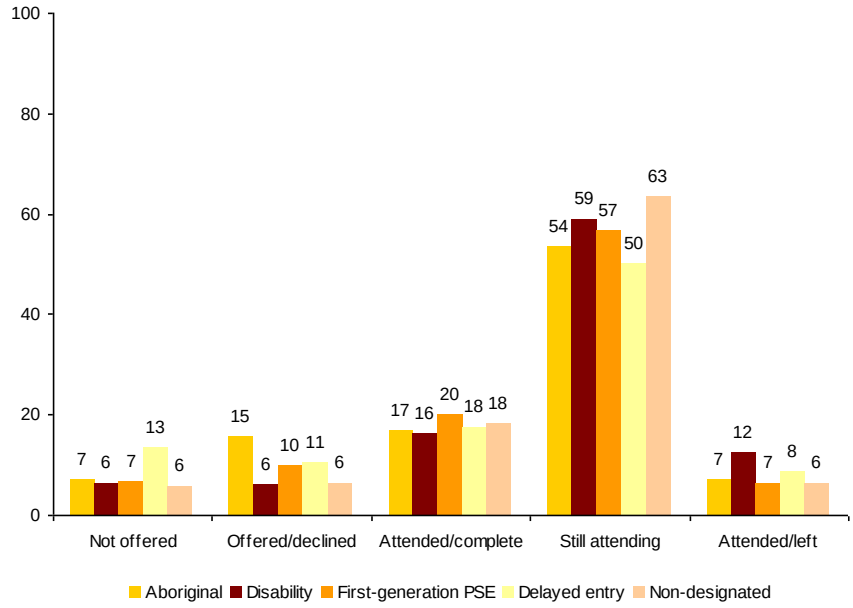
Table 1.2 – Sample by Pathway

		Not offered	Offered/ declined	Attended/ left	Still attending	Attended/ complete	Total
Un-weighted data (n size)	Aboriginal	6	14	6	43	15	84
	Disability	24	23	43	215	58	363
	First-generation PSE	114	168	109	953	339	1683
	Delayed entry	58	49	35	220	69	431
	Non-designated	87	95	92	939	268	1481
	Total Sample	283	335	279	2269	766	3932
Weighted data (n size)	Aboriginal	5	11	5	38	12	71
	Disability	20	19	39	185	51	314
	First-generation PSE	83	123	80	696	248	1230
	Delayed entry	42	36	26	161	50	315
	Non-designated	114	124	121	1233	351	1943
	Total Sample	273	317	279	2297	766	3932
Weighted data (% of weighted sample)	Aboriginal	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	Disability	7%	6%	14%	8%	7%	8%
	First-generation PSE	30%	39%	29%	30%	32%	31%
	Delayed entry	15%	11%	9%	7%	7%	8%
	Non-designated	42%	39%	43%	54%	46%	49%
	Total Sample	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Comparing the distribution of applicants across pathways shows that the majority of respondents from all groups were in the “still attending” pathway (58% overall), particularly applicants who were not designated as belonging to an under-represented group (Figure 1.1). The next most common pathway was “attended/complete” (19% overall) with similar proportions of applicants in the “offered/declined” (8% overall), “not offered” (7% overall) and “attended/left” (7% overall) pathways.

Compared to non-designated applicants, applicants from all four under-represented groups were less likely to be in the “still attending” pathway at the time of the PSE Outcomes Study. Applicants with disabilities were significantly less likely to be in the “attended/complete” pathway and much more likely to be in the “attended/left” pathway. The “offered/declined” pathway included larger proportions of first-generation PSE, delayed entry, and especially Aboriginal applicants, while delayed entry applicants were twice as likely as all other applicants to be in the “not offered” pathway.

*Figure 1.1 – Pathway Distributions**



Obviously, differences in pathways can be attributed to such characteristics as the year of application, the type of institution applied to, and the duration of the program of study. As shown in Tables 1.3 and 1.4, while the distribution of respondents by year of application was relatively similar within each under-represented group, under-represented applicants were more likely to have applied to college – where programs are shorter – and less likely to have applied to university. The opposite was true for non-designated applicants, 59% of whom applied to university. To some extent, this explains the larger proportion of non-designated applicants in the “still attending” pathway, but does not explain the higher incidence of not receiving offers, declining admission, and early school leaving among under-represented applicants. Chapters 3 and 4 explore each pathway in greater detail, to shed light on the characteristics associated with

not being offered admission to PSE, declining offers of admission, leaving PSE prior to graduating, and completing a PSE program.

Table 1.3 – Sample by Year of PSE Application

		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Un-weighted data (n size)	Aboriginal	6	7	13	27	31	84
	Disability	53	44	51	77	138	363
	First-generation PSE	261	166	228	382	646	1683
	Delayed entry	68	46	69	76	172	431
	Non-designated	253	129	214	378	507	1481
	Total Sample	681	399	550	902	1400	3932
Weighted data (n size)	Aboriginal	6	6	9	23	27	71
	Disability	50	42	44	66	112	314
	First-generation PSE	191	121	167	279	472	1230
	Delayed entry	50	34	50	56	126	316
	Non-designated	331	167	282	497	667	1944
	Total Sample	708	398	542	914	1370	3932
Weighted data (% of weighted sample)	Aboriginal	1%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%
	Disability	7%	11%	8%	7%	8%	8%
	First-generation PSE	27%	30%	31%	31%	34%	31%
	Delayed entry	7%	9%	9%	6%	9%	8%
	Non-designated	47%	42%	52%	54%	49%	49%
	Total Sample	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 1.4 – Sample by Type of PSE Application[8]

		University Applicants	College Applicants	Total
Un-weighted data (n size)	Aboriginal	22	56	78
	Disability	110	229	339
	First-generation PSE	597	969	1566
	Delayed entry	82	289	371
	Non-designated	846	545	1391
	Total Sample	1734	1909	3643
Weighted data (n size)	Aboriginal	20	46	66
	Disability	108	186	294
	First-generation PSE	436	708	1144
	Delayed entry	62	213	275
	Non-designated	1111	715	1826
	Total Sample	1868	1784	3652
Weighted	Aboriginal	1%	3%	2%

[8] Applicants to more than one type of institution, where one of the institutions was a university, were coded as "university." Applicants to private colleges were included with "college" applicants. Data in Table 1.4 differs from Tables 1.2 and 1.3, since type of institution was missing for some respondents.

		University Applicants	College Applicants	Total
data (% of weighted sample)	Disability	6%	10%	8%
	First-generation PSE	23%	40%	31%
	Delayed entry	3%	12%	8%
	Non-designated	59%	40%	50%
	Total Sample	100%	100%	100%

Throughout this report, differences between each under-represented group and all other applicants have been tested for statistical significance, using the Chi-Square for distributions, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) or T-test for mean score differences. Since segment n sizes less than 20 were considered insufficient to draw meaningful conclusions about differences, statistical testing was not conducted for these segments. In these cases, results are displayed as counts rather than frequency distributions, and mean scores are not calculated.

Literature Review

The benefits of postsecondary education have been well-established and extend far beyond increased employment earnings to improved health outcomes, greater job satisfaction, more stable employment, higher economic productivity, and stronger civic engagement. To ensure that all students have opportunities to access these benefits, various research studies have attempted to understand the barriers to pursuing PSE, and the factors associated with postsecondary education participation, persistence, and completion, especially for youth from different backgrounds. Although leaving postsecondary education is not always a negative outcome for students, it carries both societal and individual costs, in terms of lost tuition, other PSE expenses, and foregone earnings. At the same time, the majority of Ontario students – even those who have dropped out of school – recognize the value of postsecondary education and aspire to some form of PSE (CCL, 2009; King et al., 2009). Given the significant government and institutional investments in supporting PSE, and the aspirations of young people to further education, identifying the factors that contribute to improved persistence and postsecondary graduation can help reduce the costs of early school leaving and enable all students to achieve positive educational and labour market outcomes.

This literature review briefly highlights some key findings about access, participation, and persistence, as well as characteristics of the four under-represented groups.

PSE Access and Participation

There is no single factor that fully accounts for who goes on to postsecondary education and who decides against PSE (Barr-Telford et al., 2003). Instead, a wide variety of characteristics distinguish young people who decide against further education from those who go on to postsecondary. Generally, students who pursue postsecondary studies are more likely to be female, to have lived with two parents while in secondary school, and to be single with no children (Barr-Telford et al., 2003). Far more males than females do not apply to any PSE institutions (with university applications accounting for most of the difference) (King et al., 2009).

For those who do not participate in PSE, three main barriers have been identified: informational/ motivational, financial, and academic (Junor & Usher, 2004). Informational/motivational barriers are characterized by lack of interest and unawareness of the benefits of PSE; financial barriers are related to the costs of PSE, concerns about ability to finance PSE, and aversion to taking on debt; and academic barriers include low marks and concerns about academic ability. A major qualitative study of youth who did not go on to postsecondary education after secondary school confirmed the importance of informational/motivational barriers, finding that negative perceptions of school, uncertainty about PSE, and limited access to key information were the primary reasons for students not to pursue PSE (Ekos, 2009). The study noted that finances play a relatively minor role in the decision, compared to other more significant issues such as indecision about future career options and concerns over grades. Previous YITS research, however, found that financial situation was the most frequently cited barrier preventing young people from going "as far as they would like to" in school, identified by more than half of students who did not go on to PSE (Bowlby & McMullen, 2002). A recent study of Ontario secondary school students who decided against enrolling in college found that students were influenced by uncertainty about career direction, concerns about financing their PSE, and negative school experiences, including low marks (King et al., 2009).

Income

Although the impact of household income on the education of youth is complex, there is a clear association between income and PSE participation, with students from low-income families less likely to pursue a postsecondary education. Only 61% of low-income secondary school graduates in Canada enter postsecondary studies, compared to more than three-quarters of youth from high-income families (Berger, 2009). It is important to note, however, that university participation accounts for almost all of this differential.

Parental Education & Attitudes

Parental education has been shown to be a key determinant of whether youth go on to PSE. Youth whose parents had a high level of education were more likely to participate in postsecondary education before entering the labour market (Hango & de Broucker, 2007). The impact of parental education is particularly pronounced among university applicants. Compared to students whose parents had less than secondary school education, students whose parents had completed PSE were almost three times as likely to participate in university programs (Shaienks et al., 2008).

Some researchers have argued that parental education and family attitudes toward PSE is a more important predictor of PSE participation than income. Frenette (2007) attributes most of the gap in university participation rates between high-income and low-income youth to such characteristics as parental education, academic ability (reading scores and grade averages), parental expectations, and quality of school, and only 12% of the difference to financial constraints. There is also a strong positive relationship between accessing PSE and parental attitudes about the value of education. YITS analysis shows that 84% of students whose parents believed in the importance of continuing education after secondary school went on to attend PSE (Shaienks et al., 2008). By comparison, only 48% of students whose parents did

not consider PSE to be important went on to further education. These students were twice as likely to attend college as university.

Grade Averages and secondary school experiences

YITS data shows that secondary school students with good grades are more likely to enter postsecondary education directly from secondary school, and typically choose university over college (Hango & de Broucker, 2007). Conversely, the lower the average secondary school marks, the less likely than students will enrol in PSE (King et al., 2009). High achieving students (grades of 80% or more) are much more likely to be female than male, while males are much more likely to obtain low or failing grades (King et al., 2009). Students who reported high levels of academic and social engagement in secondary school were more likely to pursue postsecondary education than their less engaged peers (Lambert et al., 2004).

Location

Relocating to attend PSE can substantially increase the costs associated with postsecondary participation. Distance from an institution reduces the likelihood of accessing PSE, with lower rates of participation among people who must relocate in order to attend school (Frenette, 2002). In Ontario, rural and northern Ontario students were less likely to apply to and register in PSE (King et al., 2009).

Type of Institution and Program

While similar numbers of males and females register in Ontario colleges, females are much more likely than males to apply to university (King et al., 2009). College applicants are more likely to decline offers than university applicants. Although over 80% of applicants to Ontario colleges typically receive offers, only 60% register to attend, regardless of the number of colleges and programs to which they apply (King et al., 2009).

PSE Persistence

Early School Leaving

For many students, early school leaving is “stopping out” rather than “dropping out.” An analysis of YITS data shows that one-third of students who left early in their studies returned within two years, and almost half returned within four years (Shaienks et al., 2008). Reasons for discontinuing postsecondary study are quite different from barriers to participating in PSE. Students are likely to have difficulties persisting in PSE when they do not feel integrated – either academically or socially – into school and campus life, and perceive a “lack of fit” between their course of study and/or institution and their long-term career goals (Barr-Telford et al., 2003). Postsecondary leavers are much less positive than their peers about their first year of postsecondary studies, and generally much less satisfied with their academic “fit” (Bowlby & McMullen, 2002). Indeed one in three dropouts cited “lack of program fit” as the major reason for discontinuing PSE, compared to only one in 10 youth who identified “lack of money” as a barrier to continuing their studies (Lambert et al., 2004).

The likelihood of students discontinuing their postsecondary education is influenced by a range of socio-economic factors as well as their perceptions of their first-year experience. Males, older students, and students with family responsibilities – particularly if they are single parents – tend to have poorer persistence in PSE (Lambert et al., 2004). Students from rural communities, and students whose parents do not value PSE, are also more likely to leave their program of study. By contrast, students who were engaged with their postsecondary program and spent more time on their studies were less likely to drop out (Lambert et al., 2004). Grades are strong predictors of PSE persistence as well as participation. Students with lower levels of academic achievement when they enter PSE are less likely to graduate and more likely to drop out (Shaienks et al., 2008).

There are significant labour market implications to early school leaving. Hango and deBroucker (2007) found that PSE leavers were the most likely to be unemployed, to report low earnings, and to be less satisfied with their jobs.

PSE Completion

Females are more likely than males to pursue PSE and are over-represented among youth who go directly into postsecondary education from secondary school (Hango & deBroucker, 2007). In 2005, they made up the majority of graduates at the college, bachelor and master's degree levels (Bayard & Greenlee, 2009).

PSE completion appears to have a "credentializing" effect on employment earnings, with significantly higher earnings reported by PSE graduates (Hango & de Broucker, 2007). This finding did not hold true, however, for graduates who had delayed their entry into PSE, suggesting that taking time off school does not translate into greater earnings following postsecondary completion.

Under-Represented Students

Aboriginal

Aboriginal peoples have much lower PSE participation rates than non-Aboriginal Canadians, and are more likely to attend college than university (ACCC, 2008). Research undertaken for the Canada Millenium Research Foundation identified a range of barriers to PSE for Aboriginal peoples, including inadequate financial resources, poor academic preparation, lack of self-confidence and motivation, lack of institutional understanding of Aboriginal culture, experiences of racism and exclusion, and an absence of role models with PSE experience (Malatest, 2004). First Nations youth who did not plan to go on to college or university reported that financial constraints were the most significant factor in their decision not to attend PSE, and those who did plan to attend indicated that finances might prevent them from going (CMSF, 2005). Distance is also a significant barrier for Aboriginal students, who are often forced to relocate from their home communities in order to attend postsecondary education – increasing their costs and removing them from a supportive social and family network. With low levels of educational attainment in Aboriginal communities, students who go on to PSE are often first-generation. They tend to be older, married, and to have children, and are much more likely than

non-Aboriginal students to have delayed their entry into PSE after secondary school (Holmes, 2005).

Disability

While there is little research available on the PSE participation of students with disabilities, a recent study from the Canadian Council on Learning (2009) identifies three main barriers faced by learners with disabilities: the physical accessibility of PSE campuses and public transportation; financial issues related to the costs of tuition and assistive devices, and the administrative challenges of navigating student financial aid; and attitudinal barriers that limit the provision of disability-related accommodations and resources for learners with special needs. Other educational barriers include long school interruptions due to disability, and the need to relocate in order to attend school because of the disability (HRSDC, 2009). Although YITS research indicates that students with limiting physical or mental conditions do not have an increased incidence of postsecondary leaving (Hango & de Broucker, 2007), the 2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) found that 16% of youth with disabilities discontinued their education because of their condition, an increase from 12% in 2001 (HRSDC, 2009). Students with disabilities typically prefer college over university, and are more likely to be male. They are generally older than other applicants, and more likely to be married with family responsibilities (ACCC, 2008; Holmes, 2005).

First-Generation PSE

First-generation PSE students are much more likely to apply to college than university (Shaienks et al., 2008). Hango and de Broucker (2007) found that students whose parents have low education are over-represented among secondary school drop outs, and are much less likely to complete university. While Shaienks et al. (2008) also found that students who are the first generation in their family to attend PSE were more likely than other students to drop out of college, they were not more likely to drop out of university.

Delayed Entry

In 2005, almost half of all PSE graduates – an increase from 2000 – did not enter their program directly from secondary school, with higher proportions of college graduates, compared to university graduates, delaying their entry from secondary school to PSE (Bayard & Greenlee, 2009). This is consistent with findings from the Youth in Transition Survey, which showed that only 60% of secondary school graduates had begun PSE by the age of 18 to 20 but 80% had postsecondary experience by the age of 24 to 26 (Shaienks & Gluszynski, 2007). Males and Aboriginal students are more likely to delay entry into postsecondary education than females and non-Aboriginal students (Hango & de Broucker, 2007). In their study of applicants to Ontario colleges, King et al. (2009) found that delayed entry applicants make up about one-third of all college applicants, and are motivated to enter PSE by limited employment opportunities; lack of career opportunities without PSE; clarified career goals; reduced concerns about financial issues; and positive peer role models. Delayed entry applicants are quite unlikely to apply to university.

Chapter 2. Applicant Profiles

This chapter summarizes the characteristics of Ontario applicants from the four under-represented groups studied in this report – Aboriginal, disability, first-generation PSE, and delayed entry – at the time of their application to postsecondary education between 2005 and 2009. The analysis considers selected demographic and academic characteristics and school choice factors, including the influence of personal recommendations and campus visits on school selection, applicant motivations for applying to PSE, the decision-making process of applicants, their program choices, and planned PSE goals.

Key differences between these applicants and Ontario college and university applicants overall are highlighted, using data gathered from five years of surveying applicants to Ontario universities (between 2005 and 2009) and three years of surveying applicants to Ontario colleges (between 2007 and 2009), through the University & College Applicant Study™ (UCAS™). While some longitudinal observations are offered for college applicants from 2007 to 2009, the dataset did not allow for longitudinal comparisons of the university applicant data. (See Appendix B for a full description of the methodology.)

Demographic Characteristics

Gender

Between 2007 and 2009, the majority of applicants to postsecondary education, especially those applying to university, were female. Similar to PSE applicants overall, females made up the majority of Aboriginal and first-generation PSE applicants to college and university, as well as applicants with disabilities. Delayed entry applicants to PSE were much more likely than PSE applicants overall to be male, particularly those applying to college, where they represented close to half of all delayed entry college applicants.

Age

About one-third of Ontario college applicants were less than 19 years of age, and close to one in five was 25 or older. University applicants were much younger, with at least three-quarters of university applicants less than 19 years of age. Fewer than 5% of university applicants were 25 or older.

Compared to college applicants overall, there were larger proportions of applicants from all four under-represented groups in the 25+ age cohort, and fewer applicants with disabilities in the youngest age cohort. In 2009, there was a marked increase in the proportion of delayed entry college applicants aged 25 or older, compared to 2007 and 2008. University applicants from all four under-represented groups were more likely to be 25 or older, and less likely to be under 19 years of age, than university applicants overall.

Community Size

About one-quarter of college applicants, but far fewer university applicants (about one in seven), were from communities with populations less than 10,000.

Aboriginal applicants to both college and university were much more likely to be from small communities than PSE applicants overall. In 2009, fully half of all Aboriginal college applicants, and two out of five Aboriginal university applicants, were from small communities of 10,000 people or less. Delayed entry applicants to both college and university were somewhat less likely to be from small communities.

Plans to Commute

University applicants are more likely to move away to attend PSE than college applicants. About three-quarters of university applicants planned to move away from home to attend school, compared to more than half of all college applicants who planned to commute to school. Unlike college applicants generally, the majority of Aboriginal college applicants planned to move away from home to attend college. Delayed entry applicants to both college and university, as well as first-generation PSE university applicants, were more likely than applicants overall to plan to commute to school.

Income

More than half of all college applicants, and over one-third of university applicants, were from families with incomes less than $60,000. Aboriginal, first-generation PSE, and delayed entry applicants to both college and university were more likely to be from low and moderate-income households than PSE applicants overall.

Employment Status

About one-quarter of college applicants, but only one in 10 university applicants, were working full-time when they applied to PSE.

College applicants with disabilities were less likely than their peers to be employed full-time when they applied to college. At both the college and university levels, delayed entry applicants were much more likely to be employed full-time than applicants overall.

Disability

About 7% of college applicants, but only 3% of university applicants, identified as having a disability when they applied to PSE. There was a higher incidence of disability among both Aboriginal and delayed entry applicants to PSE than applicants overall.

Language

At the time of their application to PSE, about 3% of college applicants, and 1% of university applicants, reported French as their first language. Compared to all college applicants, French first language applicants to college were less likely to be delayed entry or first-generation PSE, and were also less likely to report a disability.

Academic Characteristics

First generation PSE

In 2009, 44% of college applicants reported that their parents had not completed PSE, an increase from just more than one-third in 2007 and 2008. Less than one-quarter of university applicants were first-generation PSE. Both Aboriginal and delayed entry applicants were more likely to be first-generation PSE than college and university applicants overall.

Grade Averages

In 2009, fewer than one-quarter of college applicants applied with grade averages below 75%, a decrease from 2007 and 2008. The proportion of higher-achieving college applicants (grades of 90% or higher) increased from 3% in 2007 to 6% in 2009. Among university applicants, about one-quarter reported grades of at least 90%, and less than one in 10 had grades below 75%. Compared to PSE applicants overall, academic achievement levels were lower for applicants from under-represented groups. Aboriginal and delayed entry applicants to college, as well as college applicants with disabilities, were more likely than applicants overall to report grades below 75%. At the university level, applicants from all four under-represented groups were more likely to report grades below 75% and much less likely to report grades of 90% or higher, than university applicants overall.

Entry Status

Close to half of all college applicants (45%) applied to college directly from secondary school, and one-quarter transferred from another PSE institution. The remaining college applicants were generally divided between those who were delaying their entry to college after secondary school, or were applying with previous PSE experience. About nine out of 10 university applicants applied directly from secondary school. Just more than 5% were transferring from another PSE institution, and less than 5% delayed their entry to PSE. Very few applied with previous PSE experience.

Aboriginal applicants and applicants with disabilities were less likely than college applicants overall to be applying directly from secondary school, and more likely to have delayed their entry into PSE or to be transferring from another PSE institution. Aboriginal university applicants and those with disabilities were also less likely to be direct entry, but more likely to be transferring from another PSE or to have previous PSE experience. Similar but less pronounced trends were evident among first-generation PSE applicants.

Marketing Efforts

Use of Personal Recommendations & Campus Visits

The two most popular sources of information for college applicants overall were word of mouth from friends, used by more than half of all applicants, and recommendations from parents or family members, used by about two out of five applicants. More than one-third of college applicants relied on advice from guidance counsellors and more than one-quarter sought information from secondary school teachers. About two out of five college applicants made informal visits to college campuses or attended an open house, and one-third took formal tours of college campuses. There was a notable increase in the proportion of college applicants who visited college campuses between 2008 and 2009.

While more than two-thirds of university applicants sought advice from friends, almost as many looked to parents and family members for information about PSE. At least half of all university applicants obtained PSE information from secondary school teachers or guidance counsellors. For the one-half of university applicants who visited university campuses, visits were equally likely to be formal tours or events as to be informal trips.

In 2009, Aboriginal college applicants were somewhat more likely than college applicants overall to make informal visits to campuses, but were less likely to attend college open houses. First-generation college applicants tended to depend less on advice from parents and family members than college applicants overall, and more on guidance counsellor recommendations. Aboriginal college applicants were also more likely to ask for information from guidance counsellors. As would be expected, delayed entry applicants were less likely than college applicants overall to seek PSE advice from secondary school staff. They were also less likely to participate in campus tours and open houses.

Aboriginal, first-generation and delayed entry university applicants were all less likely to seek PSE advice from parents and family, and were less likely to visit university campuses. First-generation, delayed entry, and university applicants with disabilities were all more likely than university applicants overall to turn to guidance counsellors for advice, while secondary school teachers were a frequent information source for first-generation university applicants. Applicants with disabilities were more likely to visit college and university campuses for PSE information compared to PSE applicants overall.

Influence of Personal Recommendations & Campus Visits

Applicants rated the influence of personal recommendations and campus visits on a five-point influence scale from “not at all” to “very much.” Both college and university applicants rated campus open houses and formal tours much higher in mean influence (between 4.0 and 4.2) than personal recommendations from friends and family, teachers or guidance counsellors (between 3.5 and 3.9). There was a noteworthy increase in the influence of formal campus tours and college open houses on college applicants from 2008 to 2009.

College applicants with disabilities tended to be more influenced by secondary school teacher recommendations than college applicants overall. At the same time, formal campus tours had less influence on the decisions of delayed entry college applicants than college applicants overall.

University applicants with disabilities ascribed slightly higher influence to their campus visits than university applicants overall. First-generation and delayed entry university applicants were slightly more influenced by recommendations from friends, as well as secondary school staff. Formal tours of the university campus were rated lower in influence by delayed entry applicants.

Financial Issues

Impact on Selection of First-Choice School

The impact of financial factors on selection of first-choice school were rated using a seven-point scale from -3 to +3, where -3 was strongly negative impact and +3 was strongly positive impact. In 2009, proximity to home was the financial factor with the greatest impact on college applicants' selection of their first-choice school (+1.2). The availability of entrance bursaries, tuition costs, and other costs of attending school were rated as having similar, but less, influence on college choice (+0.9).

Among university applicants, the availability of merit-based scholarships (+0.9) and entrance bursaries (+0.8) were the most influential financial factors, with the costs of attending university and tuition costs considered much less influential (+0.5 and +0.4 respectively).

Aboriginal applicants to both college and university ascribed less impact to proximity to home as a factor in their selection of their first-choice school. Although Aboriginal applicants were generally less influenced by financial considerations than PSE applicants overall, those applying to university were more influenced by other costs associated with attending school. Proximity to home had somewhat greater impact on delayed entry applicants in their college selection than college applicants overall.

Among university applicants, those with disabilities ascribed lower impact to scholarship guarantees and the availability of merit-based scholarships than applicants overall. Most financial considerations had greater impact on first-generation applicants than PSE applicants overall, especially those applying to university. Delayed entry university applicants rated both proximity to home and the availability of entrance bursaries higher in impact than university applicants overall.

Funding Concerns

Concerns about funding were rated on a five-point scale from "not at all concerned" to "very concerned." In 2009, college applicants were most concerned about having sufficient funding (mean concern score of 3.3), followed by amount of debt and availability of bursaries and loans (mean concern scores of 3.2). University applicants expressed similar levels of concern about having sufficient funding, amount of debt incurred, and the availability of bursaries and student

loans (mean concern scores of 3.1). Both college and university applicants were somewhat less concerned about their ability to repay debt within a reasonable timeframe (mean concern score of 3.0).

Aboriginal applicants and college applicants with disabilities were less concerned about financing their college education than applicants overall. Although college applicants expressed greater levels of concern about PSE financing in 2009 than in 2008, levels of concern among Aboriginal college applicants decreased over these two years, while concerns among college applicants with disabilities remained stable. University applicants with disabilities were also less concerned about financing their university education than applicants overall.

By contrast, first-generation applicants expressed slightly higher levels of concern about PSE financing issues than PSE applicants overall, particularly if they were applying to university. Concerns were also consistently greater among delayed entry university applicants.

Sources of PSE Funding

Applicants were asked to describe sources of PSE funding as major contributors (50% or more), minor contributors (less than 50%), or not contributing to their PSE. In 2009, more than half of all college applicants identified provincial student aid as a major source of PSE funding (52%), followed by government student loans (40%), personal savings (35%), contributions from parents or family (30%), other sources such as scholarships or bursaries (18%), and private loans (8%). University applicants relied almost as much on parental contributions as provincial student aid, with both sources identified as major sources of funding by a majority of university applicants. One-third of university applicants accessed government student loans, and about one out of five used personal savings. About 14% relied on scholarships or bursaries, and less than one in 10 accessed private loans.

Between 2008 and 2009, there was a marked change in the reported sources of PSE funding for Aboriginal college applicants, with less reliance on personal savings, parental contributions, government student loans, and provincial student aid, and much greater reliance on other funding sources such as scholarships and bursaries. There was also a notable increase in the proportion of college applicants with disabilities who accessed other funding sources. Compared to college applicants overall, Aboriginal applicants to college were less likely to draw upon personal savings or family contributions to fund their education. They were also less likely to apply for provincial student aid or government loans, and made more use of private loans. Along with college applicants with disabilities and first-generation college applicants, Aboriginal applicants were more reliant than their peers on other funding sources, such as scholarships and bursaries.

Aboriginal university applicants made greater use of other sources and private loans, and tended to rely more on government loans, than university applicants overall. University applicants with disabilities made greater use of personal savings and other sources. First-generation and delayed entry applicants to both college and university were more likely to access government student loans and provincial student aid, and less likely to draw upon family contributions.

Intended Credential & Program Preferences

Highest Intended Credential

About two out of five college applicants applied to PSE in order to obtain a two-year college diploma, and one-quarter were seeking three-year advanced diplomas. More than one in 10 intended to pursue a Bachelor's degree. University applicants were typically interested in degrees beyond a Bachelor's, with about one-third planning to pursue graduate studies at the Master's or doctoral levels, and another one-third interested in professional certification in medicine, business, law or teaching.

Between 2007 and 2009, there was a steady decline in the proportion of Aboriginal college applicants seeking two-year diplomas, and in 2009, Aboriginal college applicants were almost as likely to seek a three-year advanced college diploma as a two-year credential. First-generation and delayed entry applicants were somewhat more likely to seek a two-year college diploma than college applicants overall.

Aboriginal and first-generation university applicants were more likely to seek Bachelor's degrees than university applicants overall, while university applicants with disabilities had greater interest in Master's and doctoral degrees. With the exception of teaching degrees, however, university applicants with disabilities were less likely to seek professional certification. First-generation university applicants were also more interested in teacher's college, but less interested in Master's programs and medical school.

First-Choice Programs

Health Sciences, followed by Social & Community Services, and Business, were the most popular program choices for college applicants overall. The most popular program choices among university applicants were Business, Social Sciences, Health Sciences, Engineering, Sciences, and Arts & Humanities.

Aboriginal college applicants were almost as likely to identify Social & Community Services as Health Sciences as their programs of choice. Between 2008 and 2009, Social & Community Services and Business programs increased in popularity among Aboriginal college applicants. Compared to college applicants overall, Health Sciences attracted fewer applicants with disabilities and delayed entry applicants, while Social & Community Services attracted more. Between 2008 and 2009, interest in programs in Social & Community Services grew among college applicants with disabilities. Programs in Health Sciences and Social & Community Services drew slightly larger proportions of first-generation college applicants than applicants overall.

Aboriginal university applicants appeared to be less interested than their peers in Business and Engineering programs, but more interested in Health Sciences. University applicants with disabilities were less likely to enter Health Sciences, Business, and Engineering programs, but much more likely to enter the Social Sciences. First-generation university applicants were more

likely to enter the Social Sciences than university applicants overall, but less likely to enter Engineering programs. Delayed entry applicants to university were slightly more likely to apply to Business and Engineering programs than university applicants overall, but somewhat less likely to apply to Arts.

School Choice Factors

Reasons for Applying

For all postsecondary applicants, career preparation was by far the most important reason for applying to college or university, selected by more than four out of five applicants. The next most important reasons, for more than half of all college applicants, were increasing knowledge, personal growth, securing a better job, exploring options for the future, and increasing earning potential. Almost half of all applicants applied to college in order to meet new people or enhance confidence, and about one-third applied to develop leadership skills or prepare for graduate study.

After career preparation, increasing knowledge and personal growth was important to three-quarters of university applicants, and two-thirds wanted to explore future options or meet new people. More than half applied to prepare for graduate study or increase their earning potential, and slightly fewer were interested in experiencing student life or developing leadership skills. About two out five applied to university because they were encouraged by others, to enhance confidence, or to get a better job.

Aboriginal college applicants were less likely than college applicants overall to apply to PSE for career preparation, but were more likely to apply in order to develop leadership skills, enhance confidence and improve their social status. They were also more influenced by encouragement from others and to prepare for graduate study. At the university level, Aboriginal applicants appeared highly motivated by career preparation, but were generally less motivated by most other reasons than university applicants overall.

Career preparation, obtaining better employment, and increasing earning potential were slightly less important for both college and university applicants with disabilities. Compared to PSE applicants overall, enhancing confidence was more important to college applicants with disabilities, while university applicants with disabilities were more motivated by personal development.

For first-generation college applicants, getting a better job and giving back to society were somewhat stronger motivators. These applicants were slightly less likely to apply to college because of encouragement from others. First-generation university applicants also tended to be more motivated by careerist reasons (increasing earning potential, getting a better job, and career advancement) as well as enhancing self-confidence and improving social status. They were less likely to apply to university to prepare for graduate study or achieve personal growth. Delayed entry college applicants viewed the prospect of getting a better job as a particularly powerful incentive. Delayed entry applicants to university were also more motivated by getting a better job and improving social status. They were less likely to cite giving back to society,

exploring future options, experiencing student life, meeting new people, developing leadership skills, and encouragement from others as reasons for their university application.

Decision-Making Process

For all PSE applicants, program reputation was the key factor in their decision process, with more than half of all applicants to college and university consistently selecting PSE institutions with strong program reputations. While still considering program reputation first, institutional reputation was much more important to university applicants than to college applicants. While college applicants were as likely to consider proximity to home as institutional reputation, proximity was a much lower concern for students applying to university.

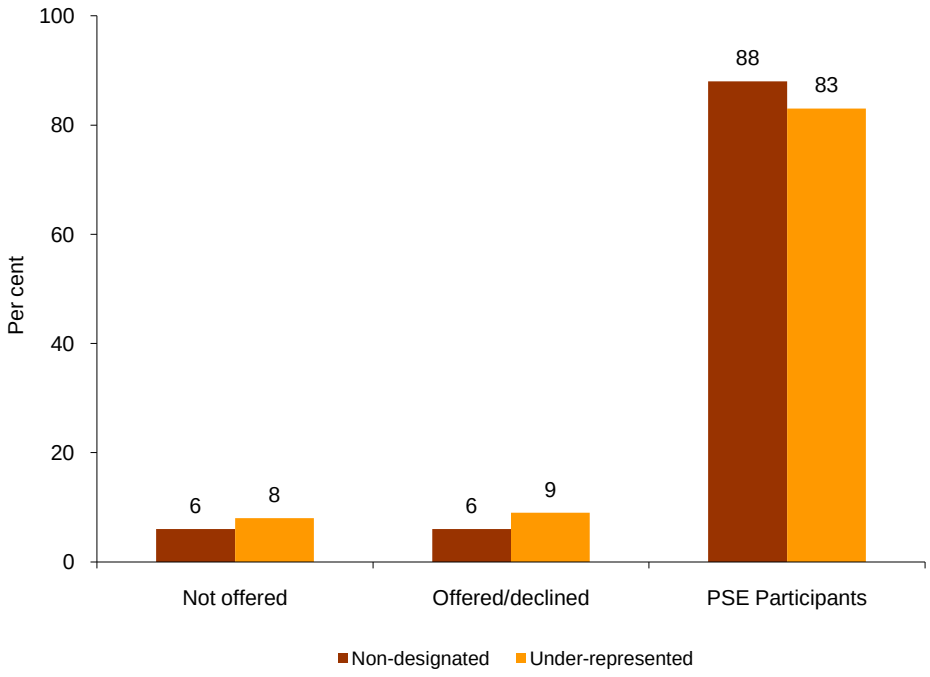
Aboriginal, first-generation PSE, and delayed entry college applicants were somewhat less likely than applicants overall to choose colleges on the basis of program reputation. Aboriginal college applicants were more likely to report that factors other than program and institutional reputation, admissions, and finances influenced their college selection process. Delayed entry and first-generation college applicants were more likely to select schools close to home for financial reasons than applicants overall.

University applicants with disabilities were somewhat less influenced by institutional reputation than university applicants overall, and more likely to make their decision based on other factors. While program reputation was slightly less important to delayed entry and first-generation university applicants, these applicants were somewhat more influenced by proximity to home for financial reasons.

Chapter 3. Participation in PSE

This chapter considers the differences between applicants who went on to college or university following their initial application to PSE, and those who declined offers of admission or were not offered admission at all. Within each under-represented group, issues related to participation, declining admission and not receiving an offer are explored through comparison to applicants who were not part of the group. Unless otherwise indicated, "PSE participants" includes respondents from the "still attending," "attended/complete," and "attended/left" pathways. Applicants from the four under-represented groups were more likely than other applicants to have declined offers of admission to PSE, and were also more likely not to have been offered admission at all (Figure 3.1). Their overall rate of PSE participation (83%) was lower than the participation rate of other applicants (88%).

Figure 3.1 – PSE Participation



As shown in Table 3.1, applicants from the four under-represented groups were significantly less likely to participate in postsecondary education than applicants who were not designated as belonging to one of these groups. They were also more likely to decline offers of admission, and not to receive offers of admission. Within the under-represented groups, Aboriginal and first-generation PSE applicants were equally likely to receive offers of admission as their non-Aboriginal and non first-generation peers, but were more likely to decline. Aboriginal applicants had the highest rate of declining among the four under-represented groups, and were twice as likely as non-Aboriginal applicants to decide not to attend PSE after receiving an offer. Delayed

entry applicants were more likely than other applicants not to receive offers, and also to decline offers. Rates of PSE participation were slightly higher among first-generation PSE applicants (83%) than among Aboriginal (77%) or delayed entry applicants (76%), but applicants from all three of these groups were less likely to attend PSE than applicants who were not in these groups.

There were no significant effects associated with either disability or language on the likelihood of not receiving offers of admission, declining offers of admission, or participating in PSE.

*Table 3.1- PSE Participation, All Applicants**

	Not offered	Offered/ declined	PSE Participants
Overall	**7%**	**8%**	**85%**
Applicant group*			
Under-represented	***8%***	***9%***	***83%***
Non-designated	***6%***	***6%***	***88%***
Aboriginal identity*			
Aboriginal	***7%***	***16%***	***77%***
Non-Aboriginal	***7%***	***8%***	***86%***
Disability status			
Disability	6%	6%	88%
No disability	7%	8%	86%
Parental education*			
First-generation PSE	***7%***	***10%***	***83%***
Not first-generation PSE	***7%***	***7%***	***86%***
Entry type*			
Delayed entry	***13%***	***11%***	***76%***
Not delayed entry	***6%***	***8%***	***86%***
First language			
English	7%	8%	85%
French	8%	12%	80%

Demographic Characteristics

Analysis of demographic characteristics reveals that PSE outcomes did not vary by applicant gender and region.[9] Regardless of PSE pathway, two-thirds of all respondents were female and only one-third were male (*Figure 3.2*). The majority were from Central Ontario – either Metro (18%), the GTA outside Metro (17%) or the rest of the Central region (20%) (*Figure 3.3*). One in five was from Southwestern Ontario (21%), slightly fewer were from Eastern Ontario (17%), and 7% were from Northern Ontario.

[9] With the exception of racial/cultural background and marital status, demographic characteristics were gathered from the UCAS™ database.

Table 3.2 shows, however, that there were significant differences by age, income, marital status, dependent children, and cultural/racial background in the likelihood of applicants receiving offers of admission, declining offers of admission, and attending PSE.

Figure 3.2 – Gender, All Applicants

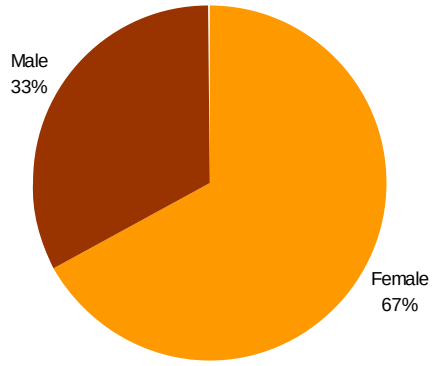


Figure 3.3 Region, All Applicants

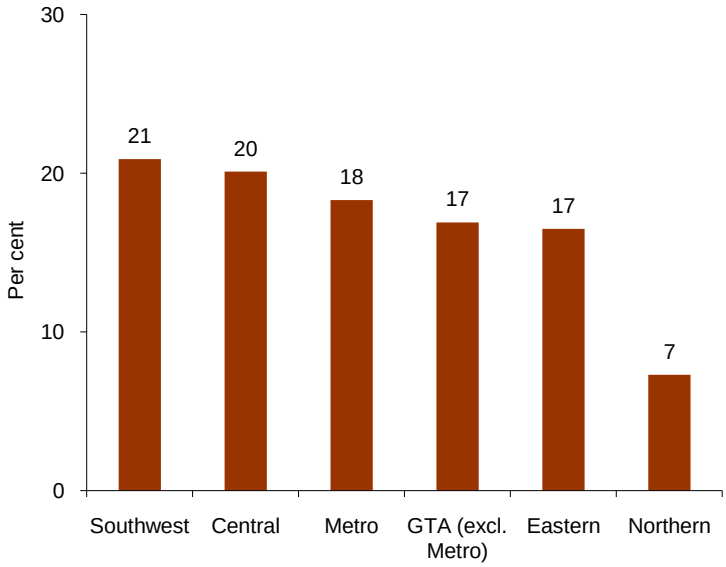


*Table 3.2 – PSE Pathway by Demographic Characteristics**

	Not offered	Offered/ declined	PSE Participants
Overall	**7%**	**8%**	**85%**
Age*			
< 18 years	***4%***	***8%***	***88%***
18 years	***5%***	***6%***	***89%***
19 years	***7%***	***6%***	***87%***
20-24 years	***10%***	***9%***	***81%***
25+ years	***12%***	***15%***	***73%***
Marital status*			
Married/common-law	***16%***	***12%***	***72%***
Divorced/separated	***11%***	***20%***	***69%***
Single	***6%***	***7%***	***87%***
Household income*			
< $30,000	***10%***	***10%***	***80%***
$30,000 - $59,999	***7%***	***10%***	***83%***
$60,000 - $89,999	***8%***	***7%***	***85%***

	Not offered	Offered/ declined	PSE Participants
Overall	**7%**	**8%**	**85%**
$90,000 +	***4%***	***7%***	***89%***
Cultural/racial background			
Caucasian	**6%**	**7%**	**86%**
Black*	***10%***	***11%***	***78%***
Chinese	**7%**	**6%**	**87%**
South Asian	**7%**	**7%**	**86%**

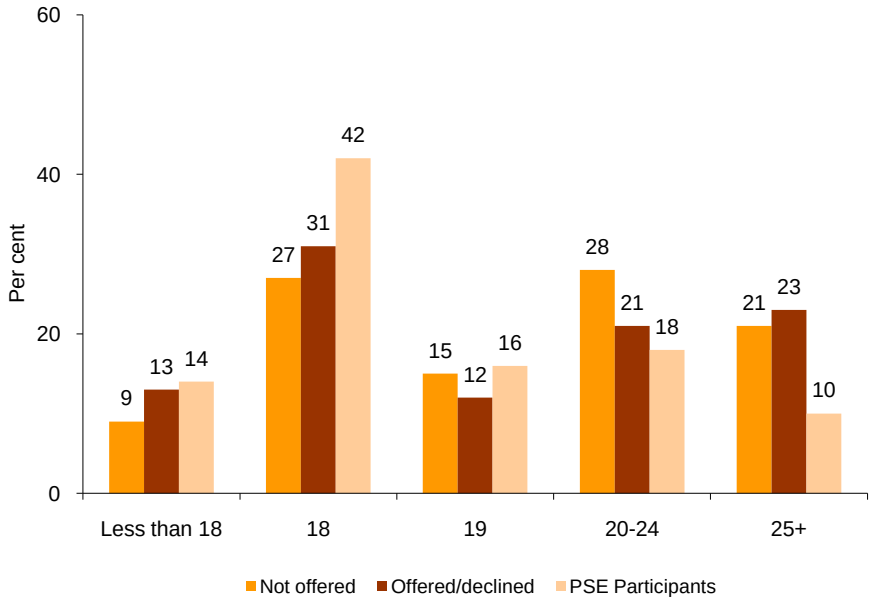
After age 19, PSE participation decreased directly with age: applicants aged 20 to 24 were less likely to participate than younger applicants, and those aged 25 or older had the lowest rate of participation. Conversely, PSE participation increased directly with income, with the lowest-income applicants the least likely to attend PSE and the highest-income applicants the most likely. Age and income had similar effects among applicants who were not offered admission to PSE, with older and low-income applicants over-represented in the "not offered" pathway.

The relationship between age and income and the likelihood of declining offers of admission is somewhat more complex. The likelihood of declining also increased with age, with the highest rate of declining among applicants aged 25 or older, but the trend appeared to begin later, around age 20. There was also a higher incidence of decline among lower-income applicants, with a clear demarcation between incomes less than $60,000 and incomes of $60,000 or more.

Generally, applicants who did not attend PSE were evenly distributed between those who did not receive an offer, and those who were offered admission but decided not to attend. Certain groups, however, were more likely to decline offers of admission than not to receive offers. These included the youngest (less than 18) and oldest applicants (25 or older); divorced or separated applicants; and those with modest incomes (between $30,000 and $60,000) or higher incomes ($90,000 or more). Married applicants were the only group with a higher incidence of not receiving offers of admission than declining.

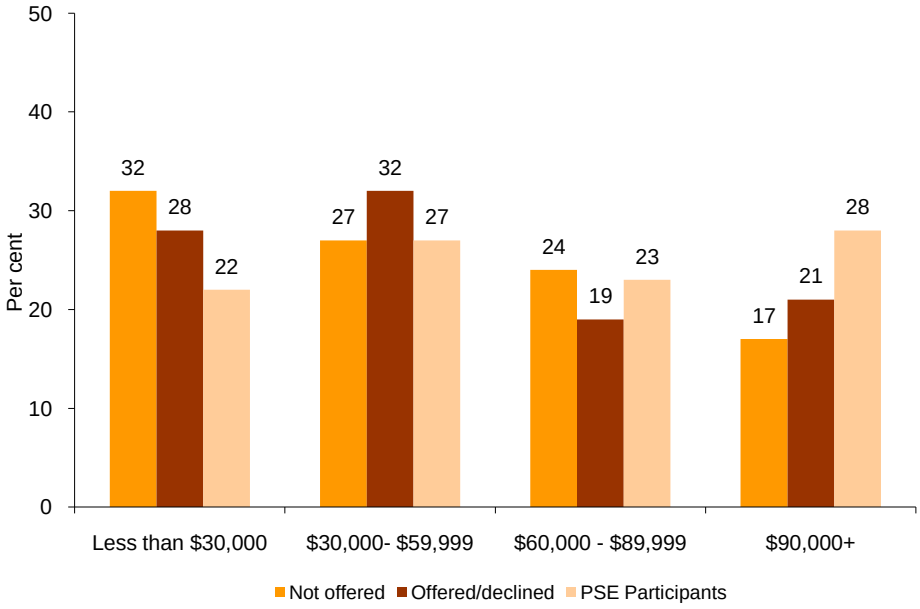
Figures 3.4 to 3.9 explore selected demographic characteristics by PSE pathway. Applicants who were not offered admission were typically older than applicants who went on to attend PSE. Half of the applicants in the "not offered" pathway (49%) were 20 years of age or older, compared to three-quarters of PSE participants (72%) who were 19 years of age or younger (Figure 3.4) Applicants who declined offers of admission were as likely to be 18 or younger (44%), as to be 20 or older (44%).

Figure 3.4 – Age by PSE Pathway



While the majority of PSE participants reported incomes of $60,000 or more, about 60% of applicants in both the “not offered” and “offered/declined” pathways reported incomes *less* than $60,000. Incomes were lowest among applicants who were not offered admission, with fully one-third reporting incomes less than $30,000 (*Figure 3.5*).

Figure 3.5 – Income by PSE Pathway



Not surprisingly given their older age distribution, applicants in the "not offered" pathway were also the most likely to be married (20%) at the time of their application to PSE, and to have dependent children (17%). Respondents who declined offers of admission were also more likely to be married (13%) and were more than twice as likely to have child dependents (13%) as those who went on to attend PSE (6%).

Figure 3.6 – Marital Status by PSE Pathway

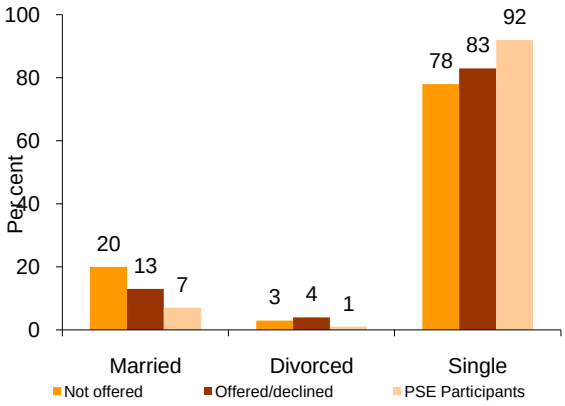
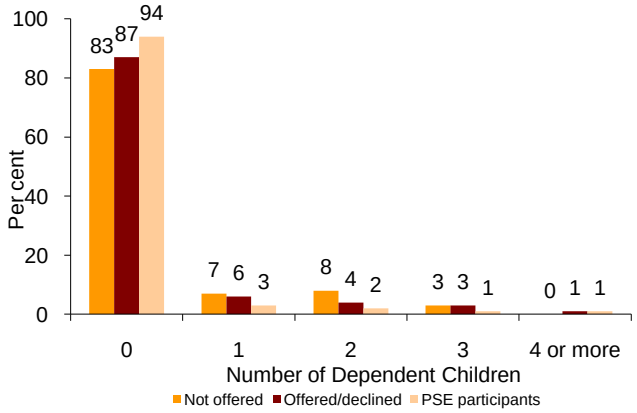
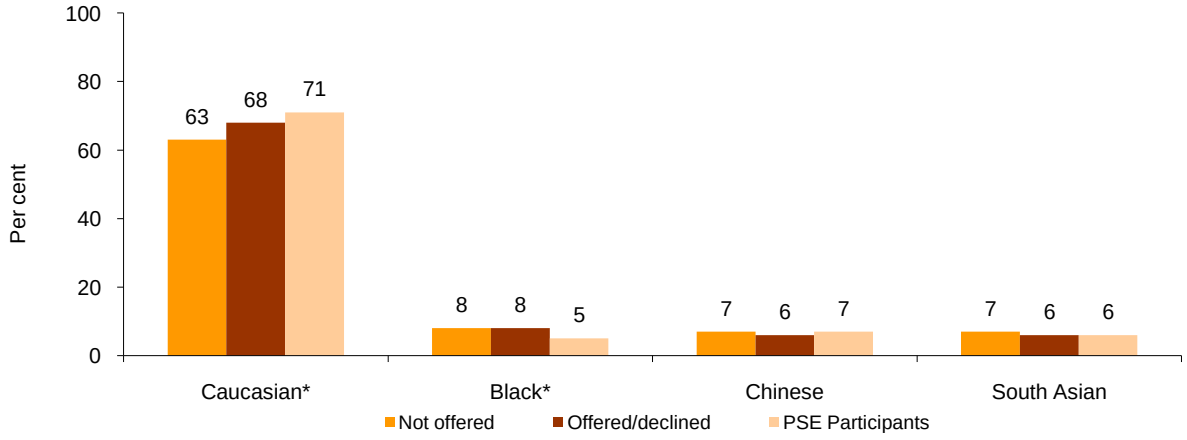


Figure 3.7 – Dependent Children by PSE Pathway



All three groups included a majority of applicants who described their ethnic or racial background as Caucasian, and similar proportions of Chinese and South Asian applicants. There were, however, significantly fewer Caucasians – and significantly more Black applicants[10] – in the "not offered" and "offered/declined" pathways than among PSE participants (*Figure 3.8*).

Figure 3.8 – Cultural/Racial Background by PSE Pathway



[10] Black applicants are those who described their cultural or racial background as: "Black (for example, African, Haitian, Jamaican, Somali, etc.)."

Academic Characteristics

Several academic characteristics also had significant effects on applicants' PSE outcomes, with rising grade averages directly correlated to increased rates of PSE participation (*Table 3.3*).[11] Participation rates were highest among applicants with high grade averages, applying as full-time students or to programs in the Natural Sciences or Math, applying directly from secondary school, and planning to live in on-campus residence. Participation was lower among applicants with lower grade averages, those applying as part-time students, and to programs in the Skilled Trades/Apprenticeship and Hospitality.

As with demographic characteristics, some academic characteristics were associated with higher incidence of declining offers of admission, while others were associated with higher incidence of not receiving offers. Respondents with grade averages less than 75% were more likely not to have received offers of admission than to decline. Applicants interested in part-time study and those applying to Education programs were also more likely not to receive offers than to decline. Conversely, applicants to programs in Communication, Health Sciences, Law & Security, Skilled Trades/Apprenticeship, and Hospitality were more likely to decline admission than not to receive offers.

*Table 3.3 – PSE Participation by Academic Characteristics**

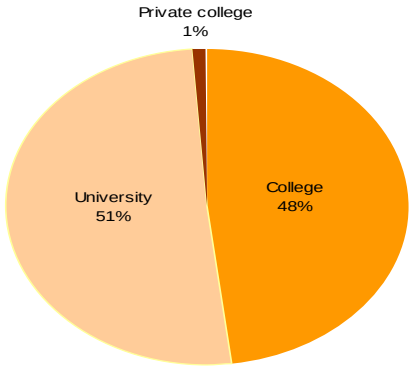
	Not offered	Offered/ declined	PSE Participants
Overall	**7%**	**8%**	**85%**
Secondary school grade average*			
<75%	***13%***	***9%***	***78%***
75 – 79%	***7%***	***8%***	***85%***
80 – 84%	***4%***	***8%***	***88%***
85 – 89%	***4%***	***6%***	***91%***
90% +	***4%***	***2%***	***95%***
Planned course load*			
Full-time	***6%***	***8%***	***86%***
Part-time	***31%***	***6%***	***63%***
Specific career goal			
Yes	7%	8%	85%
No	7%	7%	87%
Planned living arrangements*			
Commuter	***9%***	***9%***	***82%***
Off-campus housing	***8%***	***12%***	***81%***
On-campus residence	***4%***	***7%***	***89%***
First-choice subject area*			
Natural Sciences/Math	***5%***	***3%***	***92%***
Humanities	***6%***	***6%***	***89%***
Engineering	***6%***	***6%***	***88%***

[11] Data on grade averages and planned living arrangements were gathered from the UCAS™ database.

	Not offered	Offered/ declined	PSE Participants
Overall	7%	8%	85%
Social Sciences	***5%***	***7%***	***88%***
Environment	***7%***	***6%***	***88%***
Communications	***4%***	***9%***	***87%***
Computer Science	***6%***	***8%***	***87%***
Social/Community	***7%***	***7%***	***86%***
Business/Accounting	***9%***	***7%***	***85%***
Fine/Performing Arts	***9%***	***9%***	***82%***
Health Sciences	***8%***	***11%***	***81%***
Law/Security	***7%***	***13%***	***80%***
Education	***12%***	***8%***	***80%***
Skilled Trades/Apprenticeship	***8%***	***15%***	***76%***
Hospitality	***7%***	***17%***	***76%***
Entry type*			
Direct entry	***5%***	***6%***	***89%***
Delayed entry	***13%***	***11%***	***76%***
PSE experience	***10%***	***11%***	***80%***

Among respondents who received offers of admission (whether they accepted or declined the offer), about half the offers were from universities and just less than half were from Ontario colleges (*Figure 3.9*).[12] Since the sample did not include applicants to private colleges or other types of institutions unless they had *also* applied to an Ontario college or university, there were naturally very few respondents who received offers of admission from other postsecondary institutions.

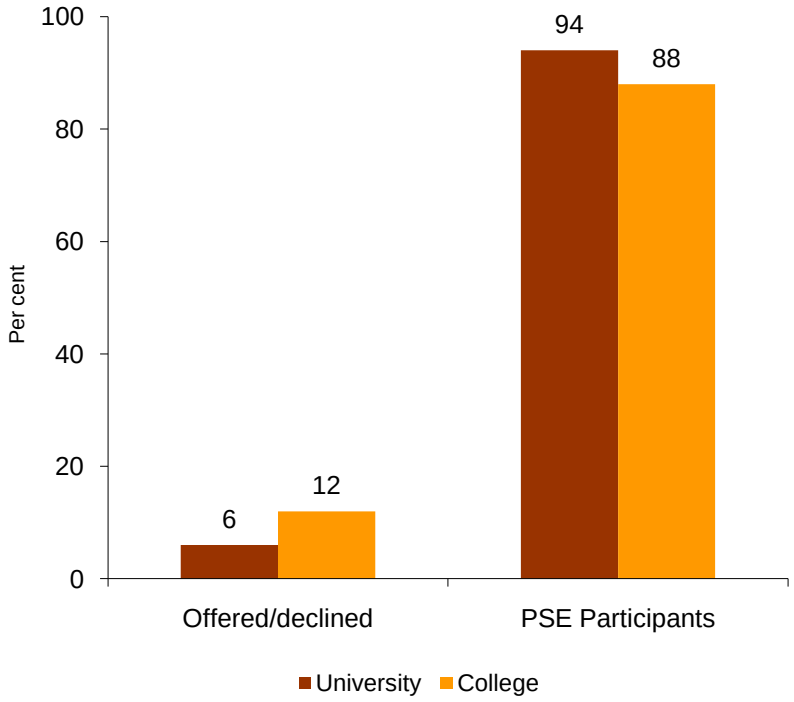
Figure 3.9 – Source of Offers of Admission, Respondents who Received



[12] Respondents who received offers from more than one type of institution were coded as university if at least one of the offers was from a university.

Figure 3.10 compares offer acceptance and decline rates by type of institution. (Note that the distribution of respondents differs from the distribution of all survey respondents, since those who did not receive an offer are excluded from the analysis.) Overall, about nine out of 10 respondents who received offers of admission accepted the offer. University applicants were more likely than college applicants to accept offers of admission (94% vs. 88%), while college applicants were twice as likely to decline (12% vs. 6%).

Figure 3.10 – PSE Participation by Type of Institution, Respondents who Received Offer



University applicants who received offers of admission were more likely to accept if they received at least three offers, and more likely to decline if only one or two offers were received (Table 3.4). Although university applicants' participation in PSE did not appear to be affected by whether the offer was from their first-choice school, acceptance rates were higher for offers to first-choice programs.

In contrast, there were no significant differences within the college applicant sample with regard to the likelihood of accepting and number of offers, first-choice institution, and first-choice program (Table 3.5).

*Table 3.4 – Offers of Admission, University Respondents who Received Offers**

	Offered/ declined	PSE Participants
Number of offers received following initial application*		
1	***12%***	***88%***
2	***11%***	***89%***
3	***4%***	***96%***
4	***3%***	***97%***
5	***2%***	***98%***
6+	***5%***	***95%***
Offered first-choice institution?		
Yes	6%	94%
No	5%	95%
Offered first-choice program?*		
Yes	***5%***	***95%***
No	***10%***	***90%***

Table 3.5 – Offers of Admission, College Respondents who Received Offers

	Offered/ declined	PSE Participants
Number of offers received following initial application		
1	14%	86%
2	11%	89%
3	10%	90%
4	10%	90%
5	7%	93%
6+	12%	88%
Offered first-choice institution?		
Yes	12%	88%
No	12%	88%
Offered first-choice program?		
Yes	11%	89%
No	15%	85%

Reasons for Declining PSE

The PSE Outcomes Study asked respondents who declined offers of admission to indicate the factors that influenced their decision not to attend PSE. Respondents were presented with a list of 20 factors and asked to rate the influence of each on a five-point influence scale from “very little” to “very much.” They could also indicate that the factor had no influence at all, or that it did not apply. Results were used to generate index scores (calculated by multiplying the proportion influenced by mean level of influence), as shown in Table 3.6. Postponing PSE to another year was the single most influential reason to decline. This was followed by financial concerns about higher than expected costs and insufficient financial aid. A change in career

goals and personal issues were next, then job-related issues involving balancing work with school and gaining employment. These were followed by feelings of uncertainty about PSE, and concerns about balancing school with family life.

Table 3.6 – Influence of Reasons for Declining Admission to PSE, "Offered/Declined" Respondents

	Proportion Influenced	Mean Influence	Index Score
Postponed PSE to another year	57%	3.8	2.18
Costs of attending school were higher than I expected	50%	3.4	1.69
Financial aid was insufficient	44%	3.5	1.53
Career goals changed	47%	3.2	1.50
Personal issues	48%	3.0	1.44
Concern about balancing school with job responsibilities	45%	3.0	1.36
Found employment	41%	3.1	1.25
Felt uncertain about PSE	41%	3.0	1.24
Concern about balancing school with family responsibilities	36%	3.1	1.11
Wanted a break from school	36%	2.8	0.99
Program was not my first choice	30%	3.1	0.93
Interested in travel opportunities	30%	3.0	0.90
Campus was too far from home	31%	2.8	0.88
Relocated to another community	24%	3.6	0.87
School was not my first choice	28%	2.9	0.80
Concern about level of academic difficulty	32%	2.4	0.78
Applied for financial aid but did not receive it	24%	3.1	0.74
Campus was not easily accessible by public transit	20%	2.7	0.55
Health-related problems	16%	3.0	0.49
Pregnancy	8%	2.7	0.20

Results for "offered/declined" respondents from the four under-represented groups were rank-ordered and compared to respondents not in the group. The shaded boxes in Table 3.7 indicate the five most influential factors for each group. Results that are bolded, italicized and marked with an asterisk (*) indicate where index scores were significantly *higher* than the index scores for respondents not in the group. Results for Aboriginal respondents who declined admission and applicants with disabilities are presented as counts, since there were too few respondents for meaningful analysis and significance testing.[13] (*See Appendix C for index scores for under-represented, first-generation PSE and delayed entry applicants*.)

Compared to non-designated applicants who declined admission, those from under-represented groups ascribed significantly greater influence to financial issues – including higher than expected costs and insufficient financial aid – and were more influenced by not receiving

[13] While caution must be exercised in interpreting the results, it is noteworthy that half of the applicants with disabilities declined offers of admission because of health-related problems.

financial aid and distance of the campus from home. Balancing school and employment was a much more influential concern for these applicants, while a change in career goals – among the top five reasons for non-designated applicants to decline – was ranked slightly lower.

First-generation and delayed entry applicants were similar to applicants overall in their reasons for declining admission. Both groups, however, were somewhat less influenced by changes in career goals, and more influenced by concerns about balancing school with employment. Compared to other applicants, first-generation applicants ascribed significantly greater levels of influence to the top four factors.

Balancing school and family, unsuccessful application for financial aid, and the availability of public transit were all ranked higher in influence by delayed entry applicants than applicants overall. Pregnancy, which was the least influential factor for most applicants, was ranked significantly higher by applicants who had delayed their entry to PSE.

Table 3.7 – Ranked Reasons for Declining Admission to PSE, "Offered/Declined" Respondents

Overall rank		Under-represented (n=148)	Aboriginal (n=11)	Disability (n=19)	First-generation PSE (n=117)	Delayed entry (n=31)
1	Postponed PSE	1	n=7	n=11	***1****	1
2	Higher costs than expected	***2****	n=6	n=14	***2****	2
3	Insufficient financial aid	***3****	n=7	n=11	***3****	3
4	Career goals changed	6	n=4	n=6	6	7
5	Personal issues	5	n=6	n=11	5	5
6	School-job balance	***4****	n=5	n=11	***4****	***4****
7	Found employment	7	n=3	n=6	7	8
8	Uncertainty about PSE	8	n=5	n=8	8	9
9	School-family balance	9	n=5	n=9	9	6
10	Wanted break from school	14	n=5	n=4	15	13
11	Program not first choice	13	n=1	n=4	10	17
12	Interested in travel	15	n=3	n=4	14	16
13	Campus too far from home	10	n=6	n=8	11	11
14	Relocation	11	n=1	n=8	12	20
15	School not first choice	16	n=2	n=3	16	18
16	Academic concerns	17	n=2	n=6	17	14
17	No financial aid	12	n=3	n=8	13	10
18	Public transit	18	n=2	n=4	18	12
19	Health-related problems	19	n=3	n=9	19	19
20	Pregnancy	20	n=3	n=2	20	***15****

*Where statistically significant differences exist ($p < 0.05$), results are ***bolded*** and ***italicized.***

Later PSE Participation

The PSE Outcomes Study defines respondent pathways by the outcome of the initial application to college or university. Hence respondents who declined an offer when they initially applied to PSE, but went on to attend PSE later, were defined as "offered/declined," even if they were currently attending PSE or had completed a PSE program at the time of their participation in the survey.

To explore participation in later PSE, all respondents (other than those in the "still attending" pathway) were asked if they had attended any other postsecondary institutions since their initial application. As shown in Table 3.8, half of all respondents (excluding those "still attending") went on to another postsecondary institution after their initial application to college or university, with no significant differences between applicants who were not offered admission, those who declined admission, and those who participated in PSE after they applied. More than one-third of respondents in all three groups were in fact attending PSE in 2009, and close to one in 10 had completed a PSE program. Only 3% of respondents started another PSE program but left before completing.

Table 3.8 – Later PSE Participation

	Not offered	Offered/ declined	PSE Participants (Attended/left and Attended/complete)
Attended other PSE since initial application			
Yes, currently attending	39%	38%	34%
Yes, completed PSE	8%	9%	9%
Yes, started PSE but left	3%	2%	3%
No PSE	51%	51%	54%

Respondents who did not participate in PSE following their initial application, and who had not subsequently attended another PSE institution, were asked about their PSE intentions, and whether they planned to attend college or university at some point in the future. As shown in Table 3.9, the majority of "not offered" and "offered/declined" respondents indicated plans to pursue further education at a later date – usually on a full-time basis – with no significant differences between pathways.

Table 3.9 – Plans to Pursue Later PSE

	Not offered	Offered/ declined
No later PSE but planning to pursue PSE in the future		
Yes, full-time	47%	59%
Yes, part-time	19%	11%
No PSE	7%	4%
Don't know	27%	26%

Respondents who planned to attend in the future were further asked about the nature of their PSE plans, and whether they intended to apply to the same institution and the same program.

More than half of the “not offered” and “offered/declined” respondents planned to apply to the same school to which they had initially applied, and close to half planned to apply to the same program (Table 3.10). The majority intended to pursue their PSE study in 2010.

Table 3.10 – Type of Future PSE Plans,
Respondents “Not Offered” and “Offered/Declined” Planning to Pursue PSE

	Not offered and Offered/declined, Planning to pursue PSE
Plan to apply to same school?	
Yes	56%
No	30%
Don’t know	13%
Plan to apply to same program?	
Yes	47%
No	39%
Don’t know	14%
When expect to pursue future studies?	
Less than 6 months	21%
6-12 months	41%
1-2 years	24%
After 2 years	8%
Don’t know	6%

The 59 respondents who did not plan to apply to the same school were asked to identify the type of institution to which they thought they would apply. Although original application data was missing for more than half of these respondents, available data suggests that applicants were as likely to apply to different institutional types – most often changing from college application to university application – as to apply to different schools within the same institutional type.

Table 3.11 – Planned PSE Institution,
Respondents “Not Offered” and “Offered/Declined” Planning to Pursue PSE

	Not offered and Offered/declined, Not planning to pursue PSE
Applied university, planning different university	n=5
Applied college, planning different college	n=8
Applied university, planning college	n=1
Applied college, planning university	n=12

Respondents who did not participate in PSE and were not planning to pursue PSE in the future were asked to describe the reasons for their decision not to attend, by rating the influence of 15 factors on a five-point influence scale from “very little” to “very much.” Respondents could also indicate that the factor had no influence at all, or that it did not apply. Given that respondents in the PSE Outcomes Study had already applied to college or university, they were, by definition, predisposed to PSE, and the number of respondents who effectively “changed their minds” about pursuing PSE was very small (n=15). Since these cases are insufficient for meaningful

analysis, the results are presented in Table 3.11 as the number of respondents who selected a factor as influencing their decision, regardless of the level of influence. While it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions from these results, the table suggests that a range of factors contribute to respondent decisions not to pursue postsecondary education.

Table 3.12 – Reasons for Not Pursuing Future PSE,
Respondents "Not Offered" and "Offered/Declined" NOT Planning to Pursue PSE

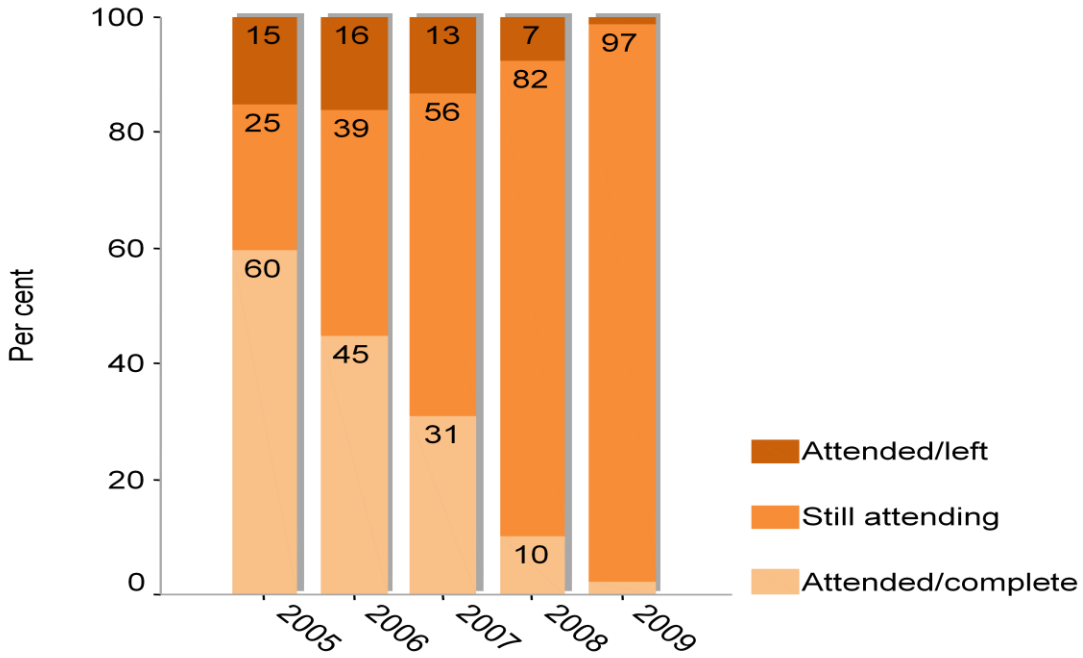
	Respondents Influenced (n=15)
I would rather work and make money than go to school.	n=8
I don't think I can manage a PSE workload with my job responsibilities.	n=8
I can't afford to go to school.	n=7
I don't think I can manage a PSE workload with my family responsibilities.	n=7
I worry I won't be able to pass the courses I need to take.	n=6
My grades are not high enough to get in.	n=5
I don't need PSE for my chosen career.	n=5
I can't go to PSE for personal reasons.	n=5
I need to work to support my family.	n=5
I don't like school.	n=3
I was not accepted into the program I wanted.	n=3
I already have a good job.	n=2
Going to school is not important to me.	n=2
I can't go to PSE for health-related reasons.	n=1
I was not accepted at the school I wanted.	n=1

Chapter 4. Persistence in PSE

This chapter explores issues related to applicant persistence in postsecondary education through in-depth analysis of the experiences of respondents who participated in PSE immediately following their initial application – whether they were currently enrolled, had already completed a program of study, or left PSE before completion. Persistence is defined as the ability of students to continue their postsecondary studies from one year to the next, and to successfully graduate from PSE. For each of the four under-represented groups, persistence is compared to respondents who do not fall into the group.

Naturally, the more time that had elapsed since their initial application to PSE, the greater the likelihood that respondents had completed their program of study. Conversely, the more recent the application, the greater the likelihood applicants were still attending PSE (Figure 4.1). Applicants who applied to attend PSE in the fall of 2005, 2006, and 2007 were more likely to have left their program than those who applied in 2008 or 2009.

Figure 4.1 – PSE Persistence by Year of Application



When results were compared between under-represented and non-designated respondents, and within under-represented groups, there were no significant differences between applicants who were Aboriginal, first-generation PSE, or delayed entry, and those who did not identify as members of these groups (Table 4.1). Similarly, language did not have a significant effect on PSE persistence. However, applicants with disabilities were significantly more likely to be postsecondary leavers than those without a disability (14% vs. 8%) and less likely to have completed their program of study (18% vs. 23%).

*Table 4.1 – PSE Persistence by Under-represented Groups and Language**

	Attended/ left	Still attending	Attended/ complete
Overall	**8%**	**69%**	**23%**
Applicant group			
Under-represented	9%	68%	23%
Non-designated	8%	70%	23%
Aboriginal identity			
Aboriginal	9%	70%	21%
Non-Aboriginal	8%	69%	23%
Disability status*			
Disability	***14%***	***67%***	***18%***
No disability	***8%***	***69%***	***23%***
Parental education			
First-generation PSE	8%	68%	24%
Not first-generation PSE	9%	69%	22%
Entry type			
Delayed entry	11%	66%	23%
Not delayed entry	8%	71%	21%
First language			
English	8%	69%	23%
French	9%	70%	21%

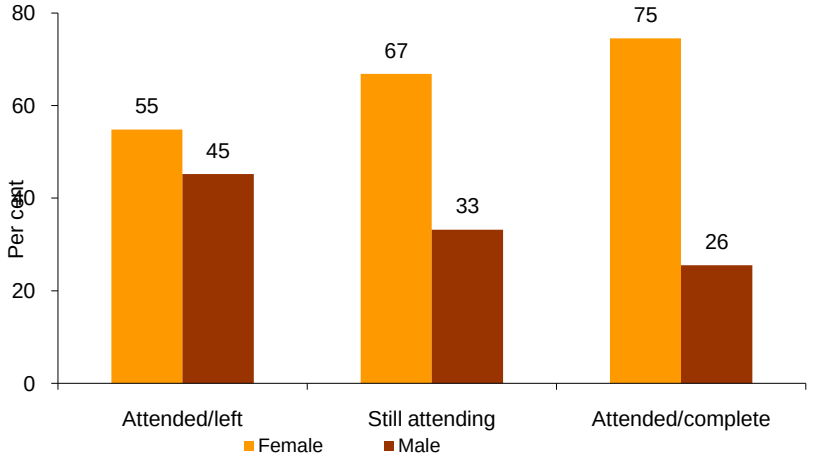
***Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are *bolded and italicized*.**

Demographic Characteristics

Analysis of demographic characteristics reveals significant differences in the profiles of applicants within each of the three pathways by gender, region, age, marital status, dependent children, and ethnic/racial background, as shown in Figures 4.2 to 4.7. While there were no strong associations between income and overall PSE participation, our analysis did not compare college participation to university participation, where income has generally been shown to be a more important factor.

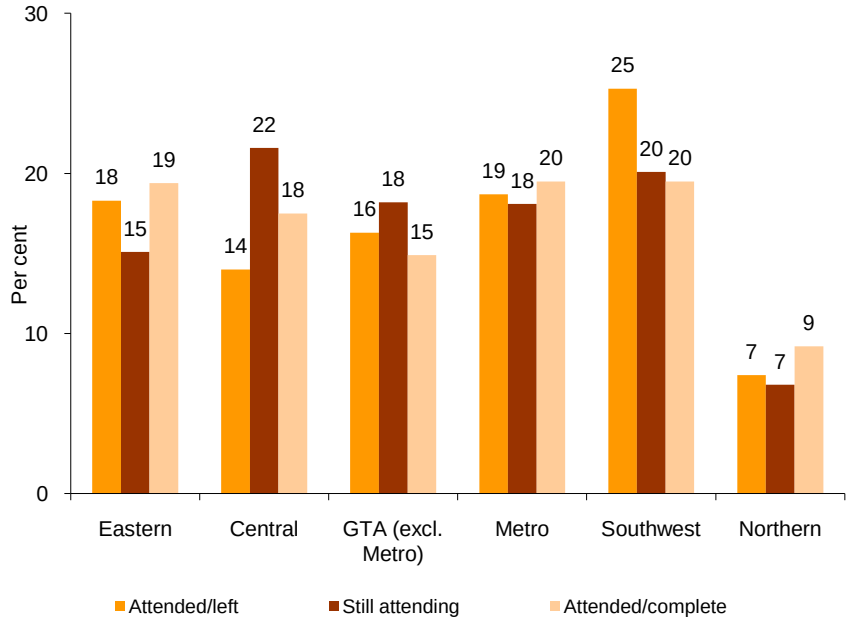
Females made up the majority of applicants across all three pathways, but particularly within the "attended/complete" pathway (Figure 4.2). Three-quarters of PSE graduates were female and only one-quarter were male. By contrast, males were over-represented in the "attended/left" pathway, where they made up close to half of early school leavers.

Figure 4.2 – PSE Pathway by Gender



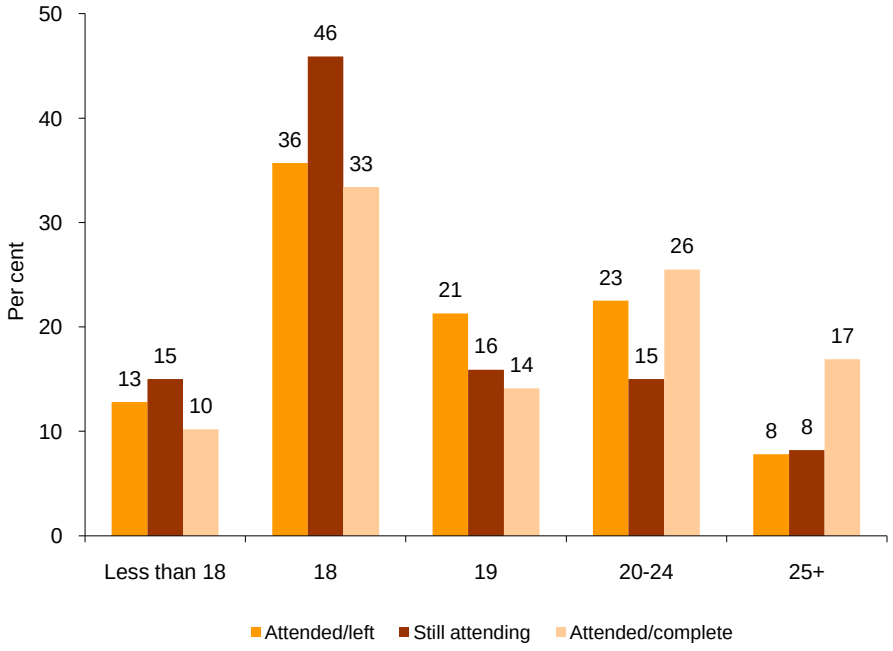
Comparison of results by region shows a significantly greater proportion of early school leavers from the Southwest region, and a larger proportion of students from Central Ontario who were still attending PSE (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3 – Region by PSE Pathway



By age, three out of five applicants in the “still attending” pathway were 18 or younger, compared to half of early school leavers (49%) and 43% of PSE graduates in the youngest age cohorts (Figure 4.4). Applicants in the “attended/complete” pathway were typically older than other applicants: 43% were at least 20 years of age, compared to about one-third of “attended/left” applicants (31%) and only one-quarter (23%) of “still attending” applicants who were 20 or older.

Figure 4.4 – Age by PSE Pathway



Consistent with their earlier years of application and older age distribution, applicants who completed their program of study were the most likely of the three pathways to be married (11%) when they initially applied to PSE (*Figure 4.5)*. While early leavers were less likely than PSE graduates to be married at the time of their PSE application (7% compared to 11%), similar proportions of applicants in both the “attended/left” and “attended/complete” pathways reported dependent children (8%) (*Figure 4.6*).[14] Although further data analysis would be required to determine whether a relationship exists between lone parenting and early school leaving, the literature review cites other studies showing lower levels of persistence among lone parent students.

[14] Marital status was captured for all respondents at the time of application to PSE. By contrast, number of dependent children was captured at the time of responding to the survey (for “still attending” respondents), at the time of leaving (for “attended/left” respondents), and at the time of completing (for “attended/complete” respondents).

Figure 4.5 – Marital Status by PSE Pathway

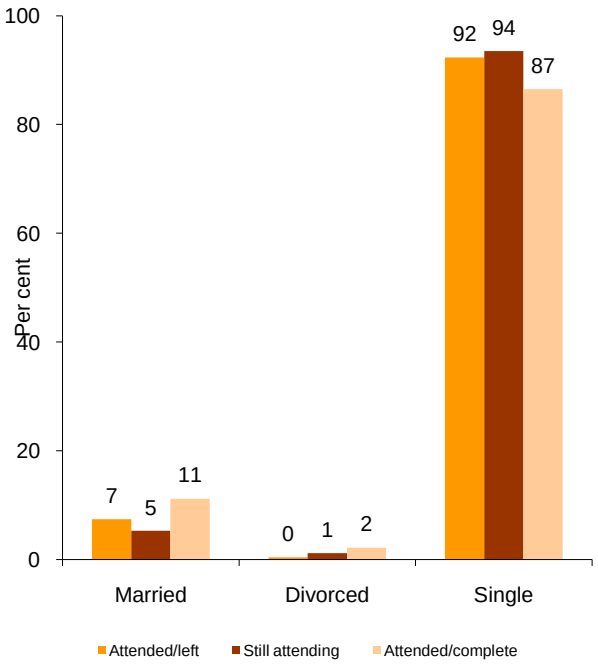
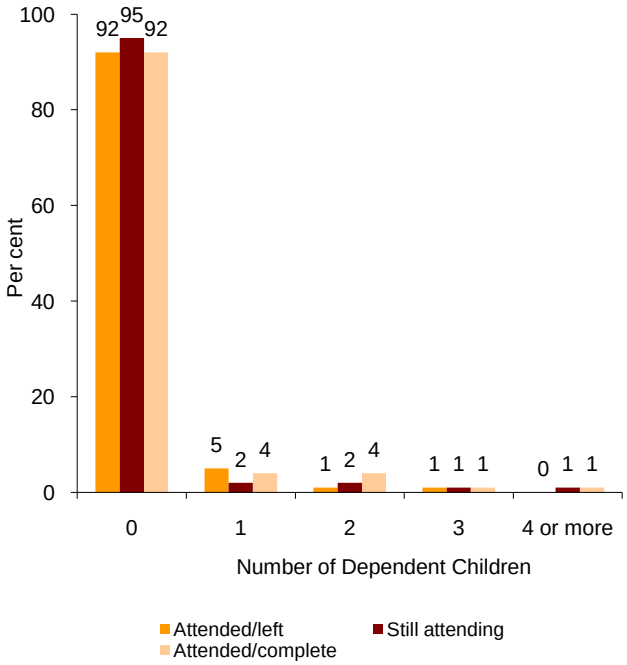
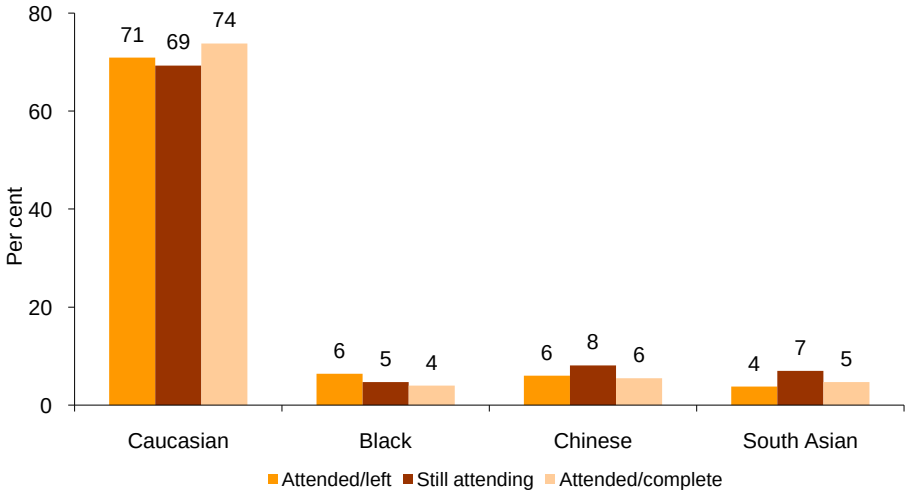


Figure 4.6 – Dependent Children by PSE Pathway



Although some variations across the three PSE pathways are evident in the proportions of applicants who described their cultural/racial backgrounds as Caucasian or Black, these differences are not significant (Figure 4.7). Significance tests showed, however, that Chinese and South Asian applicants were over-represented in the "still attending" pathway.

Figure 4.7 – Cultural/Racial Background



Academic Characteristics

Obviously, duration of program of study has a direct impact on rates of PSE completion. As would be expected, respondents who pursued private career certificates, one-year college certificates, and post-graduate certificates – all programs of one-year or less – were more likely than respondents who attended other certificate, diploma or degree programs to have completed PSE (*Figure 4.8*). Similarly, respondents who enrolled in Hospitality programs, typically only offered at colleges and therefore shorter in program length, were more likely than students in other programs to have completed their program of study (*Figure 4.9*). The incidence of early school leaving was highest among students in Computer Science programs and lowest among students in Education programs.

Figure 4.8 – PSE Persistence by Intended Credential

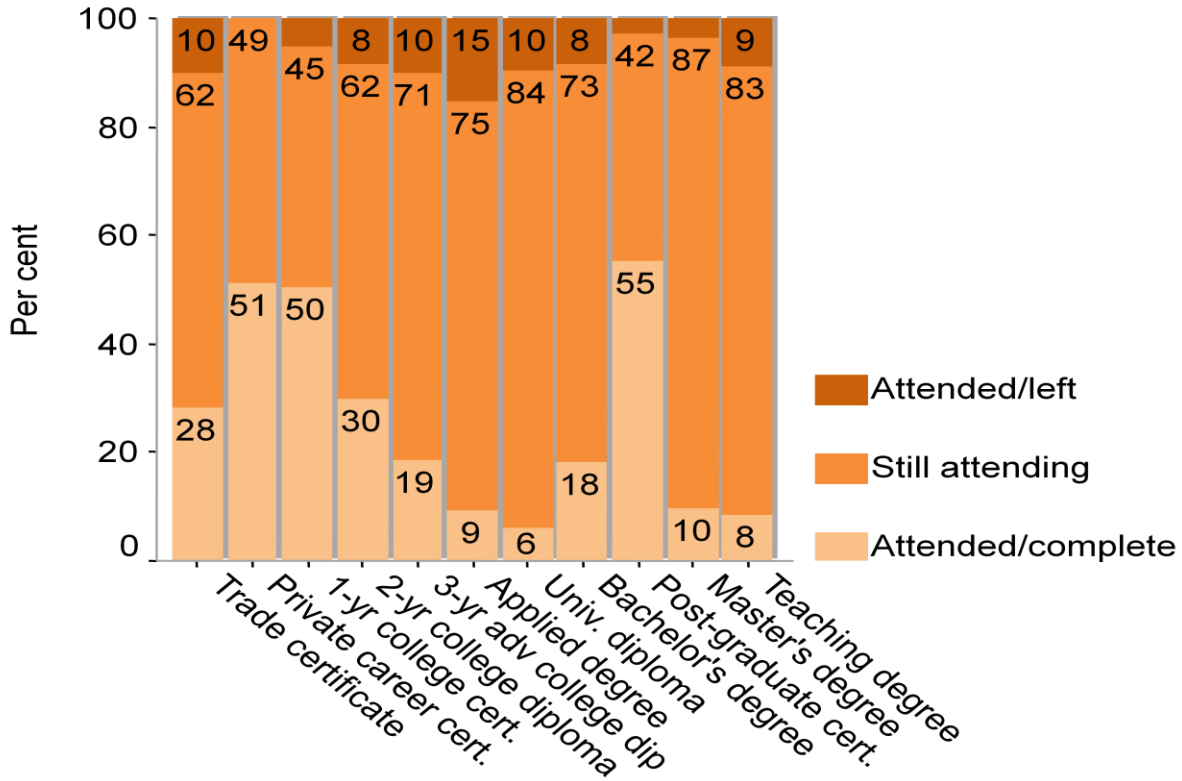


Figure 4.9 - PSE Persistence by Program of Study

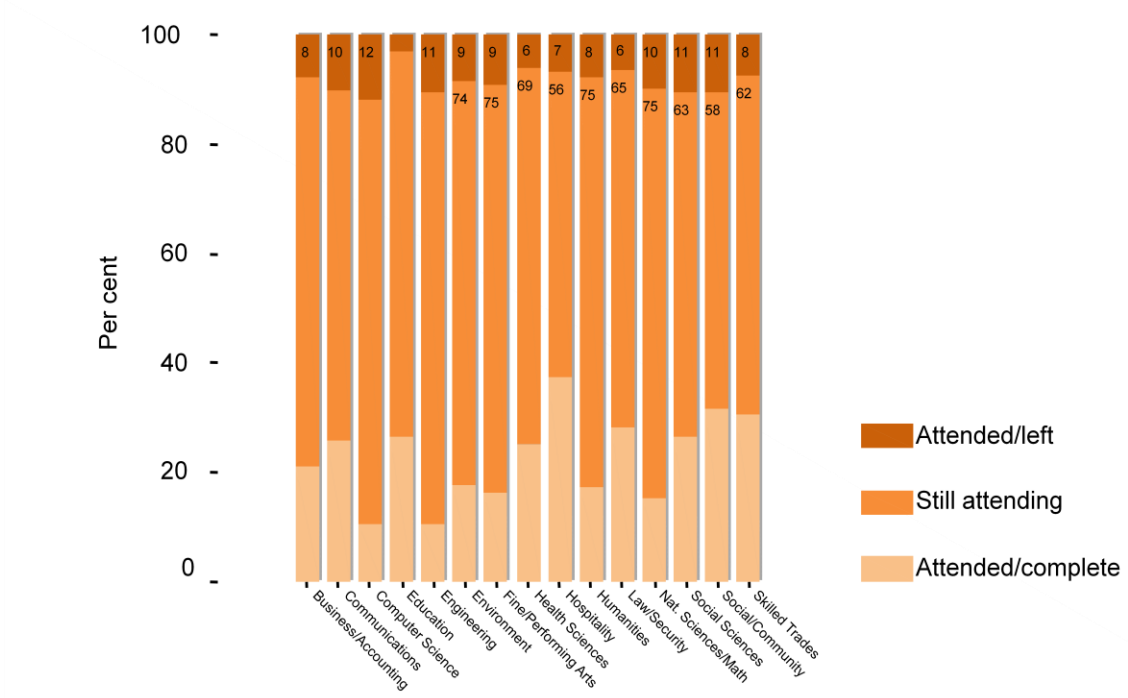


Table 4.2 compares results by academic characteristics, and reveals strong associations between PSE persistence and secondary school grades, type of institution, whether applicants attended their first-choice school, and entry type. No significant differences were observed with regard to whether applicants attended their first-choice program, applied as full-time or part-time students, or had a specific career in mind when they entered PSE.

Early school leavers were more likely to have low secondary school grades (less than 75%) than grades of 85% or higher. As grade averages increased, there was a corresponding increase in the likelihood of applicants being current PSE students – attributable to higher-achieving students enrolling in longer, four-year programs. Conversely, decreasing grades were associated with increased incidence of early school leaving.

Although there were no significant differences between university applicants and college applicants in their rate of early school leaving, college applicants were more likely to have completed their program of study than university applicants, which again relates to program length. Offers of admission to applicants' first-choice institution did not affect early school leaving, but did increase the likelihood of completing a program of study.

While delayed entry applicants did not differ significantly from other applicants across the three pathways, significant results were found when applicants entering directly from secondary school were compared to those with previous PSE experience. Applicants who applied directly

to PSE from secondary school were over-represented in the “still attending” pathway. By contrast, applicants with previous PSE experience were over-represented in the “attended/complete” pathway. This may be a result of these applicants participating in one-year post-graduate programs after obtaining a PSE credential, however, the previous PSE category was not further analysed to determine the proportion of applicants who had completed a PSE program. Alternately, they may also have been able to transfer credits from their previous program, contributing to their PSE completion.

Table 4.2 - Academic Characteristics, PSE Participants

	Attended/ left	Still attending	Attended/ complete
Overall	**8%**	**69%**	**23%**
Secondary school grade average*			
<75%	***15%***	***62%***	***23%***
75 – 79%	***8%***	***74%***	***18%***
80 – 84%	***8%***	***76%***	***15%***
85 – 89%	***6%***	***77%***	***18%***
90% +	***4%***	***81%***	***15%***
Type of institution*			
University	***8%***	***74%***	***18%***
College	***9%***	***64%***	***28%***
Offered first-choice institution?*			
Yes	***8%***	***68%***	***25%***
No	***9%***	***74%***	***17%***
Offered first-choice program?			
Yes	8%	69%	23%
No	8%	69%	23%
Planned course load			
Full-time	8%	69%	23%
Part-time	9%	62%	28%
Specific career goal			
Yes	8%	68%	24%
No	9%	69%	22%
Entry type*			
Direct entry	***8%***	***75%***	***17%***
Delayed entry	***11%***	***66%***	***23%***
PSE experience	***8%***	***59%***	***33%***

*Where statistically significant differences exist ($p < 0.05$), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Respondents who left their program of study prior to completion were asked how long they had attended PSE before leaving. Close to half of early leavers (44%) reported completing one or more years of study, and another one-quarter (26%) completed several academic terms (seven months or more) (Table 4.3)

Table 4.3 – Persistence, Early Leavers

	Attended/left
Completed less than 1 year of study	**56%**
Less than 2 months	8%
3-6 months	22%
7 months to less than 1 year	26%
Completed 1 year of study or more	**44%**
1 year	26%
2 years	14%
3 years	4%

Student Support Services

The PSE Outcomes Study asked respondents who participated in postsecondary education to indicate the student services they used while at school, and their satisfaction with those services. Respondents were presented with a list of 12 services, and asked whether the service was used frequently, sometimes, at least once, or never. Respondents who used a service were asked to rate their satisfaction on a five-point scale from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied," and could also indicate that they did not know how to rate their satisfaction.

Figure 4.10 shows the proportion of all PSE participants who made use of each of the 12 student services – whether they used it once, sometimes, or frequently. About nine out of 10 of all respondents who accepted offers to PSE reported using their school's library resource centre (89%), and close to two-thirds used financial aid services (64%), or participated in orientation programs and activities (62%). Approximately half of all students used recreation/athletic facilities (55%), academic advising (51%), and career services (47%), and one-quarter accessed personal counselling (26%), academic tutoring (25%), prior learning and assessment (PLA) (25%), and peer mentoring (23%). The least used services among all respondents were those for students with disabilities (11%) and Aboriginal students (2%).

Figure 4.10 – Use of Student Supports, PSE Participants

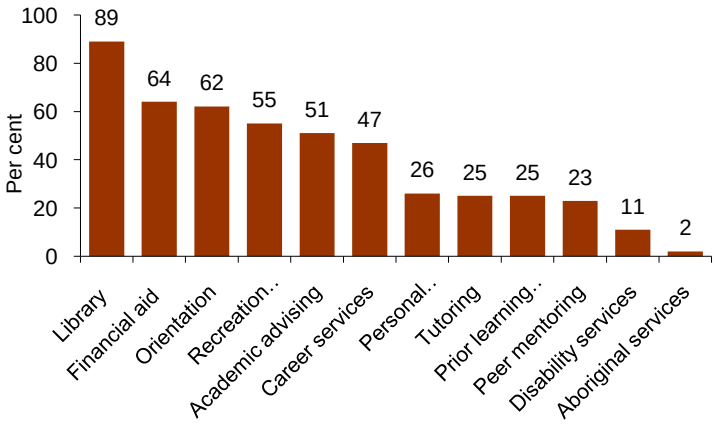


Table 4.4 compares differences in use and satisfaction across the three PSE pathways and shows that there were no significant differences between early school leavers, current PSE students, and students who completed PSE in their use of – and satisfaction with – personal counselling services, PLA, and Aboriginal student services. Some services were used more by certain groups of applicants – including the library resource centre, tutoring, peer mentoring, and services for students with disabilities – but received similar satisfaction ratings from those who used them. Conversely, while students were equally likely to access academic advising, they varied in their levels of satisfaction with the service.

As would be expected because of their shorter period of school attendance, early leavers generally made less use of several services (library, orientation, recreation facilities, and career services) and were also less satisfied with the services they used (financial aid, orientation, and career services). The exception was services for students with disabilities, which they used more than current PSE students and graduates, but were similar in their levels of satisfaction. Students currently attending PSE used several services more (financial aid, orientation, and peer mentoring) and expressed higher levels of satisfaction with many of the services they used (particularly orientation, recreation facilities, academic advising, and career services).

Students who had completed their program of study were the most likely to use career services, but the least likely to use tutoring services. They were also more satisfied than other students with financial aid services.

*Table 4.4 – Student Supports Use & Satisfaction, PSE Participants**

		Attended/left	Still attending	Attended/complete
Library resource centre	Use*	***85%***	***91%***	***91%***
	Mean	4.2	4.3	4.3
Financial aid services	Use*	***56%***	***63%***	***58%***
	Mean*	***3.7***	***3.9***	***4.0***
Orientation programs/activities	Use*	***62%***	***70%***	***65%***
	Mean*	***3.9***	***4.1***	***4.0***
Recreation and athletic facilities	Use*	***58%***	***68%***	***66%***
	Mean*	***4.1***	***4.2***	***4.1***
Academic advising	Use	54%	55%	53%
	Mean*	***3.7***	***4.0***	***3.8***
Career/employment services	Use*	***38%***	***45%***	***57%***
	Mean*	***3.7***	***3.9***	***3.8***
Personal counselling	Use	24%	21%	19%
	Mean	4.0	3.9	3.9
Tutoring services	Use*	***25%***	***26%***	***21%***
	Mean	3.6	3.9	3.9
Prior learning and assessment	Use	18%	20%	16%
	Mean	3.6	3.8	3.6
Peer mentoring services	Use*	***23%***	***28%***	***22%***
	Mean	3.7	3.9	3.8

		Attended/left	Still attending	Attended/complete
Services for students with disabilities	Use*	***13%***	***8%***	***8%***
	Mean	3.8	4.2	4.2
Aboriginal student services	Use	4%	2%	2%
	Mean	3.7	4.1	4.1

Table 4.5 compares use and satisfaction with student support services between students who were members of any of the four under-represented groups and students who did not fall into these groups. To avoid misleading comparisons, mean satisfaction scores are not reported for segments with n sizes less than 20.

There were a number of significant differences between students from under-represented groups and non-designated students in their use of student support services. Regardless of whether they left PSE early, were still attending PSE, or had completed PSE, students from the under-represented groups made significantly greater use of personal counselling, PLA, and services for students with disabilities than their non-designated peers. Among current PSE students and PSE graduates, those from under-represented groups were also more likely to use financial aid and Aboriginal student services, but were less likely to participate in orientation and recreation programs. In terms of satisfaction with the services used, under-represented students who were still attending PSE were marginally less satisfied than non-designated students with library services and career services, but considerably more satisfied with PLA.

*Table 4.5 – Student Supports Use & Satisfaction, Under-represented Students**

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		Under-represented (n=121)	Non-designated (n=125)	Under-represented (n=920)	Non-designated (n=1233)	Under-represented (n=351)	Non-designated (n=317)
Library resource centre	Use	85%	82%	91%	91%	91%	91%
	Mean*	4.2	4.4	***4.3***	***4.3***	4.3	4.3
Financial aid services	Use*	58%	49%	***68%***	***59%***	***62%***	***54%***
	Mean	3.8	3.9	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.1
Orientation programs/activities	Use*	65%	58%	***66%***	***73%***	***62%***	***66%***
	Mean	3.8	4.1	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.1
Recreation and athletic facilities	Use*	56%	57%	***63%***	***72%***	***62%***	***68%***
	Mean	3.9	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.1
Career/employment services	Use	41%	36%	45%	45%	56%	58%
	Mean*	3.6	3.7	***3.9***	***4.0***	3.8	3.8
Personal counselling	Use*	***32%***	***17%***	***25%***	***18%***	***24%***	***17%***
	Mean	4.0	3.9	4.1	3.8	4.0	3.9
Tutoring services	Use*	26%	22%	27%	26%	***24%***	***19%***
	Mean	3.8	3.5	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.8
Prior learning and assessment	Use*	***24%***	***13%***	***22%***	***18%***	***19%***	***14%***
	Mean*	3.6	-	***4.0***	***3.7***	3.8	3.5
Services for students	Use*	***20%***	***4%***	***16%***	***3%***	***13%***	***2%***

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		Under-represented (n=121)	Non-designated (n=125)	Under-represented (n=920)	Non-designated (n=1233)	Under-represented (n=351)	Non-designated (n=317)
with disabilities	Mean	3.9	-	4.3	-	4.4	-
Aboriginal student services	Use*	3%	3%	***4%***	***1%***	***3%***	***1%***
	Mean	-	-	4.2	-	-	-

***Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are *bolded and italicized*.**

Aboriginal Students

Because of small n sizes for Aboriginal early school leavers and Aboriginal students who completed PSE, Table 4.6 below displays counts rather than frequency distributions. As would be expected, Aboriginal students who were currently attending PSE made significantly greater use of Aboriginal student services than non-Aboriginal current PSE students, but did not differ in their use of, or satisfaction with, other services.

*Table 4.6 – Student Supports Use & Satisfaction, Aboriginal Students**

		Attended/ left	Still attending		Attended/ complete
		Aboriginal (n=5)	Aboriginal (n=38)	Non-Aboriginal (n=2,168)	Aboriginal (n=12)
Aboriginal student services	**Use***	**n=1**	***45%***	***2%***	**n=4**
	Mean	-	-	4.0	-

***Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are *bolded and italicized*.**

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who attended PSE – whether current students, early leavers, or graduates – made much greater use of both personal counselling and disability services than their peers without disabilities, and were also more likely to access financial aid services, academic advising, PLA, and peer mentoring (Table 4.7). Among current students, those with disabilities used tutoring and Aboriginal student services more, but recreation facilities less, than those without disabilities. PSE graduates with disabilities were also more likely to use tutoring services than their peers. Interestingly, both students with disabilities who left prior to completion and those who completed their programs of study were more likely to participate in orientation programs and activities than other students.

With one exception, where significant differences in mean satisfaction scores were noted, students with disabilities were less satisfied than their peers without disabilities. Early leavers with disabilities reported lower levels of satisfaction with orientation programs. Current PSE students with disabilities gave lower satisfaction ratings to financial aid services, academic advising, career services, and tutoring services. PSE graduates with disabilities were less satisfied with financial aid services and recreation facilities. The notable exception was disability services, which received high satisfaction scores from the current students with disabilities who used the service.

*Table 4.7 - Student Supports Use & Satisfaction, Students with Disabilities**

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		Disability (n=39)	No Disability (n=221)	Disability (n=185)	No Disability (n=2005)	Disability (n=51)	No Disability (n=678)
Financial aid services	Use*	***67%***	***53%***	***72%***	***62%***	***65%***	***57%***
	Mean*	3.8	3.7	***3.8***	***3.9***	***4.0***	***4.1***
Orientation programs/ activities	Use*	***72%***	***61%***	67%	70%	***72%***	***64%***
	Mean*	***3.5***	***4.0***	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.0
Recreation and athletic facilities	Use*	56%	60%	***60%***	***69%***	66%	66%
	Mean*	3.8	4.2	4.1	4.2	***3.7***	***4.1***
Academic advising	Use*	***67%***	***54%***	***68%***	***54%***	***68%***	***52%***
	Mean*	3.8	3.7	***3.9***	***4.0***	3.8	3.8
Career/employment services	Use	41%	38%	47%	45%	56%	56%
	Mean*	-	3.7	***3.8***	***4.0***	3.8	3.8
Personal counselling	Use*	***59%***	***17%***	***41%***	***19%***	***45%***	***18%***
	Mean	4.1	3.9	4.2	3.9	4.2	3.8
Tutoring services	Use*	31%	24%	***39%***	***25%***	***33%***	***20%***
	Mean*	-	3.5	***3.8***	***4.0***	4.4	3.9
Prior learning and assessment	Use*	***33%***	***15%***	***33%***	***19%***	***27%***	***15%***
	Mean	-	3.6	4.1	3.8	-	3.5
Peer mentoring services	Use*	***33%***	***22%***	***36%***	***27%***	***30%***	***22%***
	Mean	-	3.7	3.9	3.9	-	3.8
Services for students with disabilities	Use*	***59%***	***5%***	***65%***	***2%***	***64%***	***3%***
	Mean*	3.9	-	***4.4***	***3.8***	4.5	3.8
Aboriginal student services	Use*	3%	4%	***4%***	***2%***	2%	3%
	Mean	-	-	***-***	4.0	-	4.1

***Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are *bolded and italicized*.**

Aboriginal Students

Because of small n sizes for Aboriginal early school leavers and Aboriginal students who completed PSE, Table 4.6 below displays counts rather than frequency distributions. As would be expected, Aboriginal students who were currently attending PSE made significantly greater use of Aboriginal student services than non-Aboriginal current PSE students, but did not differ in their use of, or satisfaction with, other services.

*Table 4.6 – Student Supports Use & Satisfaction, Aboriginal Students**

		Attended/ left	Still attending		Attended/ complete
		Aboriginal (n=5)	Aboriginal (n=38)	Non-Aboriginal (n=2,168)	Aboriginal (n=12)
Aboriginal student services	Use*	n=1	***45%***	***2%***	n=4
	Mean	-	-	4.0	-

***Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are *bolded and italicized*.**

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who attended PSE – whether current students, early leavers, or graduates – made much greater use of both personal counselling and disability services than their peers without disabilities, and were also more likely to access financial aid services, academic advising, PLA, and peer mentoring (Table 4.7). Among current students, those with disabilities used tutoring and Aboriginal student services more, but recreation facilities less, than those without disabilities. PSE graduates with disabilities were also more likely to use tutoring services than their peers. Interestingly, both students with disabilities who left prior to completion and those who completed their programs of study were more likely to participate in orientation programs and activities than other students.

With one exception, where significant differences in mean satisfaction scores were noted, students with disabilities were less satisfied than their peers without disabilities. Early leavers with disabilities reported lower levels of satisfaction with orientation programs. Current PSE students with disabilities gave lower satisfaction ratings to financial aid services, academic advising, career services, and tutoring services. PSE graduates with disabilities were less satisfied with financial aid services and recreation facilities. The notable exception was disability services, which received high satisfaction scores from the current students with disabilities who used the service.

*Table 4.7 - Student Supports Use & Satisfaction, Students with Disabilities**

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		Disability (n=39)	No Disability (n=221)	Disability (n=185)	No Disability (n=2005)	Disability (n=51)	No Disability (n=678)
Financial aid services	Use*	***67%***	***53%***	***72%***	***62%***	***65%***	***57%***
	Mean*	3.8	3.7	***3.8***	***3.9***	***4.0***	***4.1***
Orientation programs/ activities	Use*	***72%***	***61%***	67%	70%	***72%***	***64%***
	Mean*	***3.5***	***4.0***	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.0
Recreation and athletic facilities	Use*	56%	60%	***60%***	***69%***	66%	66%
	Mean*	3.8	4.2	4.1	4.2	***3.7***	***4.1***
Academic advising	Use*	***67%***	***54%***	***68%***	***54%***	***68%***	***52%***
	Mean*	3.8	3.7	***3.9***	***4.0***	3.8	3.8
Career/employment services	Use	41%	38%	47%	45%	56%	56%
	Mean*	-	3.7	***3.8***	***4.0***	3.8	3.8

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		Disability (n=39)	No Disability (n=221)	Disability (n=185)	No Disability (n=2005)	Disability (n=51)	No Disability (n=678)
Personal counselling	Use*	***59%***	***17%***	***41%***	***19%***	***45%***	***18%***
	Mean	4.1	3.9	4.2	3.9	4.2	3.8
Tutoring services	Use*	31%	24%	***39%***	***25%***	***33%***	***20%***
	Mean*	-	3.5	***3.8***	***4.0***	4.4	3.9
Prior learning and assessment	Use*	***33%***	***15%***	***33%***	***19%***	***27%***	***15%***
	Mean	-	3.6	4.1	3.8	-	3.5
Peer mentoring services	Use*	***33%***	***22%***	***36%***	***27%***	***30%***	***22%***
	Mean	-	3.7	3.9	3.9	-	3.8
Services for students with disabilities	Use*	***59%***	***5%***	***65%***	***2%***	***64%***	***3%***
	Mean*	3.9	-	***4.4***	***3.8***	4.5	3.8
Aboriginal student services	Use*	3%	4%	***4%***	***2%***	2%	3%
	Mean	-	-	***-***	4.0	-	4.1

***Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are *bolded and italicized*.**

First-Generation PSE Students

Recreation and athletic facilities were used consistently less by all first-generation PSE students – whether early leavers, current PSE students or graduates – than students whose parents had completed PSE (Table 4.8).

First-generation early leavers made less use of tutoring and disability services than other students. Current first-generation PSE students made more use of financial aid, personal counselling, and Aboriginal student services than their non first-generation peers, but were less likely to attend orientation programs or access academic advising and peer mentoring. At the same time, those who received academic advising rated the service higher in satisfaction. First-generation PSE graduates used financial aid services, personal counselling, tutoring, and PLA more, but orientation programs less.

*Table 4.8 – Student Supports Use & Satisfaction, First-generation PSE Applicants**

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		First-Gen PSE (n=80)	Not First-Gen PSE (n=199)	First-Gen PSE (n=696)	Not First-Gen PSE (n=1601)	First-Gen PSE (n=248)	Not First-Gen PSE (n=518)
Financial aid	Use*	57%	55%	***68%***	***61%***	***63%***	***55%***
	Mean	3.6	3.8	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.1

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		First-Gen PSE (n=80)	Not First-Gen PSE (n=199)	First-Gen PSE (n=696)	Not First-Gen PSE (n=1601)	First-Gen PSE (n=248)	Not First-Gen PSE (n=518)
Orientation programs/activities	Use*	59%	64%	***66%***	***72%***	***62%***	***66%***
	Mean	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.1
Recreation and athletic facilities	Use*	***49%***	***62%***	***63%***	***70%***	***60%***	***69%***
	Mean	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.0	4.1
Academic advising	Use*	46%	58%	***51%***	***57%***	51%	53%
	Mean*	3.6	3.7	***4.0***	***3.9***	3.9	3.8
Career/employment services	Use	37%	39%	45%	45%	56%	57%
	Mean	3.6	3.7	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8
Personal counselling	Use*	24%	24%	***22%***	***20%***	***21%***	***18%***
	Mean	-	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.9	3.9
Tutoring services	Use*	***20%***	***26%***	25%	26%	***23%***	***19%***
	Mean	-	3.5	3.9	3.9	3.8	4.0
Prior learning and assessment	Use*	16%	18%	20%	20%	***19%***	***15%***
	Mean	-	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.6
Peer mentoring services	Use*	19%	24%	***26%***	***29%***	21%	22%
	Mean	-	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.8
Services for students with disabilities	Use*	***9%***	***15%***	10%	7%	8%	7%
	Mean	-	3.9	4.3	4.2	4.5	4.1
Aboriginal student services	Use*	3%	5%	***3%***	***2%***	2%	3%
	Mean	-	-	4.1	4.1	-	-

***Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are *bolded and italicized*.**

Delayed Entry Students

Delayed entry early leavers made more use of financial aid services and recreation facilities than other students who left PSE before completing (Table 4.9).

Among current PSE students, those who delayed their entry into PSE were less likely to attend orientation programs or use recreation facilities, but were more likely to access financial aid services, personal counselling, and PLA. They were also significantly more satisfied with the PLA services they received. Delayed entry students who completed their PSE program used career services more than other students, but made less use of recreation facilities, peer mentoring, and Aboriginal student services.

*Table 4.9 - Student Supports Use & Satisfaction, Delayed Entry Students**

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		Delayed Entry (n=27)	Not Delayed Entry (n=226)	Delayed Entry (n=159)	Not Delayed Entry (n=2058)	Delayed Entry (n=56)	Not Delayed Entry (n=609)
Financial aid	Use*	***67%***	***54%***	***69%***	***63%***	50%	58%
	Mean	-	3.7	4.1	3.9	4.1	4.1
Orientation programs/activities	Use*	48%	62%	***62%***	***71%***	68%	64%
	Mean	-	3.9	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0
Recreation and athletic facilities	Use*	***63%***	***54%***	***55%***	***69%***	***50%***	***67%***
	Mean	-	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.1
Career/employment services	Use*	33%	40%	45%	45%	***63%***	***57%***
	Mean	-	3.7	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.8
Personal counselling	Use*	26%	24%	***27%***	***20%***	23%	19%
	Mean	-	4.0	4.2	3.9	-	3.9
Prior learning and assessment	Use*	26%	17%	***29%***	***19%***	11%	16%
	Mean*	-	3.7	***4.1***	***3.8***	-	3.6
Peer mentoring services	Use*	19%	23%	26%	28%	***16%***	***22%***
	Mean	-	3.8	4.1	3.8	-	3.8
Aboriginal student services	Use*	4%	4%	3%	2%	***0%***	***2%***
	Mean	-	-	-	4.1	-	-

***Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are *bolded and italicized*.**

School Experience

The PSE Outcomes Study asked students to reflect on their experiences at the school they attended, and indicate their agreement with a series of eight randomized statements using a five-point agreement scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.”

Whether early leavers, current students, or PSE graduates, students expressed the strongest agreement that they understood the academic expectations of their program, and that they were encouraged to spend time on their coursework (Table 4.10). Agreement was somewhat lower with regard to the availability of supports to assist in managing their non-academic responsibilities.

In terms of mean agreement scores, the only statement that elicited similar levels of agreement from all respondents was the importance of campus activities to student life. While there were few differences between current students and graduates with regard to the other seven statements, early leavers had much poorer perceptions of their experiences at school. The widest differences in agreement concerned perceptions that there was someone at school they could rely on, and that support was available to assist them with homework or non-academic responsibilities.

*Table 4.10 – Perceptions of School Experience**

	Attended/ left	Still attending	Attended/ complete
I understand the academic expectations of my program.*	***4.1***	***4.5***	***4.5***
I am encouraged to spend time on my coursework.*	***4.0***	***4.3***	***4.4***
There is at least one person at school (teacher, counsellor, staff person, student) I can rely on when I need information or assistance.*	***3.7***	***4.3***	***4.3***
I am aware of financial aid services.*	***3.9***	***4.2***	***4.1***
I am informed about social opportunities on-campus.*	***3.6***	***4.0***	***3.9***
Support is available to help me deal with my homework.*	***3.3***	***3.9***	***3.8***
Participating in extracurricular and campus activities is an important part of student life.	3.5	3.7	3.7
Support is available to help me deal with my non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)*	***3.0***	***3.6***	***3.4***

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are *bolded and italicized.*

When results for all under-represented students were compared to students from non-designated groups, only two significant differences were noted. Among current PSE students, those from under-represented groups were less likely than non-designated students to agree that extracurricular activities were important to student life (*Table 4.11*). Among students who had completed their PSE program, those from under-represented groups agreed more strongly that they were supported in managing non-academic demands.

*Table 4.11 – Perceptions of School Experience, Under-represented Students**

	Attended/ left		Still attending*		Attended/ complete*	
	Under-represented (n=121)	Non-designated (n=125)	Under-represented (n=920)	Non-designated (n=1233)	Under-represented (n=351)	Non-designated (n=317)
Importance of extracurriculars	3.5	3.5	***3.6***	***3.8***	3.6	3.7
Non-academic supports	3.0	3.2	3.6	3.6	***3.4***	***3.3***

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are *bolded and italicized.*

Aboriginal Students

Insufficient n sizes prevented comparison of Aboriginal early leavers and graduates to non-Aboriginal early leavers and graduates. Comparison within the current student group, however, revealed no significant differences.

Students With Disabilities

Compared to students without disabilities, current students with disabilities expressed significantly lower levels of agreement that they had someone to rely on for useful information, that they understood the academic expectations of their program, and that extracurriculars are important to student life (Table 4.12). While no differences were observed between PSE graduates with disabilities and those without disabilities, early leavers with disabilities were

much less likely to agree that supports were available to help them deal with non-academic demands.

*Table 4.12 – Perceptions of School Experience, Students with Disabilities**

	Attended/ left*		Still attending*		Attended/ complete	
	Disability (n=39)	No Disability (n=221)	Disability (n=185)	No Disability (n=2005)	Disability (n=51)	No Disability (n=678)
Understand expectations	4.0	4.2	***4.4***	***4.5***	4.6	4.5
One person to rely on	3.9	3.8	***4.2***	***4.3***	4.6	4.3
Importance of extracurriculars	3.5	3.5	***3.3***	***3.7***	3.6	3.7
Non-academic supports	***2.7***	***3.1***	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.4

***Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are *bolded and italicized*.**

First-Generation PSE Students

With one exception, the perceptions of first-generation PSE students were similar to those of students whose parents had completed PSE. Among students who had completed their PSE program, first-generation students were less likely to agree that they had someone to rely on at school (Table 4.13). The difference is significant, although it appears to be minor.

*Table 4.13 – Perceptions of School Experience, First-Generation PSE Students**

	Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete*	
	First-Gen PSE (n=80)	Not First-Gen PSE (n=199)	First-Gen PSE (n=696)	Not First-Gen PSE (n=1601)	First-Gen PSE (n=248)	Not First-Gen PSE (n=518)
One person to rely on	3.7	3.7	4.3	4.2	***4.3***	***4.4***

***Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are *bolded and italicized*.**

Delayed Entry Students

While delayed entry early leavers and current students did not differ from other students in perceptions of student experience, there was stronger agreement among delayed entry graduates that they were aware of financial aid services. Delayed entry graduates, however, expressed lower mean agreement that extracurriculars are important to student life (Table 4.14).

*Table 4.14 – Perceptions of School Experience, Delayed Entry Students**

	Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete*	
	Delayed Entry (n=27)	Not Delayed Entry (n=226)	Delayed Entry (n=159)	Not Delayed Entry (n=2058)	Delayed Entry (n=56)	Not Delayed Entry (n=609)
Awareness of financial aid	4.0	3.9	4.2	4.2	***4.2***	***4.1***
Importance of extracurriculars	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.7	***3.5***	***3.7***

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are *bolded and italicized.*

School Engagement

To assess the impact of students' academic and social engagement in their PSE studies on their likelihood of persisting at school, respondents were presented with a randomized list of 13 activities and asked whether they "frequently," "sometimes," or "never" engaged in each activity.

While there were no significant differences between early leavers, current students, and graduates with regard to the frequency of participating in recreational or sports programs, students who completed their programs of study were the most likely to report that they frequently engaged in all other activities, with the exception of skipping classes (Table 4.15). The opposite was true for early leavers, who were much less likely than PSE graduates to report frequently engaging in any of the activities (which could also be related to shorter time spent at the institution), and more than twice as likely to regularly skip classes.

*Table 4.15 – School Engagement, PSE Participants**

		Attended/ left	Still attending	Attended/ complete
Complete assignments on time*	Frequently	***71%***	***88%***	***94%***
	Never	***2%***	***1%***	***0%***
Review assignments before handing in*	Frequently	***58%***	***67%***	***79%***
	Never	***4%***	***3%***	***2%***
Use variety of sources to complete work*	Frequently	***57%***	***59%***	***78%***
	Never	***5%***	***3%***	***1%***
Communicate electronically with other students*	Frequently	***60%***	***75%***	***80%***
	Never	***7%***	***3%***	***2%***
Ask questions/participate in class*	Frequently	***37%***	***41%***	***58%***
	Never	***13%***	***11%***	***3%***
Communicate electronically with instructor*	Frequently	***47%***	***54%***	***72%***
	Never	***14%***	***7%***	***2%***
Work with other students*	Frequently	***44%***	***47%***	***67%***
	Never	***8%***	***7%***	***2%***
Discuss grades, assignments with an instructor*	Frequently	***24%***	***26%***	***43%***
	Never	***24%***	***18%***	***6%***
Discuss ideas for papers or projects with an instructor*	Frequently	***16%***	***25%***	***42%***
	Never	***36%***	***24%***	***9%***
Discuss career plans with instructor*	Frequently	***12%***	***13%***	***28%***
	Never	***57%***	***46%***	***23%***
Participate in recreational or sports programs	Frequently	10%	14%	16%
	Never	58%	52%	52%
Attend campus, student or school events*	Frequently	***19%***	***24%***	***28%***
	Never	***28%***	***20%***	***19%***
Skip classes*	Frequently	***15%***	***6%***	***5%***
	Never	***29%***	***42%***	***38%***

*Where statistically significant differences exist ($p < 0.05$), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Among students who left PSE before completing their program, there were no differences between under-represented students and non-designated students. However, current PSE students from under-represented groups were less likely to communicate electronically with other students on a frequent basis, and were also less likely to participate in recreation or sports activities (*Table 4.16*). At the same time, they reported more frequent engagement in several activities, including asking questions in class, working with other students, and talking to instructors about term paper ideas or career plans. Compared to non-designated students, under-represented students who had completed their program of study were more likely to frequently ask questions in class but less likely to participate in campus recreation.

*Table 4.16– School Engagement, Under-represented Students**

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		Under-represented (n=121)	Non-designated (n=125)	Under-represented (n=920)	Non-designated (n=1233)	Under-represented (n=351)	Non-designated (n=317)
E-communication with students*	Frequently	58%	61%	***72%***	***77%***	79%	81%
	Never	7%	7%	***5%***	***3%***	3%	3%
Ask questions/ participate in class*	Frequently	40%	38%	***45%***	***38%***	***63%***	***53%***
	Never	10%	17%	***9%***	***12%***	***2%***	***5%***
Work with other students*	Frequently	45%	45%	***51%***	***45%***	68%	65%
	Never	7%	9%	***6%***	***8%***	1%	2%
Discuss ideas with instructor*	Frequently	21%	13%	***28%***	***23%***	44%	39%
	Never	32%	38%	***22%***	***26%***	7%	12%
Discuss career with instructor*	Frequently	10%	13%	***16%***	***11%***	28%	29%
	Never	54%	58%	***41%***	***48%***	22%	25%
Participate in recreation/sports*	Frequently	8%	11%	***11%***	***16%***	***10%***	***22%***
	Never	61%	56%	***59%***	***48%***	***57%***	***50%***

*Where statistically significant differences exist ($p < 0.05$), results are ***bolded and italicized***.

Aboriginal Students

Where n sizes were sufficient for statistical analysis, there were no meaningful differences between Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal students in their engagement in academic activities.

Students with Disabilities

Among students with disabilities, only 55% of early leavers frequently completed assignments on time, compared to 74% of early leavers without disabilities (*Table 4.17*). Similarly, current students with disabilities were less likely to report regularly meeting assignment deadlines. They were also less likely to communicate electronically with other students or participate in recreation programs. They were more likely, however, to ask questions in class on a frequent basis, and to discuss grades, term papers, and career plans with instructors. Students with disabilities who completed their programs were much more likely than those without disabilities to report high levels of class participation.

*Table 4.17 – School Engagement, Students with Disabilities**

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		Disability (n=39)	No Disability (n=221)	Disability (n=185)	No Disability (n=2005)	Disability (n=51)	No Disability (n=678)
Complete assignments on time*	Frequently	***55%***	***74%***	***81%***	***89%***	94%	94%
	Never	***10%***	***1%***	***1%***	***1%***	-	<1
E-communication with students*	Frequently	56%	63%	***67%***	***75%***	84%	80%
	Never	13%	5%	***7%***	***3%***	-	3%
Ask questions/ participate in class*	Frequently	45%	37%	***49%***	***40%***	***80%***	***57%***
	Never	10%	14%	***7%***	***11%***	***2%***	***4%***
Discuss grades with instructor*	Frequently	26%	25%	***35%***	***25%***	59%	42%
	Never	21%	24%	***10%***	***19%***	2%	7%
Discuss ideas with instructor*	Frequently	18%	17%	***31%***	***25%***	54%	41%
	Never	32%	35%	***17%***	***25%***	-	10%
Discuss career with instructor*	Frequently	10%	14%	***15%***	***12%***	44%	27%
	Never	49%	58%	***36%***	***46%***	18%	23%
Participate in recreation/sports*	Frequently	5%	12%	***10%***	***15%***	10%	17%
	Never	62%	56%	***64%***	***51%***	57%	51%

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized***.

First-Generation PSE Students

While first-generation early leavers were similar to other early leavers, first-generation current students were more likely to report working with other students and discussing career plans with an instructor on a regular basis (Table 4.18). These students, together with first-generation PSE graduates, were less likely to participate in recreation activities than students who were not first-generation PSE.

*Table 4.18 – Academic Engagement by PSE Persistence, First-Generation PSE Students**

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		First-Gen PSE (n=80)	Not First-Gen PSE (n=199)	First-Gen PSE (n=696)	Not First-Gen PSE (n=1601)	First-Gen PSE (n=248)	Not First-Gen PSE (n=518)
Work with other students*	Frequently	44%	44%	***52%***	***46%***	68%	66%
	Never	11%	6%	***5%***	***8%***	2%	2%
Discuss career with instructor*	Frequently	10%	13%	***15%***	***12%***	25%	29%
	Never	54%	59%	***41%***	***47%***	22%	24%
Participate in recreation/sports*	Frequently	6%	12%	***11%***	***15%***	***11%***	***19%***
	Never	67%	55%	***58%***	***49%***	***58%***	***49%***

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized***.

Delayed Entry Students

Current students who had delayed entry to PSE were more likely than other current students to frequently ask questions in class and to discuss career plans with an instructor (*Table 4.19*). They were less likely, however to communicate electronically with other students and to participate in recreation or sports programs. Both current delayed entry students and delayed entry graduates were much more likely than other students to report that they never skipped classes.

*Table 4.19 – Academic Engagement by PSE Persistence, Delayed Entry Students**

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		Delayed Entry (n=27)	Not Delayed Entry (n=226)	Delayed Entry (n=159)	Not Delayed Entry (n=2058)	Delayed Entry (n=56)	Not Delayed Entry (n=609)
Ask questions/ participate in class*	Frequently	62%	34%	***57%***	***40%***	71%	56%
	Never	8%	15%	***4%***	***11%***	2%	4%
Skip classes*	Frequently	19%	15%	***5%***	***6%***	***2%***	***6%***
	Never	19%	32%	***54%***	***41%***	***59%***	***37%***
E-communication with students*	Frequently	50%	59%	***64%***	***76%***	75%	80%
	Never	4%	8%	***4%***	***3%***	5%	2%
Discuss career with instructor*	Frequently	15%	11%	***17%***	***12%***	29%	28%
	Never	58%	56%	***35%***	***46%***	14%	24%
Participate in recreation/ sports*	Frequently	15%	8%	***9%***	***14%***	7%	18%
	Never	50%	61%	***64%***	***51%***	59%	52%

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Time Use

To better understand how PSE participants deal with the challenges of managing their time while attending school, respondents were asked to indicate the hours they normally spend each week on various activities during the school year. A majority of respondents across all three PSE pathways reported spending 11 hours a week or more on activities related to their academic program, and up to 10 hours a week on other campus or school activities (Table 4.20).

For more than three-quarters of respondents, travel to and from school involved up to 10 hours each week. Between one-third and one-half of respondents reported volunteering, one-quarter of respondents spent time caring for dependents, and about one in 10 was engaged in unpaid work at a family business or farm.

Compared to current students and PSE graduates, early leavers spent somewhat less time on academic activities, but were similar in the time spent on non-academic campus activities. PSE graduates were the most likely to volunteer, with half reporting spending up to 10 hours a week on volunteer activities.

*Table 4.20 – Time Use by PSE Persistence, PSE Participants**

		Attended/ left	Still attending	Attended/ complete
Activities related to your academic program*	None	***1%***	***1%***	***1%***
	1-10 hours	***43%***	***38%***	***33%***
	11+ hours	***56%***	***62%***	***66%***
Travelling to and from school*	None	***13%***	***17%***	***8%***
	1-10 hours	***79%***	***73%***	***82%***
	11+ hours	***9%***	***10%***	***10%***
Campus or school activities other than attending classes or labs	None	27%	26%	24%
	1-10 hours	54%	59%	63%
	11+ hours	18%	15%	14%
Volunteer activities*	None	***62%***	***61%***	***45%***
	1-10 hours	***35%***	***35%***	***49%***
	11+ hours	***3%***	***4%***	***6%***
Caring for dependents	None	77%	75%	71%
	1-10 hours	14%	17%	19%
	11+ hours	9%	8%	11%
Unpaid work at a family business or farm	None	88%	87%	85%
	1-10 hours	8%	11%	13%
	11+ hours	4%	2%	2%

Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are *bolded and italicized.

When results for under-represented groups were compared to non-designated students, there were no significant differences among early leavers (Table 4.21). Current PSE students from under-represented groups, however, spent less time than non-designated current students on academic and other school activities, and more time travelling to and from school. PSE graduates from under-represented groups also spent more time travelling to and from school, and were much more likely to report dependent care obligations.

*Table 4.21 – Time Use by PSE Persistence, Under-represented Students**

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
Activity	**# of Hours**	**Under-represented (n=125)**	**Non-designated (n=121)**	**Under-represented (n=920)**	**Non-designated (n=1233)**	**Under-represented (n=317)**	**Non-designated (n=351)**
Academic activities*	None	1%	1%	***1%***	***1%***	1%	1%
	1-10	41%	47%	***41%***	***34%***	34%	33%
	11+	58%	52%	***58%***	***65%***	65%	66%
Travelling to and from school*	None	11%	12%	***14%***	***20%***	***6%***	***10%***
	1-10	81%	79%	***74%***	***72%***	***81%***	***84%***
	11+	8%	9%	***12%***	***8%***	***13%***	***6%***
Non-academic campus or school activities*	None	24%	31%	***30%***	***22%***	26%	23%
	1-10	61%	49%	***57%***	***62%***	62%	63%
	11+	15%	21%	***13%***	***16%***	12%	14%

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
Activity	**# of Hours**	**Under-represented (n=125)**	**Non-designated (n=121)**	**Under-represented (n=920)**	**Non-designated (n=1233)**	**Under-represented (n=317)**	**Non-designated (n=351)**
Caring for dependents*	None	78%	75%	70%	79%	***63%***	***78%***
	1-10	15%	15%	18%	15%	***21%***	***16%***
	11+	7%	10%	12%	5%	***16%***	***7%***

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Aboriginal Students

Insufficient n sizes did not permit comparisons between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal early leavers. However, Aboriginal current students reported spending less time than non-Aboriginal students on non-academic campus or school activities (Table 4.22). They spent much more time on dependent care responsibilities, and are also more likely to be involved in unpaid work for a family business or farm.

*Table 4.22 – Time Use by PSE Persistence, Aboriginal Students**

		Attended/ left	Still attending		Attended/ complete
Activity	**# of Hours**	**Aboriginal (n=5)**	**Aboriginal (n=38)**	**Non-Aboriginal (n=2168)**	**Aboriginal (n=12)**
Non-academic campus or school activities*	None	n=1	***39%***	***25%***	n=4
	1-10	n=4	***45%***	***60%***	n=6
	11+	n=1	***16%***	***14%***	n=2
Unpaid family business/ farm work*	None	n=4	***74%***	***87%***	n=11
	1-10	-	***21%***	***11%***	n=1
	11+	n=1	***5%***	***2%***	-
Caring for dependents*	None	n=4	***53%***	***76%***	n=7
	1-10	n=1	***24%***	***16%***	n=4
	11+	-	***21%***	***7%***	n=1

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Students with Disabilities

By disability status, there were no significant differences within the early leaver pathway. Both current students with disabilities, and especially those who had graduated, reported spending more time than students without disabilities on caring for dependents (Table 4.23).

*Table 4.23 – Time Use by PSE Persistence, Students with Disabilities**

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
Activity	**# of Hours**	**Disability (n=39)**	**No Disability (n=221)**	**Disability (n=185)**	**No Disability (n=2005)**	**Disability (n=51)**	**No Disability (n=678)**
Caring for dependents*	None	79%	76%	***69%***	***76%***	***57%***	***72%***
	1-10	10%	15%	***18%***	***16%***	***22%***	***19%***
	11+	10%	9%	***12%***	***8%***	***22%***	***10%***

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

First-Generation PSE Students

While first-generation early leavers were similar to other students in their use of time while at school, current students who were first-generation PSE spent more time travelling between school and home, and less time on non-academic campus or school activities (Table 4.24). Both current first-generation students and graduates were more likely to report dependent care obligations than students who were not first-generation.

*Table 4.24 – Time Use by PSE Persistence, First-Generation PSE Students**

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
Activity	**# of Hours**	**First-Gen PSE (n=80)**	**Not First-Gen PSE (n=199)**	**First-Gen PSE (n=696)**	**Not First-Gen PSE (n=1601)**	**First-Gen PSE (n=248)**	**Not First-Gen PSE (n=518)**
Travelling to and from school*	None	8%	15%	***14%***	***19%***	6%	9%
	1-10	83%	77%	***74%***	***73%***	82%	82%
	11+	9%	9%	***12%***	***9%***	13%	8%
Non-academic campus or school activities*	None	23%	29%	***30%***	***24%***	26%	22%
	1-10	61%	52%	***56%***	***61%***	62%	63%
	11+	16%	20%	***14%***	***15%***	12%	14%
Caring for dependents*	None	73%	78%	***70%***	***77%***	***65%***	***73%***
	1-10	18%	13%	***18%***	***16%***	***20%***	***18%***
	11+	9%	9%	***12%***	***7%***	***15%***	***9%***

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Delayed Entry Students

Again, there were no significant differences between delayed entry early leavers and those who were not delayed entry. Current students who delayed their entry into PSE spent considerably more time travelling to and from school than other students, and less time on non-academic

campus or school activities (Table 4.25). Delayed entry graduates were more likely to have dependent care obligations.

*Table 4.25 – Time Use by PSE Persistence, Delayed Entry Students**

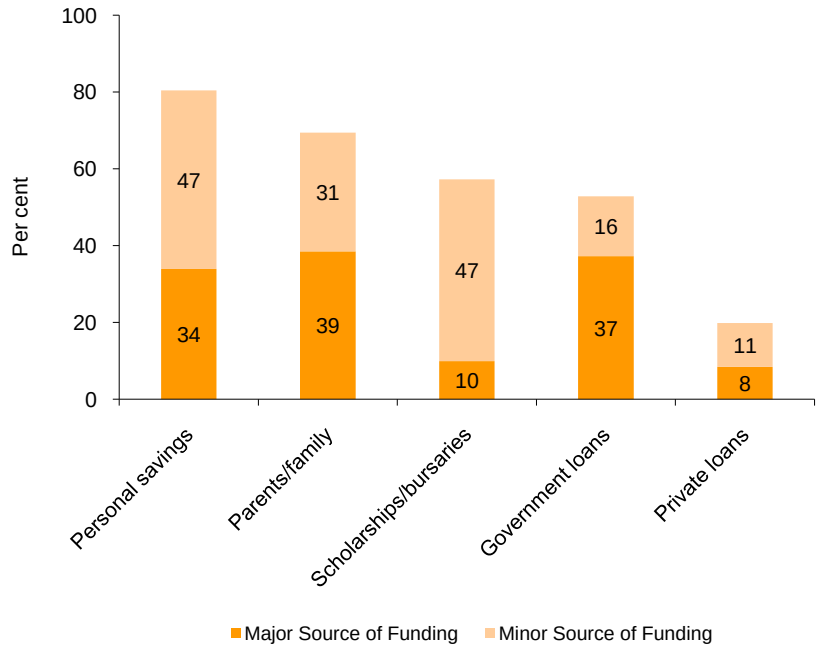
		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
Activity	**# of Hours**	**Delayed Entry (n=27)**	**Not Delayed Entry (n=226)**	**Delayed Entry (n=159)**	**Not Delayed Entry (n=2058)**	**Delayed Entry (n=56)**	**Not Delayed Entry (n=609)**
Travelling to and from school*	None	4%	13%	***6%***	***18%***	4%	9%
	1-10	92%	79%	***80%***	***72%***	82%	82%
	11+	4%	9%	***14%***	***10%***	15%	9%
Non-academic campus or school activities*	None	15%	29%	***40%***	***25%***	29%	24%
	1-10	77%	52%	***49%***	***60%***	60%	62%
	11+	8%	19%	***11%***	***15%***	11%	14%
Caring for dependents*	None	77%	75%	61%	76%	***62%***	***73%***
	1-10	12%	16%	14%	17%	***16%***	***18%***
	11+	12%	8%	24%	7%	***22%***	***10%***

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

PSE Financing

The PSE Outcomes Study asked respondents to indicate how much each of the five possible sources of funding was contributing to help them cover the costs of their postsecondary education, including tuition, books, travel, and living expenses. As shown in Figure 4.11, four out of five PSE participants (81%) relied on personal savings to help fund their postsecondary studies, and more than two-thirds (70%) turned to parents or family members for financial assistance. More than half received scholarships or bursaries (57%) or accessed government student loans (53%), which were frequently identified as a major source of PSE funding. About one in five students (19%) borrowed money from private sources to pay for their education.

Figure 4.11 – Sources of Funding, PSE Participants



As shown in Table 4.26, PSE graduates were less likely than other PSE participants to identify their parents or family members as major contributors to their PSE funding. They were, however, the most likely to report receiving scholarships or bursaries (62%). By contrast, only half of early leavers received scholarships and bursaries.

*Table 4.26 – Sources of Funding by PSE Persistence**

	Level of Contribution	Attended/ left	Still attending	Attended/ complete
Personal savings	Major	30%	31%	35%
	Minor	47%	49%	46%
	None	23%	20%	18%
Parents/family*	Major	***38%***	***41%***	***32%***
	Minor	***32%***	***30%***	***33%***
	None	***30%***	***29%***	***35%***
Scholarships/bursaries*	Major	***7%***	***11%***	***9%***
	Minor	***44%***	***46%***	***53%***
	None	***49%***	***44%***	***38%***
Government student loans	Major	39%	37%	38%
	Minor	11%	17%	14%
	None	49%	47%	48%
Private loans	Major	10%	8%	10%
	Minor	11%	11%	12%
	None	79%	81%	77%

*Where statistically significant differences exist ($p < 0.05$), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

When under-represented applicants were compared to other applicants, those who were currently attending PSE relied slightly less on personal savings than non-designated current students, but were more likely to regard personal savings as a major PSE contributor (Table 4.27). They received slightly less financial support from their families or scholarships or bursaries, but reported higher participation in government student aid programs, and usually depended on loans for a major part of their PSE funding. Under-represented students who completed their programs were also less likely than non-designated students to receive financial support from their family, but more likely to borrow from private sources to fund their PSE.

*Table 4.27 – Sources of Funding by PSE Persistence, Under-represented Students**

	Level of Contribution	Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		Under-represented (n=121)	Non-designated (n=125)	Under-represented (n=920)	Non-designated (n=1233)	Under-represented (n=351)	Non-designated (n=317)
Personal savings*	Major	33%	28%	***33%***	***29%***	37%	34%
	Minor	39%	53%	***45%***	***52%***	44%	48%
	None	28%	18%	***22%***	***19%***	19%	18%
Parents/ family*	Major	33%	45%	***30%***	***48%***	***25%***	***39%***
	Minor	32%	32%	***30%***	***30%***	***30%***	***35%***
	None	35%	23%	***40%***	***21%***	***45%***	***26%***
Scholarships/ bursaries*	Major	11%	4%	***10%***	***11%***	7%	8%
	Minor	44%	45%	***44%***	***49%***	49%	57%
	None	45%	51%	***47%***	***40%***	43%	35%
Government student loans*	Major	43%	31%	***44%***	***32%***	42%	34%
	Minor	11%	11%	***15%***	***18%***	13%	13%
	None	45%	58%	***41%***	***50%***	45%	53%
Private loans*	Major	8%	12%	9%	7%	***13%***	***9%***
	Minor	11%	9%	12%	11%	***14%***	***10%***
	None	80%	79%	80%	82%	***73%***	***82%***

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Aboriginal Students

Insufficient n sizes did not permit comparisons between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal early leavers. While Aboriginal current students were similar to their non-Aboriginal peers in their likelihood of applying for scholarships or bursaries, they were much more likely to consider this source of funding as a major contributor to their postsecondary education (Table 4.28).

*Table 4.28 – Sources of Funding by PSE Persistence, Aboriginal Students**

	Level of Contribution	Attended/ left	Still attending		Attended/ complete
		Aboriginal (n=5)	Aboriginal (n=38)	Non-Aboriginal (n=2168)	Aboriginal (n=12)
Scholarships / bursaries*	Major	n=1	***26%***	***10%***	n=1
	Minor	n=4	***29%***	***46%***	n=6
	None	n=1	***42%***	***43%***	n=4

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Students with Disabilities

Compared to students without disabilities, both early leavers and graduates with disabilities were much less likely to draw upon personal savings to fund their PSE (Table 4.29). Among current PSE students, those with disabilities relied less on parental contributions, and more on government student loans than those without disabilities.

*Table 4.29 – Sources of Funding by PSE Persistence, Students with Disabilities**

	Level of Contribution	Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		Disability (n=39)	No Disability (n=221)	Disability (n=185)	No Disability (n=2005)	Disability (n=51)	No Disability (n=678)
Personal savings*	Major	***31%***	***30%***	28%	31%	***35%***	***35%***
	Minor	***31%***	***50%***	47%	49%	***33%***	***47%***
	None	***38%***	***20%***	25%	20%	***31%***	***18%***
Parents/family *	Major	31%	38%	***37%***	***41%***	30%	33%
	Minor	33%	33%	***25%***	***30%***	24%	33%
	None	36%	29%	***38%***	***28%***	46%	34%
Government student loans*	Major	51%	37%	***38%***	***36%***	38%	38%
	Minor	10%	11%	***23%***	***16%***	16%	14%
	None	38%	52%	***38%***	***47%***	46%	49%

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

First-Generation PSE Students

First-generation students who left PSE before completing were similar to their peers in the sources they used to fund their education. Current first-generation PSE students relied more than other students on government student loans, and were much less likely to rely on family contributions or receive scholarships or bursaries (Table 4.30). First-generation students who completed their programs of study were also less likely to identify parents as a source of funding and more likely to access student loans.

*Table 4.30 – Sources of Funding by PSE Persistence, First-Generation PSE Students**

	Level of Contribution	Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		First-Gen PSE (n=80)	Not First-Gen PSE (n=199)	First-Gen PSE (n=696)	Not First-Gen PSE (n=1601)	First-Gen PSE (n=248)	Not First-Gen PSE (n=518)
Parents/ family*	Major	29%	41%	***29%***	***46%***	***23%***	***37%***
	Minor	32%	33%	***31%***	***30%***	***30%***	***34%***
	None	39%	26%	***40%***	***24%***	***47%***	***29%***
Scholarships/ Bursaries*	Major	9%	7%	***10%***	***11%***	9%	9%
	Minor	42%	45%	***43%***	***47%***	49%	55%
	None	49%	48%	***48%***	***42%***	43%	36%
Government student loans*	Major	42%	38%	***46%***	***33%***	***45%***	***35%***
	Minor	14%	10%	***14%***	***18%***	***11%***	***15%***
	None	44%	52%	***40%***	***49%***	***45%***	***50%***

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Delayed Entry Students

Current students who delayed their entry into PSE reported less use of personal savings (Table 4.31). They were also much less likely to rely on parental contributions (only 42% compared to 73% of non delayed entry students), or to receive scholarships or bursaries. They were much more likely to access government student loans, with the majority of current delayed entry students identifying this as a major source of funding. Delayed entry students who completed their PSE program were also less likely to have received scholarships or bursaries, and were more likely than other students to finance their education through private loans.

*Table 4.31 – Sources of Funding by PSE Persistence, Delayed Entry Students**

	Level of Contribution	Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		Delayed Entry (n=27)	Not Delayed Entry (n=226)	Delayed Entry (n=159)	Not Delayed Entry (n=2058)	Delayed Entry (n=56)	Not Delayed Entry (n=609)
Personal savings*	Major	28%	30%	***31%***	***31%***	42%	35%
	Minor	52%	45%	***40%***	***50%***	40%	46%
	None	20%	26%	***28%***	***19%***	18%	19%
Parents/ family*	Major	40%	39%	***17%***	***42%***	20%	34%
	Minor	20%	33%	***25%***	***31%***	35%	32%
	None	40%	28%	***58%***	***27%***	45%	33%
Scholarships/ bursaries*	Major	8%	8%	***8%***	***11%***	***5%***	***8%***
	Minor	40%	44%	***36%***	***47%***	***40%***	***54%***
	None	52%	48%	***56%***	***42%***	***55%***	***37%***

	Level of Contribution	Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		Delayed Entry (n=27)	Not Delayed Entry (n=226)	Delayed Entry (n=159)	Not Delayed Entry (n=2058)	Delayed Entry (n=56)	Not Delayed Entry (n=609)
Government student loans*	Major	36%	39%	***52%***	***36%***	41%	38%
	Minor	20%	9%	***14%***	***17%***	13%	13%
	None	44%	51%	***35%***	***47%***	46%	49%
Private loans*	Major	4%	11%	6%	8%	***21%***	***9%***
	Minor	12%	9%	14%	11%	***21%***	***11%***
	None	85%	80%	80%	81%	***57%***	***80%***

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Reasons for Leaving PSE

The PSE Outcomes Study asked respondents who left PSE prior to completing their program to indicate the influence of 24 factors on their decision to leave the school they were attending. A five-point influence scale was used from "very little" to "very much," with additional options for "does not apply" and "did not influence." Ranking the results as index scores (the proportion influenced multiplied by the mean level of influence) reveals that two of the three most influential reasons for early school leaving were changes in career goals, and transferring to another postsecondary institution – reconceptualizing early school leaving less as "dropping out" and more as a deliberate strategy to pursue a specific career goal. The second most influential reason, dislike for the program, may be related to two other highly-ranked factors – lack of connection to school and uncertainty about PSE. Academic factors, including low grades and time management problems, were also relatively influential, as were higher than expected costs. Other financial factors (insufficient financial aid and not receiving financial aid) were much lower ranked.

Table 4.32 – Influence of Reasons for Leaving PSE Prior to Completion, Early Leavers

	Proportion Influenced	Mean Influence	Index Score
Career goals changed	58%	3.9	2.29
Did not like the program	62%	3.3	2.04
Transferred to another postsecondary institution	44%	4.2	1.82
Felt unconnected to the school/students/faculty	50%	3.3	1.68
Personal/family issues	46%	3.4	1.56
Marks were too low	42%	3.3	1.40
Felt uncertain about postsecondary education	43%	3.0	1.27
Costs of attending school were higher than I expected	40%	3.0	1.19
Problems with time management	43%	2.7	1.16
Wanted a break from school	36%	2.8	1.01
Difficulty with some teachers	35%	2.8	1.00
Difficulty balancing school with family responsibilities	34%	2.9	0.99
Campus was too far from home	33%	2.9	0.96

	Proportion Influenced	Mean Influence	Index Score
Difficulty balancing school with job responsibilities	29%	2.8	0.84
Financial aid was insufficient	27%	3.0	0.81
Health-related problems	24%	3.2	0.78
Relocated to another community	21%	3.4	0.71
Interested in travel opportunities	23%	2.9	0.66
Program was not my first choice	21%	3.0	0.64
Did not receive financial aid	19%	2.9	0.56
Found employment	20%	2.8	0.56
Campus was not easily accessible by public transit	17%	2.6	0.46
School was not my first choice	17%	2.6	0.46
Pregnancy	6%	3.4	0.22

The rank-ordered results for each under-represented group are shown in Table 4.33 below, with the shaded boxes indicating the top five reasons for leaving prior to completing. Rank-ordered results that are bolded, italicized and marked with an asterisk (*) indicate where index scores for a specific group were significantly higher than the index scores for respondents not in the group. Given the small n size for Aboriginal respondents, results are presented as counts and were not included in the analysis. (*See Appendix C for index scores for under-represented, first-generation PSE, delayed entry applicants, and applicants with disabilities*.)

Compared to other respondents, health-related problems and difficulties balancing school and family had significantly greater influence for early school leavers from under-represented groups.

Health-related concerns were the top reason for applicants with disabilities to leave school before completing, followed by personal issues and low marks. These applicants rated time management problems as significantly more influential than applicants without disabilities. Distance of the campus from home, ranked 13th overall, was among the top 10 reasons for these applicants.

Among the four under-represented groups, delayed entry applicants were the most influenced by financial issues, with higher than expected costs the second-most influential reason for leaving. However, the number one reason for these applicants was a lack of connection to school. Difficulties balancing school and family were also more influential, ranking among the top 10 reasons for leaving. In addition, delayed entry applicants were the most influenced by finding employment.

*Table 4.33 – Ranked Reasons for Leaving PSE Prior to Completion, Early Leavers**

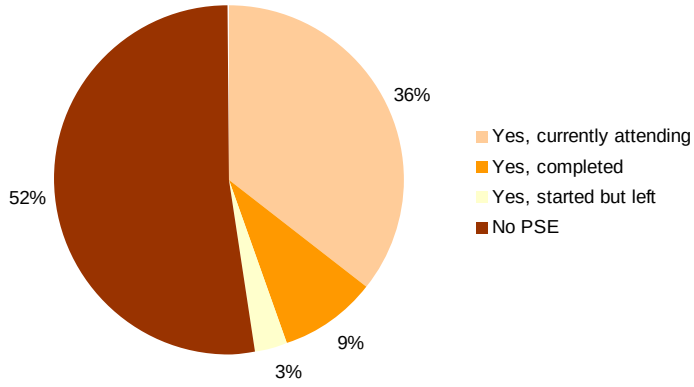
Overall Rank		Under-represented (n=122)	Aboriginal (n=5)	Disability (n=39)	First-gen PSE (n=78)	Delayed Entry (n=25)
1	Career goals changed	1	n=4	4	1	7
2	Did not like the program	2	n=4	6	2	5
3	Transferred to another PSE institution	5	n=3	8	5	4
4	Felt unconnected	3	n=4	5	3	1
5	Personal/family issues	4	n=1	2	4	3
6	Marks were too low	6	n=1	3	8	9
7	Uncertainty about PSE	10	n=1	10	9	13
8	Higher costs than expected	7	n=4	11	6	***2****
9	Problems with time management	8	n=1	***7****	7	10
10	Wanted a break from school	12	n=3	17	11	16
11	Difficulty with some teachers	14	n=1	14	12	18
12	Difficulty balancing school with family	***11****	n=2	12	10	6
13	Campus was too far from home	15	n=2	9	17	22
14	Difficulty balancing school with job	16	n=1	15	14	17
15	Insufficient financial aid	13	n=1	13	13	8
16	Health-related problems	***9****	n=1	***1****	15	11
17	Relocated to another community	17	n=1	16	18	14
18	Interested in travel opportunities	18	n=2	19	16	15
19	Program was not my first choice	22	n=1	22	21	23
20	Did not receive financial aid	21	n=1	21	20	20
21	Found employment	19	n=1	20	19	12
22	School was not my first choice	23	n=1	23	22	19
23	Inconvenient public transit	20	n=4	18	23	21
24	Pregnancy	24	-	24	24	24

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Later PSE Participation

Respondents who had graduated from PSE or left before completing their program were asked if they had attended any other postsecondary institutions since their initial application. As shown in Figure 4.12, at the time of their participation in the PSE Outcomes Study more than one-third of these respondents (36%) were currently attending another PSE institution, and one in 10 had already completed another postsecondary program.

Figure 4.12 – Later Postsecondary Experiences, "Attended/Left" an "Attended/Complete" Respondents



Comparison of early leavers to PSE graduates shows that close to two-thirds of the students who left their initial program (62%) participated in later postsecondary education, compared to 40% of the PSE graduates (Table 4.34). Close to half the early leavers (47%), but only 30% of PSE graduates, were currently attending another PSE program when they responded to the PSE Outcomes Study. Rates of leaving a later postsecondary program prior to completion were higher among students who left their initial PSE program, than among those who completed (6% vs. 1%).

*Table 4.34 – Later PSE Experiences by PSE Persistence**

	Overall	Attended/left (n=271)	Attended/complete (n=761)
Yes, currently attending	36%	***47%***	***30%***
Yes, completed	9%	***10%***	***9%***
Yes, started but left	3%	***6%***	***1%***
No PSE	53%	***38%***	***60%***

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

There were no significant differences when under-represented groups were compared to non-designated groups. Within the under-represented groups, delayed entry and first-generation PSE students were similar to students who were not delayed entry or first-generation in their likelihood of participating in later PSE. The small n size for Aboriginal students prevented the testing of results for significance. As shown in Table 4.35 below, students with disabilities who graduated from their initial PSE program were more likely to go on to subsequent PSE, and to complete a later PSE program, than PSE graduates without disabilities.

*Table 4.35 – Later PSE Experiences by PSE Persistence, Students with Disabilities**

	Attended/ left		Attended/ complete*	
	Disability (n=39)	No Disability (n=221)	Disability (n=51)	No Disability (n=678)
Yes, currently attending	44%	49%	***31%***	***30%***
Yes, completed	5%	10%	***20%***	***8%***
Yes, started but left	3%	6%	***2%***	***2%***
No PSE	49%	35%	***47%***	***61%***

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Chapter 5. PSE and the Labour Market

This chapter explores the labour market participation of applicants to postsecondary education, whether they were employed while attending PSE, entered the labour market after completing or leaving PSE, or went straight to employment without PSE. Participation in the labour market while attending PSE provides applicants with opportunities to develop new skills and gain practical work experience, facilitating later transitions to full-time employment. At the same time, research suggests that there may be costs associated with participating in the job market, including a negative impact on academic performance, disengagement from studies, and dropping out of school (CCL, 2009). Hango and de Broucker (2007) conclude that while postsecondary education has consistently been shown to increase labour market success, not all graduates experience the same benefits.

Employment During PSE

Although a larger proportion of students who left school prior to completion were employed while attending PSE (60%) than current students (41%), employment does not appear to be strongly associated with completion, since students who completed their program of study were the most likely to have held a job during their postsecondary studies (66%) (Figure 5.1).

Both early leavers and graduates worked more hours than current students, with the majority working 15 hours or more (Table 5.1). Among current students, the majority reported working 14 hours or less each week (55%), including 23% who worked under 8 hours a week. Although the vast majority of all students who were employed while attending PSE worked off campus, PSE graduates were more likely than other PSE participants to work on-campus, while early leavers were the least likely.

Figure 5.1 – Employment During PSE

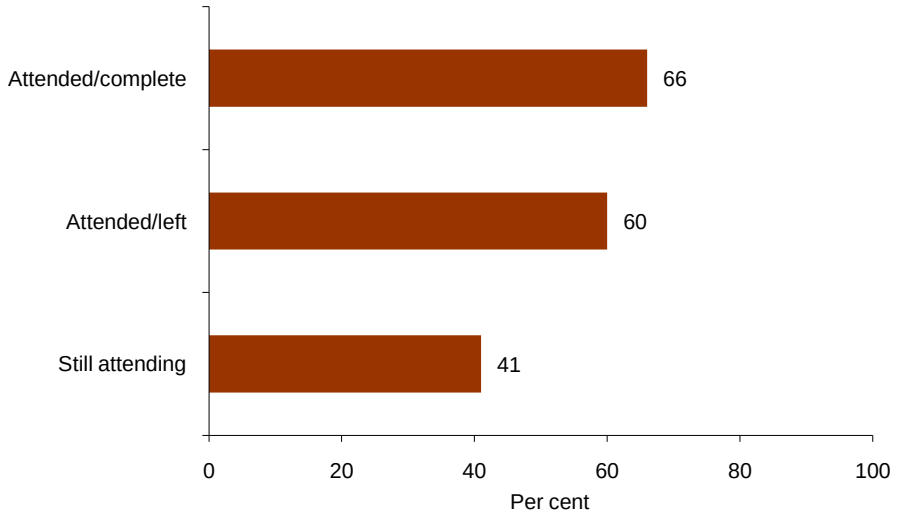


*Table 5.1 – Nature of Employment During PSE**

		Attended/ left (n=161)	Still attending (n=939)	Attended/ complete (n=500)
Location of employment*	On-campus	***11%***	***16%***	***20%***
	Off-campus	***89%***	***84%***	***80%***
Hours spent working per week*	7 or less	***13%***	***23%***	***15%***
	8 – 14	***30%***	***32%***	***28%***
	15 – 20	***33%***	***25%***	***35%***
	21+	***25%***	***20%***	***22%***

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Comparison of the employment experiences of under-represented and non-designated students shows that current PSE students from the under-represented groups were less likely to work on-campus than other students, and also worked more hours per week (Table 5.2). PSE graduates from the under-represented groups were also less likely to work on-campus than non-designated graduates.

*Table 5.2 – Employment During PSE, Under-represented Students**

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		Under-represented (n=122)	Non-Designated (n=121)	Under-represented (n=911)	Non-Designated (n=1233)	Under-represented (n=315)	Non-Designated (n=351)
Location of employment*	On-campus	11%	12%	***14%***	***19%***	***14%***	***24%***
	Off-campus	89%	88%	***86%***	***81%***	***86%***	***76%***
Hours spent working per week*	7 or less	19%	9%	***19%***	***26%***	13%	16%
	8 – 14	36%	26%	***30%***	***33%***	24%	33%
	15 – 20	24%	38%	***28%***	***24%***	35%	33%
	21+	21%	26%	***22%***	***18%***	28%	19%

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Analysis of the employment experiences of students from the under-represented groups shows no significant differences between delayed entry applicants and those who were not delayed entry across the three pathways, and n sizes for Aboriginal students were insufficient to enable comparison to non-Aboriginal students. Some significant differences were noted, however, in the pathways of students with disabilities and those who were first-generation PSE.

As shown in Table 5.3, early leavers with disabilities worked significantly fewer hours while attending school than early leavers without disabilities. Although current students with disabilities were similar to their peers in average hours worked, they reported different patterns of work: they were more likely to work long hours (21 hours or more) and less likely to work 14 hours a week or less. Graduates with disabilities were significantly less likely to have been employed while attending school than graduates without disabilities.

*Table 5.3 – Employment During PSE, Students with Disabilities**

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		Disability (n=39)	No Disability (n=221)	Disability (n=185)	No Disability (n=2005)	Disability (n=51)	No Disability (n=678)
Employed*	Yes	54%	62%	40%	41%	***46%***	***67%***
	No	46%	38%	60%	59%	***54%***	***33%***
Hours spent working per week*	7 or less	***36%***	***8%***	***17%***	***24%***	22%	14%
	8 – 14	***27%***	***31%***	***39%***	***31%***	17%	29%
	15 – 20	***18%***	***35%***	***14%***	***27%***	35%	34%
	21+	***18%***	***26%***	***30%***	***19%***	26%	22%

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Current students who were first-generation PSE were less likely than non first-generation students to work on-campus and also worked more hours each week (Table 5.4). First-generation students who had completed their program of study were also less likely to work on-campus.

*Table 5.4 – Employment During PSE, First-Generation PSE Students**

		Attended/ left		Still attending		Attended/ complete	
		First-Generation PSE (n=80)	Not First-Generation (n=199)	First-Generation PSE (n=696)	Not First-Generation (n=1601)	First-Generation PSE (n=248)	Not First-Generation (n=518)
Location of employment*	On-campus	9%	12%	***13%***	***18%***	***13%***	***23%***
	Off-campus	91%	88%	***87%***	***82%***	***87%***	***77%***
Hours spent working per week*	7 or less	9%	13%	***19%***	***24%***	13%	16%
	8 - 14	40%	27%	***29%***	***34%***	24%	30%
	15 - 20	24%	36%	***33%***	***22%***	36%	34%
	21+	27%	24%	***20%***	***20%***	27%	20%

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Current Employment

Applicants who had completed or left PSE, had declined admission, or had not received an offer were asked to describe their current employment status and whether they were going to school or looking for work.[15] Almost three-quarters of students who had completed PSE were employed or self-employed (72%) at the time they responded to the PSE Outcomes Study, compared to about two-thirds of early school leavers (67%), decliners (64%), and applicants who were not offered admission (63%) (*Figure 5.2*).

[15] Students who are employed, or unemployed but available to work, are considered by Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey to be labour market participants. Students who are unemployed and attending school full-time, or are not available to work because they are going to school, are considered to be out of the labour force. Because the PSE Outcomes Study did not ask unemployed respondents about their availability for work, this chapter does not report overall labour market participation rates.

Since “attended/complete” applicants had attained a college or university credential, it is not surprising that they were the least likely to be going to school – whether employed (19%) or unemployed (15%) (Table 5.5). At the same time, these applicants were the most likely to be looking for another job while engaged in employment.

Respondents who were not offered admission at the time of their initial application to PSE were the most likely to be holding down a job while attending school, with almost one-third (31%) combining employment with school. Close to one-quarter (23%) were unemployed and going to school.

Applicants who declined offers of admission had the highest incidence of being out of the labour market altogether because they were unemployed and not looking for work (8%).

Figure 5.2 – Employment by PSE Pathway

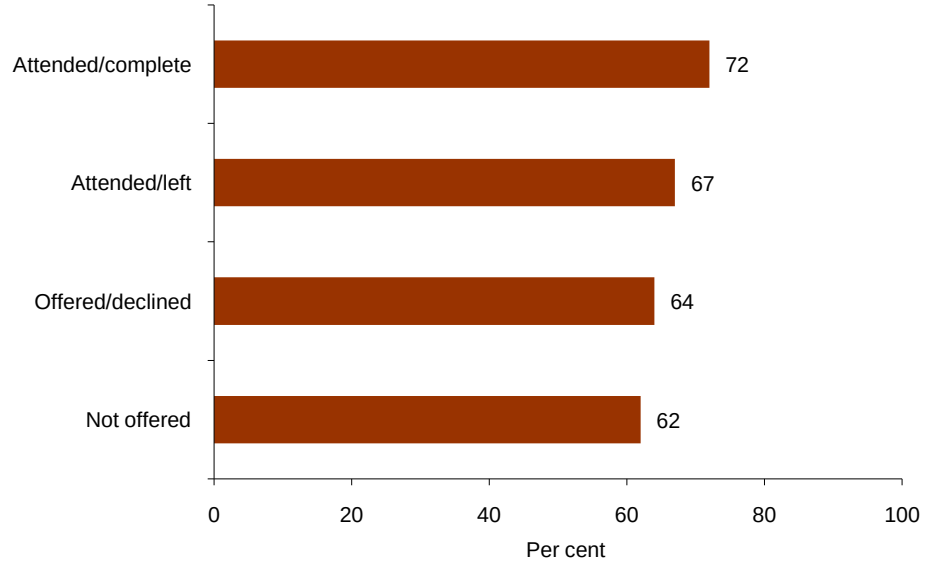


*Table 5.5 – Current Employment by PSE Pathway**

	Not offered	Offered/ declined	Attended/ left	Attended/ complete
Employed or self-employed	***23%***	***26%***	***31%***	***36%***
Employed/self-employed and going to school	***31%***	***27%***	***27%***	***19%***
Employed/self-employed, looking for another job	***9%***	***10%***	***10%***	***17%***
Not employed and looking for work	***12%***	***9%***	***10%***	***11%***
Not employed and going to school	***23%***	***20%***	***18%***	***15%***
Not employed and not looking for work	***3%***	***8%***	***5%***	***2%***

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

There were no statistically significant differences when under-represented and non-designated applicants were compared within each pathway. Similarly, with the exception of delayed entry applicants in the "not offered" pathway, there were no significant differences when results for each of the four under-represented groups were analyzed. Delayed entry applicants who were not offered admission were less likely than non-delayed entry applicants to be employed (57% compared to 64%), and more likely to be unemployed and not looking for work (7% compared to 2%) (Table 5.6). Among "not offered" applicants who were employed, those who delayed entry were much more likely to be looking for another job (19% compared to 6%) than other entry types

*Table 5.6 – Current Employment by PSE Pathway, Delayed Entry Applicants**

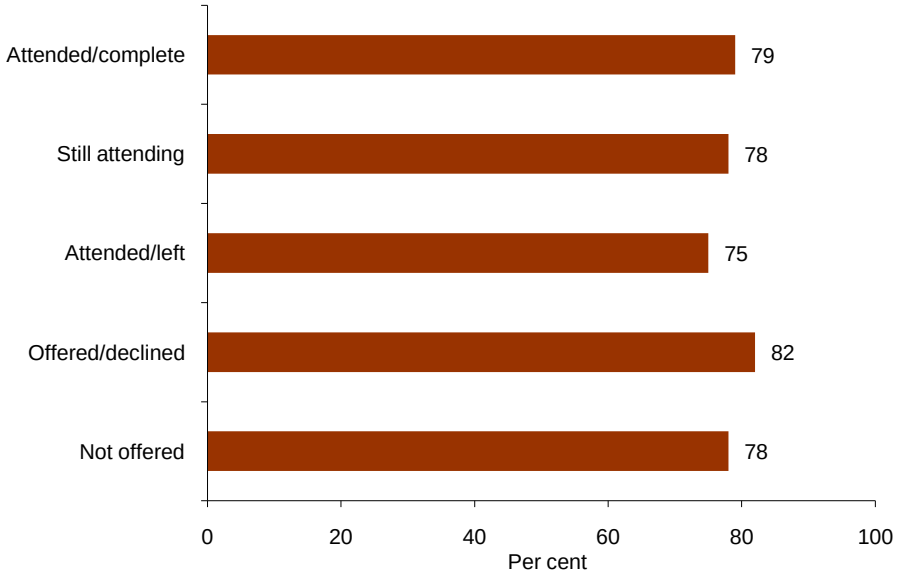
	Not offered*		Offered/ declined		Attended/ left		Attended/ complete	
	Delayed Entry (n=42)	Not Delayed Entry (n=206)	Delayed Entry (n=24)	Not Delayed Entry (n=218)	Delayed Entry (n=32)	Not Delayed Entry (n=239)	Delayed Entry (n=55)	Not Delayed Entry (n=600)
Employed	***17%***	***25%***	33%	31%	19%	26%	44%	35%
Employed and school	***21%***	***33%***	21%	28%	25%	29%	18%	19%
Employed and looking	***19%***	***6%***	17%	7%	22%	9%	16%	17%
Not employed and looking	***14%***	***12%***	4%	10%	13%	9%	13%	12%
Not employed and school	***21%***	***21%***	21%	17%	22%	20%	7%	16%
Not employed and not looking	***7%***	***2%***	4%	6%	0%	8%	2%	2%

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Career Goals and Employment Satisfaction

At least three-quarters of all respondents indicated that they had a specific occupation or career goal in mind at the time of their application to postsecondary education. Although there appear to be variations between pathways in the likelihood of entering PSE with a career goal in mind, the differences are not significant (Figure 5.3). Similarly, there were no differences within the "not offered," "offered/declined," "still attending," and "attended/left" pathways between under-represented and non-designated applicants. When each of the four under-represented groups was considered separately, one significant difference was noted: applicants with disabilities who completed their PSE program were much more likely to have had a career goal in mind when they began their postsecondary education (92%) than PSE graduates without disabilities (78%).

Figure 5.3 – Career Goal at Application to PSE



Respondents who were employed when they participated in the PSE Outcomes Study were asked to indicate how closely their job reflected their career goals, and their levels of satisfaction with their employment and earnings. This section presents results for respondents who were engaged in full-time employment when they responded to the survey, that is, those who reported working 32 hours a week or more.

Applicants who had completed their program of study were the most likely to indicate that their job was closely related to their career goals (59%), and also expressed the highest level of satisfaction with their employment (Table 5.7). Although the majority of early leavers (56%) reported that their employment was not at all related to their career goals, these applicants were nevertheless relatively satisfied with their professional lives. Job satisfaction was lowest among applicants who had declined offers to PSE, almost half of whom reported a mismatch between their job and their career goals (46%).

Surprisingly, applicants who were not offered admission to PSE were the most likely to report incomes of $50,000 or more. Two possible explanations for this finding were explored: first, that the high-income "not offered" applicants had lower average employment earnings than other high-income applicants, and second, that the high-income "not offered" applicants had previous postsecondary experience, allowing them to secure better jobs. Although there were insufficient n sizes among the highest-income respondents to test for significance, the income distribution of the "not offered" respondents did not appear to be skewed toward the lower end of the $50,000+ category (as may have been expected). In addition, the majority of the $50,000+ respondents from all four pathways had previous postsecondary education when they initially applied to PSE, ranging from 58% in the "not offered" pathway to 100% in the "offered/declined" and "attended/left" pathways. Instead of either of these explanations, it may be that the higher

reported earnings among "not offered" respondents was due to their longer workforce attachment and earnings seniority. (It should also be noted that the analysis did not consider gender or type of institution, both of which have been shown to have an impact on employment earnings).

For all applicants, satisfaction with income was lower than satisfaction with employment. There were no meaningful differences in income satisfaction by applicant pathway.

*Table 5.7 – Employment Satisfaction & Income by Pathway, Respondents in Full-time Employment**

		Not offered (n=59)	Offered/ declined (n=80)	Attended/ left (n=71)	Attended/ complete (n=296)
Job/career goals*	Closely related	***40%***	***29%***	***25%***	***59%***
	Somewhat	***35%***	***25%***	***18%***	***22%***
	Not at all	***26%***	***46%***	***56%***	***19%***
Mean job satisfaction*		***3.6***	***3.4***	***3.7***	***3.9***
Current employment income*	> $5,001	***-***	***5%***	***-***	***2%***
	$5,001-$20,000	***17%***	***28%***	***26%***	***15%***
	$20,001-$35,000	***30%***	***27%***	***46%***	***35%***
	$35,001-$50,000	***23%***	***23%***	***19%***	***31%***
	$50,001+	***30%***	***17%***	***17%***	***9%***
Mean income satisfaction		3.3	3.2	3.3	3.1

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

To explore the overall impact of past PSE experience on job and income satisfaction, pathway results were analyzed by respondent entry type. While entry type did not significantly affect respondent satisfaction with income, the analysis revealed a significant difference in the employment satisfaction of respondents in the "not offered" pathway (*Table 5.8*). "Not offered" applicants who applied to PSE directly from secondary school were significantly more satisfied with their employment than "not offered" applicants who had attended PSE before they applied.[16]

[16] The significance of results for delayed entry respondents could not be determined because of small n sizes.

*Table 5.8 – Mean Employment Satisfaction by Pathway and Entry Type, Respondents in Full-time Employment**

		Not offered (n=59)*	Offered/ declined (n=80)	Attended/ left (n=71)	Attended/ complete (n=296)
Mean job satisfaction	Direct entry	***4.1***	3.6	3.3	4.0
	Delayed entry	3.6	3.5	3.9	3.9
	PSE Experience	***3.3***	3.2	3.6	3.9

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

As shown in Table 5.9, results were further analyzed to compare labour market outcomes of applicants who later attended postsecondary education after declining or not receiving offers of admission, to those who never participated in PSE. Given the small n size for "not offered" applicants who later attended PSE, results are presented as counts in the table below. Applicants who initially declined an offer to PSE, but subsequently attended postsecondary education, were considerably more satisfied with their job than those who did not participate in later PSE.

*Table 5.9 - Employment Satisfaction & Income by Pathway, Respondents in Full-time Employment**

		Not offered		Offered/ declined	
		Later PSE (n=17)	No PSE (n=42)	Later PSE (n=22)	No PSE (n=58)
Job/career goals	Closely related	n=9	34%	32%	26%
	Somewhat	n=5	37%	18%	29%
	Not at all	n=3	29%	50%	45%
Mean job satisfaction*		-	3.4	***3.6***	***3.3***
Current employment income	> $5,001	n=0	-	5%	6%
	$5,001-$20,000	n=0	23%	23%	29%
	$20,001-$35,000	n=4	30%	23%	29%
	$35,001-$50,000	n=5	18%	36%	17%
	$50,001 +	n=3	30%	14%	19%
Mean income satisfaction		-	3.2	3.1	3.3

*Where statistically significant differences exist (p <0.05), results are ***bolded and italicized.***

Small n sizes precluded comparison between Aboriginal, disability, first-generation PSE, and delayed entry respondents and respondents not in these groups. Some statistically significant differences, however, were evident in comparisons between respondents from all under-represented groups, and non-designated respondents (*Table 5.10*). Under-represented applicants who completed their PSE program were less likely than other PSE graduates to be employed in jobs related to their career goals. Among applicants who did not receive offers of admission, close to half of those from non-designated groups were earning $50,000 or more, compared to only 12% of under-represented applicants. By contrast, two-thirds of under-represented applicants in the "not offered" pathway reported employment incomes under $35,000.

*Table 5.10 – Employment Satisfaction & Income by Pathway, Under-represented Respondents**

		Not offered		Offered/ declined		Attended/ left		Attended/ complete	
		Under-rep. (n=29)	Non-des. (n=24)	Under-rep. (n=35)	Non-des. (n=28)	Under-rep. (n=35)	Non-des. (n=28)	Under-rep. (n=130)	Non-des. (n=131)
Job/ career goals*	Closely related	31%	28%	14%	41%	28%	14%	***58%***	***61%***
	Somewhat	35%	26%	14%	17%	26%	14%	***18%***	***27%***
	Not at all	34%	46%	71%	41%	46%	71%	***24%***	***12%***
Mean job satisfaction		3.5	3.7	3.9	3.1	3.9	3.1	3.9	3.9
Current employ-ment income*	> $5,001	-	-	-	3%	-	-	2%	3%
	$5,001-$20,000	***29%***	***25%***	25%	37%	25%	25%	15%	13%
	$20,001-$35,000	***38%***	***44%***	57%	23%	44%	57%	39%	32%
	$35,001-$50,000	***21%***	***33%***	23%	27%	19%	14%	12%	13%
	$50,001 +	***12%***	***48%***	18%	10%	13%	4%	2%	3%
Mean income satisfaction		3.1	3.8	3.0	3.5	3.3	2.9	3.3	3.4

Chapter 6. Conclusions & Future Research

As other studies have indicated, the majority of Ontario students recognize the value of postsecondary education and aspire to some form of PSE (CCL, 2009; King et al., 2009). Indeed, our analysis of the pathways of Ontario PSE applicants suggests that once students have made the decision to apply to postsecondary education they are strongly committed to achieving that goal, regardless of the initial outcome of their application. Postponing PSE to another year was the single-most influential reason for applicants to decline admission to PSE, and notably few applicants "changed their minds" about PSE. The majority of respondents who did not receive offers, declined offers of admission, or left PSE prior to completion reported subsequent participation in PSE. Even among "not offered" and "offered/declined" applicants who had not attended later PSE, the majority indicated plans to pursue postsecondary study in the future. These findings reinforce the complexity of PSE pathways, which reflect a continual flow between the labour market to PSE and back again.

Our exploration of the pathways of under-represented applicants highlights differences in the PSE participation and persistence of applicants who face barriers to PSE – because of Aboriginal status, disability, parental education, or delaying entry to PSE. Overall, under-represented applicants were less likely to attend PSE immediately following their application than applicants who did not fall into one of these four groups (only 83% went on to PSE compared to 88% of non-designated applicants).

Among under-represented applicants in the "not offered" and "offered/declined" pathways, delayed entry applicants were almost twice as likely as all other applicants not to receive offers at all. Both delayed entry and first-generation PSE applicants were more likely to decline offers of admission than non-designated applicants. With a decline rate more than double that of non-designated applicants, Aboriginal applicants had the highest rate of declining offers of admission among the four under-represented groups. Within the "attended/left," "still attending," and "attended/complete" pathways, applicants with disabilities had significantly higher rates of early school leaving than other applicants, and lower rates of PSE completion.

Similar to non-designated applicants, postponing PSE was the most influential reason for under-represented applicants to decline admission to PSE. At the same time, however, financial factors tended to carry greater weight in the decisions of applicants from under-represented groups, including higher than expected costs of postsecondary study, insufficient financial aid, not receiving financial aid and distance of the campus from home. For these applicants, day-to-day concerns about balancing school and employment were more influential than changes in career goals. Pregnancy, the least influential factor for most applicants, was a particular influence on delayed entry applicants who declined offers of admission to PSE.

Among applicants who went on to attend PSE, those from under-represented groups made similar – and in many cases greater – use of student support services as their non-designated peers, and expressed comparable levels of satisfaction. Contrary to what might have been expected, this finding held true for early leavers from the four under-represented groups, who used personal counselling, prior learning and assessment, and services for students with disabilities more than other early leavers.

When under-represented early leavers were considered separately, students with disabilities who left PSE prior to completion made much greater use of both personal counselling and disability services than early leavers without disabilities, and were also more likely to access orientation programs, financial aid services, academic advising, PLA, and peer mentoring. Delayed entry early leavers also used financial aid and recreation facilities more than their peers. The only under-represented early leavers who made less use of student support services than other students were the first-generation PSE group, who reported less frequent use of recreation facility, tutoring, and services for students with disabilities.

In terms of perceptions of school experience, early leavers – whether from under-represented groups or not – had much poorer perceptions of their experiences at school than current PSE students and graduates. Similarly, all early leavers reported much lower levels of engagement in their school activities than current PSE students or graduates, with no significant differences between under-represented and non-designated applicants. Early leavers from under-represented groups were also statistically identical to non-designated students in their time use at school. They drew upon similar sources of PSE funding, and reported the same top five reasons for leaving.

Analysis of results within each of the under-represented groups sheds light on the higher incidence of early school leaving among students with disabilities.[17] Early leavers with disabilities were much less likely than other early leavers to feel supported in their non-academic responsibilities. They were less likely to complete assignments on time, and to access personal savings to finance their PSE education. The top reason for these applicants to leave school prior to completion was health-related problems, followed by personal issues and low marks. Although delayed entry applicants were no more likely than other applicants to leave prior to completing their program, they cited lack of connection to school as their number one reason for leaving, and were much more influenced by financial issues.

Whether applicants attended PSE or not – and whether they left early or completed their program of study – between two-thirds and three-quarters of respondents were participating in the labour market at the time of the PSE Outcomes Study (this analysis excludes “still attending” applicants). With the single exception of delayed entry applicants in the “not offered” pathway, there were no significant differences in labour market outcomes between under-represented and non-designated applicants. Delayed entry “not offered” applicants were less likely to be employed, and those who were employed were much more likely to be looking for another job. They were also more likely to be out of the labour market altogether.

[17] While the incidence of early school leaving was the same for Aboriginal applicants as other applicants, it should be noted that there were too few Aboriginal early leavers for meaningful analysis of their use of student support services, perceptions of school experience, school engagement, and reasons for leaving.

This study of the pathways from PSE application to the labour market suggests a number of priority issues for further research to assist in effective policy development.

Further exploration of the experience of visible minority applicants and those born outside Canada may be warranted. Analysis of YITS data suggests that these applicants and their families have high educational aspirations (Taylor & Krahn, 2005) and that they are more likely to attend university than non-visible minority youth (Hango & de Broucker, 2007; Lambert et al., 2004). Yet immigrant and visible minority youth continue to face significant barriers to labour market participation. Recent research from Colleges Ontario found that students who took at least one ESL course during secondary school were less likely to attend college or university than non-ESL youth, and were more likely to leave before completion (King et al., 2009). Similarly, the PSE Outcomes Study reveals considerable variation in the educational outcomes for some visible minority groups, with Black applicants more likely not to receive an offer or to decline admission, and Chinese and South Asian applicants more likely to be current PSE students. Further research into the educational and labour market experiences of visible minority and immigrant applicants to postsecondary education in Ontario would add valuable insights into what has been recognized as a key policy priority.

The PSE Outcomes Study research showed that students with disabilities were more likely to leave postsecondary education prior to completion than students without disabilities, echoing data from the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) that indicated an increase in the proportion of youth with disabilities who have had to withdraw from education because of a physical condition (HRSDC, 2009). In contrast, YITS research suggested that limiting physical or mental conditions do not increase the incidence of postsecondary leaving (Hango & de Broucker, 2007). More detailed analysis of the pathways of applicants with disabilities, including the type of disability, may help shed light on their postsecondary experiences.

The PSE Outcomes Study indicated that applicants to skilled trades/apprenticeship programs were more likely to decline offers of admission than applicants to other programs. Exploring the pathways of these applicants, and their demographic and academic characteristics, may assist in understanding the reasons for their decision to decline.

The PSE Outcomes Study considers all applicants to postsecondary education as a group, and does not distinguish between type of institution. Additional research should be conducted to explore differences in the factors that affect participation and persistence at college and university, and in the employment outcomes associated with type of postsecondary education, particularly for under-represented groups.

Although “attended/left” respondents were less likely than “attended/complete” respondents to be married when they applied to PSE (7% compared to 11%), similar proportions of applicants in both pathways reported having dependent children at the time of leaving or completing their PSE program. While having dependent children does not appear to be associated with either PSE leaving or completing, the possible relationship between lone parenting and early PSE leaving may be worthy of further investigation.

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Appendices

	Question	Target
1.	Were you offered admission to any of the schools to which you applied in [Year}? [1] Yes [2] No ----------->>>>> go to GROUP E (main logic shown)	ABCDE[18]
2.	How many offers of admission did you receive in [Year}? [1] 1 [2] 2 [3] 3 [4] 4 [5] 5 [6] 6 or more [7] Don't know	ABCD
3.	Did you attend any of the post-secondary institutions that offered you admission in [Year]? [1] Yes ----------->>>>> go to GROUP ABC [2] No ----------->>>>> go to GROUP D (main logic shown)	ABCD
4.	What type of school did you attend after your offer of admission in [Year]? [1] University [2] College [3] Private career college [4] Other educational institution, please specify	ABC
5.	What type of school offered you admission in [Year]? (Select all that apply) [1] University [2] College [3] Private career college [4] Other educational institution, please specify	D
6.	What is the name of the school you attended? Drop-down list of Canadian universities, Ontario colleges, Ontario private career colleges + other	ABC
7.	Was RGSCH your first-choice school when you applied to post-secondary in [Year]? [1] Yes [2] No [3] Don't know	ABC
8.	Did you receive an offer of admission from your first-choice school? [1] Yes [2] No [3] Don't know	D

[18] A=Still attending, B=Attended/complete, C=Attended/left, D=Offered/declined, E=Not offered

	Question	Target
9.	What was the subject area of your program of study? [1] Agriculture/Agricultural Operations [2] Business/Administration/Marketing/Commerce/Accounting [3] Communication/Journalism/Media Studies [4] Computer Science/Information Technology [5] Education [6] Engineering/Applied Sciences/Architecture [7] Environmental Studies/Geography/Urban Planning [8] Fine Arts/Performing Arts/Music [9] Health Sciences [10] Hospitality/Tourism/Culinary [11] Humanities/Languages/Philosophy/History [12] Law/Security & Protective Services [13] Natural Sciences/Mathematics [14] Parks & Recreation/Leisure & Fitness Studies [15] Religious Studies/Theology [16] Social Sciences/Political Science/Sociology/Psychology [17] Social & Community Services (Early Childhood Education, Personal Support Worker, etc.) [18] General Studies [19] Preparatory/Upgrading [20] Skilled Trades/Apprenticeship [21] Other, please specify	ABC
10.	What was your first-choice subject area? [1] Agriculture/Agricultural Operations [2] Business/Administration/Marketing/Commerce/Accounting [3] Communication/Journalism/Media Studies [4] Computer Science/Information Technology [5] Education [6] Engineering/Applied Sciences/Architecture [7] Environmental Studies/Geography/Urban Planning [8] Fine Arts/Performing Arts/Music [9] Health Sciences [10] Hospitality/Tourism/Culinary [11] Humanities/Languages/Philosophy/History [12] Law/Security & Protective Services [13] Natural Sciences/Mathematics [14] Parks & Recreation/Leisure & Fitness Studies [15] Religious Studies/Theology [16] Social Sciences/Political Science/Sociology/Psychology [17] Social & Community Services (Early Childhood Education, Personal Support Worker, etc.) [18] General Studies [19] Preparatory/Upgrading [20] Skilled Trades/Apprenticeship [21] Other, please specify	DE

	Question	Target
11.	What was the category of your trades/apprenticeship program? [1] Aerospace/Aviation [2] Agriculture/Horticulture [3] Automotive/Vehicle/Motive Power [4] Construction [5] Electrical/Electronics/Telecommunications [6] Health & Beauty [7] Manufacturing [8] Marine [9] Natural Resources [10] Services [11] Tourism & Hospitality [12] Other, please specify	ABCDE
12.	Were you offered admission to your first-choice program? [1] Yes [2] No [3] Don't know	D
13.	Was this program your first choice when you applied to post-secondary education in [Year]? [1] Yes [2] No [3] Don't know	ABC
14.	Have you attended any classes at RGSCH as part of your trades/apprenticeship program? [1] Yes [2] No	ABC
15.	When do you expect to begin attending classes at RGSCH? [1] Within 1 month [2] Within 3 months [3] Within 6 months [4] More than 6 months [5] Don't know	ABC
16.	What was your status at RGSCH? [1] Full-time student [2] Part-time student [3] Other, please specify	ABC
17.	Were you planning to attend post-secondary education as a… [1] Full-time student [2] Part-time student [3] Other	DE
18.	Have you completed your full program of study at RGSCH? [1] Yes---------->>>>>> go to Group B (main logic shown) [2] No	ABC
19.	Are you currently attending RGSCH? [1] Yes --------->>>>>>> go to Group A (main logic shown) [2] No	AC
20.	Did you begin attending RGSCH but leave before completing your full program of study? [1] Yes ---------->>>>>> go to Group C (main logic shown) [2] No ---------->>>>>> Thank and terminate	C
21.	Is this your first year of study? [1] Yes [2] No	A

	Question	Target
22.	In what year do you plan to complete your program of study at RGSCH? [1] 2010 [2] 2011 [3] 2012 [4] 2013 [5] 2014 [6] Don't know [7] Other, please specify	A
23.	In what year did you complete your program of study at RGSCH? [1] 2005 [2] 2006 [3] 2007 [4] 2008 [5] 2009 [6] Don't know [7] Other, please specify	B
24.	In what year did you leave your program of study at RGSCH? [1] 2005 [2] 2006 [3] 2007 [4] 2008 [5] 2009 [6] Don't know [7] Other, please specify	C
25.	Did you complete one or more years of study at RGSCH before leaving your program? [1] Yes [2] No	C
26.	How many years of study did you complete? [1] I year [2] 2 years [3] 3 years	C
27.	How many months did you attend classes before you left RGSCH? [1] Less than 1 month [2] 1-2 months [3] 3-4 months [4] 5-6 months [5] 7-8 months [6] Don't know [7] Other, please specify	C
28.	In your most recent complete year of study, what was your overall grade average, as a percentage or letter grade? [1] 90% or above (mainly A+'s) [2] 80-89% (mainly A's and A-'s) [3] 70-79% (mainly B's) [4] 60-69% (mainly C's) [5] 50-59% (mainly D's) [6] Under 50% (mainly E's and F's) [7] Don't know	A

	Question	Target
29.	In the year you completed your program, what was your overall grade average, as a percentage or letter grade? [1] 90% or above (mainly A+'s) [2] 80-89% (mainly A's and A-'s) [3] 70-79% (mainly B's) [4] 60-69% (mainly C's) [5] 50-59% (mainly D's) [6] Under 50% (mainly E's and F's) [7] Don't know	B
30.	Before leaving RGSCH, did you receive any academic credits for courses you completed? [1] Yes [2] No [3] Don't know	C
31.	For the credits you received, what was your overall grade average, as a percentage or letter grade? [1] 90% or above (mainly A+'s) [2] 80-89% (mainly A's and A-'s) [3] 70-79% (mainly B's) [4] 60-69% (mainly C's) [5] 50-59% (mainly D's) [6] Under 50% (mainly E's and F's) [7] Don't know	C
32.	What is your approximate overall average in your studies so far, as a percentage or letter grade? [1] 90% or above (mainly A+'s) [2] 80-89% (mainly A's and A-'s) [3] 70-79% (mainly B's) [4] 60-69% (mainly C's) [5] 50-59% (mainly D's) [6] Under 50% (mainly E's and F's) [7] Don't know	A
33.	What credential do you expect to obtain from your current program of study? [1] Trade, vocational or apprenticeship certificate/diploma [2] Private career college or training institute certificate/diploma [3] 1-year college certificate [4] 2-year college diploma [5] 3-year advanced college diploma [6] Applied college degree [7] University undergraduate certificate/diploma (below a Bachelor's degree) [8] Bachelor's degree (BA, BSc) [9] Post-graduate certificate [10] Master's degree (MA, MSc) [11] Doctoral degree (PhD) [12] Teaching degree [13] Law degree [14] Business graduate degree (MBA) [15] Medical degree (MD, DDS, DVS) [16] Don't know [17] Other, please specify	A

	Question	Target
34.	What credential did you obtain when you completed your program of study? [1] Trade, vocational or apprenticeship certificate/diploma [2] Private career college or training institute certificate/diploma [3] 1-year college certificate [4] 2-year college diploma [5] 3-year advanced college diploma [6] Applied college degree [7] University undergraduate certificate/diploma (below a Bachelor's degree) [8] Bachelor's degree (BA, BSc) [9] Post-graduate certificate [10] Master's degree (MA, MSc) [11] Doctoral degree (PhD) [12] Teaching degree [13] Law degree [14] Business graduate degree (MBA) [15] Medical degree (MD, DDS, DVS) [16] Don't know [17] Other, please specify	B
35.	What credential were you planning to obtain when you began your program of study? [1] Trade, vocational or apprenticeship certificate/diploma [2] Private career college or training institute certificate/diploma [3] 1-year college certificate [4] 2-year college diploma [5] 3-year advanced college diploma [6] Applied college degree [7] University undergraduate certificate/diploma (below a Bachelor's degree) [8] Bachelor's degree (BA, BSc) [9] Post-graduate certificate [10] Master's degree (MA, MSc) [11] Doctoral degree (PhD) [12] Teaching degree [13] Law degree [14] Business graduate degree (MBA) [15] Medical degree (MD, DDS, DVS) [16] Don't know [17] Other, please specify	C
36.	We would now like to ask about your experience at RGSCH. Please indicate which of the following student services you used. (TABLE) (Frequently/Sometimes/At least once/Never) [1] Career/employment services [2] Services for students with disabilities [3] Aboriginal student services [4] Library resource centre [5] Recreation and athletic facilities [6] Peer mentoring services [7] Academic advising [8] Personal counselling [9] Tutoring services [10] Prior learning and assessment [11] Orientation programs/activities [12] Financial aid services	A

	Question	Target
37.	We would now like to ask about your experience at RGSCH. Please indicate which of the following student services you used. [1] Career/employment services [2] Services for students with disabilities [3] Aboriginal student services [4] Library resource centre [5] Recreation and athletic facilities [6] Peer mentoring services [7] Academic advising [8] Personal counselling [9] Tutoring services [10] Prior learning and assessment [11] Orientation programs/activities [12] Financial aid services	B
38.	We would now like to ask about your experience at RGSCH. Please indicate which of the following student services you used. [1] Career/employment services [2] Services for students with disabilities [3] Aboriginal student services [4] Library resource centre [5] Recreation and athletic facilities [6] Peer mentoring services [7] Academic advising [8] Personal counselling [9] Tutoring services [10] Prior learning and assessment [11] Orientation programs/activities [12] Financial aid services	C
39.	You indicated that you used career/employment services. How satisfied were you with the service? [1] Very satisfied [2] Somewhat satisfied [3] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [4] Somewhat dissatisfied [5] Very dissatisfied [6] Don't know	ABC
40.	You indicated that you used services for students with disabilities. How satisfied were you with the service? [1] Very satisfied [2] Somewhat satisfied [3] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [4] Somewhat dissatisfied [5] Very dissatisfied [6] Don't know	ABC
41.	You indicated that you used Aboriginal student services. How satisfied were you with the service? [1] Very satisfied [2] Somewhat satisfied [3] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [4] Somewhat dissatisfied [5] Very dissatisfied [6] Don't know	ABC

	Question	Target
42.	You indicated that you used the library resource centre. How satisfied were you with the service? [1] Very satisfied [2] Somewhat satisfied [3] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [4] Somewhat dissatisfied [5] Very dissatisfied [6] Don't know	ABC
43.	You indicated that you used the recreation and athletic facilities. How satisfied were you with the facilities? [1] Very satisfied [2] Somewhat satisfied [3] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [4] Somewhat dissatisfied [5] Very dissatisfied [6] Don't know	ABC
44.	You indicated that you used peer mentoring services. How satisfied were you with the service? [1] Very satisfied [2] Somewhat satisfied [3] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [4] Somewhat dissatisfied [5] Very dissatisfied [6] Don't know	ABC
45.	You indicated that you used academic advising. How satisfied were you with the service? [1] Very satisfied [2] Somewhat satisfied [3] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [4] Somewhat dissatisfied [5] Very dissatisfied [6] Don't know	ABC
46.	You indicated that you used personal counseling. How satisfied were you with the service? [1] Very satisfied [2] Somewhat satisfied [3] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [4] Somewhat dissatisfied [5] Very dissatisfied [6] Don't know	ABC
47.	You indicated that you used tutoring services. How satisfied were you with the service? [1] Very satisfied [2] Somewhat satisfied [3] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [4] Somewhat dissatisfied [5] Very dissatisfied [6] Don't know	ABC
48.	You indicated that you used prior learning and assessment. How satisfied were you with the service? [1] Very satisfied [2] Somewhat satisfied [3] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [4] Somewhat dissatisfied [5] Very dissatisfied [6] Don't know	ABC

	Question	Target
49.	You indicated that you attended orientation programs/activities. How satisfied were you with the orientation programs? [1] Very satisfied [2] Somewhat satisfied [3] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [4] Somewhat dissatisfied [5] Very dissatisfied [6] Don't know	ABC
50.	You indicated that you used financial aid services. How satisfied were you with the service? [1] Very satisfied [2] Somewhat satisfied [3] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [4] Somewhat dissatisfied [5] Very dissatisfied [6] Don't know	ABC
51.	Thinking generally about your own experience at RGSCH, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. (RANDOMIZED TABLE) (Strongly agree/Somewhat agree/Neither agree nor disagree/Somewhat disagree/Strongly disagree) [1] I am encouraged to spend time on my coursework. [2] Support is available to help me deal with my homework. [3] Support is available to help me deal with my non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.) [4] I am informed about social opportunities on campus. [5] I am aware of financial aid services. [6] There is at least one person at school (teacher, counselor, staff person, student) I can rely on when I need information or assistance. [7] I understand the academic expectations of my program. [8] Participating in extracurricular and campus activities is an important part of student life.	A
52.	Thinking generally about your own experience at RGSCH, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. (RANDOMIZED TABLE) (Strongly agree/Somewhat agree/Neither agree nor disagree/Somewhat disagree/Strongly disagree) [1] I was encouraged to spend time on my coursework. [2] Support was available to help me deal with my homework. [3] Support was available to help me deal with my non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.) [4] I was informed about social opportunities on campus. [5] I was aware of financial aid services. [6] There was at least one person at school (teacher, counselor, staff person, student) I could rely on when I needed information or assistance. [7] I understood the academic expectations of my program. [8] Participating in extracurricular and campus activities is an important part of student life.	BC

	Question	Target
53.	Thinking generally about your experiences at RGSCH, please indicate how often you engage in the following activities. (RANDOMIZED TABLE) (Frequently/Sometimes/Never) [1] Ask questions in class and participate in class discussions. [2] Work with other students on assignments/projects. [3] Review assignments before handing them in. [4] Use a variety of information sources to complete an assignment/project [5] Complete homework assignments/projects on time. [6] Skip classes. [7] Use electronic communications (email, WebCT/Blackboard, facebook, texting, etc.) to communicate with an instructor [8] Use electronic communications (email, WebCT/Blackboard, facebook, texting, etc.) to communicate with other students [9] Discuss grades/assignments with an instructor [10] Discuss career plans with an instructor [11] Discuss ideas for term papers/class projects with an instructor [12] Participate in campus recreational or sports programs [13] Attend campus, student or school events	A
54.	Thinking generally about your experiences at RGSCH, please indicate how often you engaged in the following activities. (RANDOMIZED TABLE) [1] Asked questions in class and participated in class discussions. [2] Worked with other students on assignments/projects. [3] Reviewed assignments before handing them in. [4] Used a variety of information sources to complete an assignment/project [5] Completed homework assignments/projects on time. [6] Skipped classes. [7] Used electronic communications (email, WebCT/Blackboard, facebook, texting, etc.) to communicate with an instructor [8] Used electronic communications (email, WebCT/Blackboard, facebook, texting, etc.) to communicate with other students [9] Discussed grades/assignments with an instructor [10] Discussed career plans with an instructor [11] Discussed ideas for term papers/class projects with an instructor [12] Participated in campus recreational or sports programs [13] Attended campus, student or school events	BC

	Question	Target
55.	Please indicate how much each of the following factors influenced your decision to leave RGSCH. (RANDOMIZED TABLE) (Does not apply/Did not influence/Very little/2/Somewhat/4/Very much) [1] Found employment [2] Career goals changed [3] Costs of attending school were higher than I expected [4] Did not receive financial aid [5] Financial aid was insufficient [6] Health-related problems [7] Personal/family issues [8] Program was not my first choice [9] School was not my first choice [10] Campus was too far from home [11] Campus was not easily accessible by public transit [12] Wanted a break from school [13] Interested in travel opportunities [14] Pregnancy [15] Difficulty balancing school with job responsibilities [16] Difficulty balancing school with family responsibilities [17] Problems with time management [18] Marks were too low [19] Did not like the program [20] Difficulty with some teachers [21] Felt unconnected to the school/students/faculty [22] Felt uncertain about post-secondary education [23] Transferred to another post-secondary institution [24] Relocated to another community	C
56.	Please indicate how much each of the following factors influenced your decision not to attend post-secondary education after you were offered admission in [Year]. (RANDOMIZED TABLE) (Does not apply/Did not influence/Very little/2/Somewhat/4/Very much) [1] Found employment [2] Career goals changed [3] Costs of attending school were higher than I expected [4] Applied for financial aid but did not receive it [5] Financial aid was insufficient [6] Health-related problems [7] Personal issues [8] Program was not my first choice [9] School was not my first choice [10] Campus was too far from home [11] Campus was not easily accessible by public transit [12] Felt uncertain about post-secondary education [13] Wanted a break from school [14] Interested in travel opportunities [15] Pregnancy [16] Concern about balancing school with job responsibilities [17] Concern about balancing school with family responsibilities [18] Concern about level of academic difficulty [19] Postponed post-secondary education to another year [20] Relocated to another community	D

	Question	Target
57.	Since you applied to post-secondary education in [Year], have you attended any other post-secondary institutions? [1] Yes, currently attending [2] Yes, completed [3] Yes, started but left [4] No	BCDE
58.	Other than your trades/apprenticeship program, since you applied to post-secondary education in [Year], have you attended any other post-secondary institutions? [1] Yes, completed [2] Yes, started but left [3] No	BCDE
59.	What type of post-secondary institution are you currently attending? [1] University [2] College [3] Private career college [4] Other educational institution, please specify	BCDE
60.	What type of post-secondary institution did you attend? (Select all that apply) [1] University [2] College [3] Private career college [4] Other educational institution, please specify	BCDE
61.	What year did you begin attending another post-secondary institution? [1] 2005 [2] 2006 [3] 2007 [4] 2008 [5] 2009	BCDE
62.	Since you applied to college or university in [year], have you obtained any other post-secondary credentials? [1] Yes [2] No	BCDE
63.	What type of post-secondary credential did you obtain? (Select all that apply) [1] Trade, vocational or apprenticeship certificate/diploma [2] Private career college or training institute certificate/diploma [3] 1-year college certificate [4] 2-year college diploma [5] 3-year college (advanced) diploma [6] Applied college degree [7] University undergraduate certificate/diploma (below a Bachelor's degree) [8] Bachelor's degree (BA, BSc) [9] Post-graduate certificate [10] Master's degree (MA, MSc) [11] Doctoral degree (PhD) [12] Teaching degree [13] Law degree [14] Business graduate degree (MBA) [15] Medical degree (MD, DDS, DVS) [16] Don't know [17] Other, please specify	BCDE
64.	Do you plan to pursue other post-secondary education in the future? [1] Yes, full-time [2] Yes, part-time [3] No [4] Don't know	ABC

	Question	Target
65.	Do you plan to pursue other post-secondary education in the future? [1] Yes, full-time [2] Yes, part-time [3] No [4] Don't know	DE
66.	Do you plan to pursue your future post-secondary studies at a school you attended before? [1] Yes [2] No [3] Don't know	ABCDE
67.	Do you plan to apply to the same schools you applied to in [year]? [1] Yes [2] No [3] Don't know	DE
68.	What type of post-secondary institution do you think you will go to? [1] University [2] College [3] Private career college [4] Other educational institution, please specify	ABCDE
69.	Do you plan to continue in a program or subject area you have already studied? [1] Yes [2] No [3] Don't know	ABC
70.	Do you plan to apply to the same program you applied to in [year]? [1] Yes [2] No [3] Don't know	DE
71.	When do you expect to begin your future post-secondary studies? [1] Less than 6 months [2] 6-12 months [3] 1-2 years [4] After 2 years or longer [5] Don't know	ABCDE
72.	Thinking about your decision not to attend post-secondary education in the future, please indicate how much each of the following factors influenced your decision. (RANDOMIZED TABLE) (Does not apply/Did not influence/Very little/2/Somewhat/4/Very much) [1] I already have a good job. [2] I would rather work and make money than go to school. [3] I don't like school. [4] I can't afford to go to school. [5] My grades are not high enough to get in. [6] I worry I won't be able to pass the courses I need to take. [7] I don't need post-secondary education for my chosen career. [8] I can't go to post-secondary education for personal reasons. [9] I can't go to post-secondary education for health-related reasons. [10] I was not accepted into the program I wanted. [11] Going to school is not important to me. [12] I was not accepted at the school I wanted. [13] I need to work to support my family. [14] I don't think I can manage a PSE workload with my job responsibilities. [15] I don't think I can manage a PSE workload with my family responsibilities.	DE

	Question	Target
73.	What is the highest level of education you plan to attain? [1] Trade, vocational or apprenticeship certificate/diploma [2] Private career college or training institute certificate/diploma [3] 1-year college certificate [4] 2-year college diploma [5] 3-year college advanced diploma [6] Applied college degree [7] University undergraduate certificate/diploma (below a Bachelor's degree) [8] Bachelor's degree (BA, BSc) [9] Post-graduate certificate [10] Master's degree (MA, MSc) [11] Doctoral degree (PhD) [12] Teaching degree [13] Law degree [14] Business graduate degree (MBA) [15] Medical degree (MD, DDS, DVS) [16] Don't know [17] Other, please specify	ABCDE
74.	During the school year, how many hours a week do you normally spend on each of the following activities: (TABLE) (None, 1-5 hours / 6-10 hours / 11-15 hours / 16-20 hours / 21-25 hours / More than 25 hours) [1] Travelling to and from school [2] Activities related to your academic program (studying, writing, reading, labs, etc.) [3] Campus or school activities other than attending classes or labs (recreation, social, cultural, etc.) [4] Volunteer activities [5] Unpaid work at a family business or farm [6] Caring for dependents (children, spouse/partner, relatives, etc.)	A
75.	While you were attending school, how many hours a week did you normally spend on each of the following activities: (TABLE) (None/ 1-5 hours / 6-10 hours / 11-15 hours / 16-20 hours / 21-25 hours / More than 25 hours) [1] Travelling to and from school [2] Activities related to your academic program (studying, writing, reading, labs, etc.) [3] Campus or school activities other than attending classes or labs (recreation, social, cultural, etc.) [4] Volunteer activities [5] Unpaid work at a family business or farm [6] Caring for dependents (children, spouse/partner, relatives, etc.)	BC
76.	Are you currently working in paid employment? [1] Yes [2] No	A
77.	Were you employed while you were attending school? [1] Yes [2] No	BC
78.	Please indicate the location of your employment. [1] On-campus [2] Off-campus	ABC
79.	During the school year, about how many hours each week do you normally work in your paid employment? [1] Less than one hour per week [2] 1-3 hours [3] 4-7 hours [4] 8-14 hours [5] 15-20 hours [6] 21-30 hours [7] 30 hours or more [8] Don't know	A

	Question	Target
80.	While you were attending school, about how many hours each week did you normally work in your paid employment? (same options as EMPHR1)	BC
81.	Please indicate how much each of the following sources is contributing to covering your post-secondary education costs (tuition, books, travel, living expenses, etc.) (TABLE) Major contributor (50% or more)/Minor contributor (less than 50%)/Not a contributor [1] Personal (savings, employment earnings, etc.) [2] Parents/family [3] Government student loans (Canada Student Loans, OSAP, etc.) [4] Private loans (Bank loans, credit card advances, student line of credit, etc.) [5]Scholarships, bursaries, etc.	B
82.	While you were attending school, how much did each of the following sources contribute to covering your post-secondary education costs (tuition, books, travel, living expenses, etc.)? (TABLE) (same options as INSCH1)	BC
83.	How would you describe your present employment status? [1] Employed or self-employed [2] Employed or self-employed and going to school [3] Employed or self-employed, but looking for another job [4] Not employed and going to school [5] Not employed and looking for work [6] Not employed and not looking for work	BCDE
84.	On average, how many hours a week do you work? [1] 1-7 hours or less a week [2] 8-16 hours a week [3] 17-24 hours a week [4] 24-32 hours a week [5] 32 hours a week or more	BCDE
85.	Did you have a specific occupation or career in mind before you applied to post-secondary education [1] Yes [2] No [3] Don't know	ABCDE
86.	How closely is your current job related to your program of study at RGSCH? [1] Closely related [2] Somewhat related [3] Not at all related [4] Don't know	ABC
87.	How closely is your current job related to your career goals? [1] Closely related [2] Somewhat related [3] Not at all related [4] Don't know	ABCDE
88.	Considering all aspects of your current job, how satisfied are you with your employment? [1] Very satisfied [2] Somewhat satisfied [3] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [4] Somewhat dissatisfied [5] Very dissatisfied [6] Don't know	ABCDE

	Question	Target
89.	Approximately how much income do you earn annually from your current job? [1] $5,000 or less [2] $5,001-$20,000 [3] $20,001-$35,000 [4] $35,001-$50,000 [5] $50,001-$75,000 [6] $75,001-$90,000 [7] $90,001 or more [8] Don't know [9] Prefer not to answer	ABCDE
90.	Considering the duties and responsibilities of your current job, how satisfied are you with the wages you earn? [1] Very satisfied [2] Somewhat satisfied [3] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied [4] Somewhat dissatisfied [5] Very dissatisfied [6] Don't know	ABCDE
91.	What was your marital status at the time of your application to post-secondary education in [Year]? [1] Married/common-law partner [2] Divorced/separated/widowed [3] Single/never married	ABCDE
92.	How many dependent children do you have? [1] 0 [2] 1 [3] 2 [4] 3 [5] 4 or more	A
93.	How many dependent children did you have at the time you completed your program at RGSCH? [1] 0 [2] 1 [3] 2 [4] 3 [5] 4 or more	B
94.	How many dependent children did you have when you left RGSCH? [1] 0 [2] 1 [3] 2 [4] 3 [5] 4 or more	C
95.	How many dependent children did you have at the time you decided not to attend PSE in [Year]? [1] 0 [2] 1 [3] 2 [4] 3 [5] 4 or more	D
96.	How many dependent children did you have at the time at the time of your application to post-secondary education in [Year]? [1] 0 [2] 1 [3] 2 [4] 3 [5] 4 or more	E

	Question	Target
97.	Are you an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (status or non-status), Métis or Inuit? [1] Yes [2] No [3] Prefer not to answer	ABCDE
98.	People in this country come from many different cultural or racial backgrounds. Are you … (Select all that apply) [1] Black (for example, African, Haitian, Jamaican, Somali, etc.) [2] Caucasian/White [3] Chinese [4] Filipino [5] Japanese [6] Korean [7] Arab (for example, Egyptian, Lebanese, Moroccan, etc.) [8] West Asian (for example, Afghan, Iranian, Turk, etc.) [9] South Asian (for example, East Indian, Pakistani, Punjabi, Sri Lankan, etc.) [10] Southeast Asian (for example, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, etc.) [11] Latin American [12] Prefer not to answer [13] Other, please specify	ABCDE
99.	Do you consider yourself to have a disability (physical, mental health or learning)? [1] Yes [2] No [3] Prefer not to answer	ABCDE