

**GRADUATE OUTCOMES SURVEY  
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS  
HIGHLIGHTS REPORT**

*Prepared for:*  
**Alberta Innovation and Advanced Education**

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## SECTION 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

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Alberta Innovation and Advanced Education (IAE) seeks to promote and foster lifelong learning in Alberta. Since 1998, the Government of Alberta and publicly funded post-secondary institutions have collaborated to conduct a biennial survey of graduates to assess outcomes such as graduate satisfaction, achievement of personal goals, employment status and compensation. The ongoing collection of this important research reflects IAE's continued commitment to ensure that enrolment in post-secondary programs promotes the success of Albertans through self-enlightenment and enhanced employability.

IAE commissioned the Graduate Outcomes Survey – Class of 2011/12 (GOS) in 2013 to take place in early 2014. R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. was contracted to conduct the survey and synthesize the results for IAE. The purpose of the GOS is to determine post-secondary graduates' satisfaction with their post-secondary education experiences, as well as their continuing education and employment outcomes approximately two years after graduating. The GOS findings are provided to both IAE and individual post-secondary institutions, and are used to inform strategic planning and results reporting.

A total of 25 publically funded post-secondary institutions participated in the GOS for the class of 2011/12. The participating institutions included the following:

### **Comprehensive Academic & Research Institutions**

Athabasca University  
University of Alberta  
University of Calgary  
University of Lethbridge

### **Comprehensive Community Institutions**

Bow Valley College  
Grande Prairie Regional College  
Keyano College  
Lakeland College  
Lethbridge College  
Medicine Hat College  
NorQuest College  
Northern Lakes College  
Olds College  
Portage College  
Red Deer College

### **Baccalaureate & Applied Studies Institutions**

Grant MacEwan University  
Mount Royal University

### **Polytechnical Institutions**

Northern Alberta Institute of Technology  
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology

### **Independent Academic Institutions**

Concordia University College of Alberta  
The King's University College  
Ambrose University College  
St. Mary's University College  
Canadian University College

### **Specialized Arts & Culture Institutions**

Alberta College of Art and Design

The GOS was administered as a mixed-mode survey, with survey interviews conducted by telephone and online. Field testing was conducted from January 21 to 24, 2014. Full survey administration took place from February 12, 2014 to May 18, 2014.

The final sample of 14,012 completions from public institutions represents a valid response rate of 54.7% (gross response of 45.4%). Survey interviews averaged 21.7 minutes per survey, with surveys

averaging a length of 23.2 minutes over the telephone and 19.5 minutes online. In total, 47.8% of surveys were completed over the telephone, while 52.2% were completed online.

## SECTION 2: DEMOGRAPHICS

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The majority (96%) of graduates had completed the K-12 (or K-13 where applicable) system. Younger respondents were more likely to have finished high school. More specifically, 99% of graduates aged 22 and younger, 98% of those aged 23 to 25, 97% aged 26 to 30, 93% of graduates aged 31 to 40, and 91% of graduates aged 41 or older had completed high school, respectively. Finally, graduates who had last attended the K-12 system in Alberta were also more likely to have completed high school (97%) versus those having lived elsewhere in (95%) or outside (94%) Canada.

Graduates having attended high school elsewhere within Canada most commonly originated from British Columbia (29%) or Ontario (24%). Those having attended high school from outside Canada most commonly came from China (17%), India (12%), or the Philippines (8%). Of graduates aged 25 and younger, 84% had last attended high school in Alberta, versus 54% of graduates aged 26 and older. Comparatively, 26% of graduates aged 31 and older last attended high school outside of Canada. Those who earned graduate degrees (Masters or Doctoral) were less likely to have last attended high school in Alberta: only 39% of Masters graduates and 23% of Doctoral graduates had last attended high school in Alberta, compared to 64% of Certificate graduates, 76% of Applied and Bachelor degree graduates, and 69% of Diploma graduates. Of Doctoral graduates, 43% attended high school outside of Canada.

Forty percent of graduates had at least one parent who had attained undergraduate credentials or higher. For one quarter of graduates (25%), their parents' highest level of education was a college, technical institute, or apprenticeship program. Graduates were more likely to have at least one parent who had completed an undergraduate degree or higher if they had last attended high school in urban Alberta (45%) or outside of Canada (51%), compared to graduates who last attended high school in rural Alberta (30%) or elsewhere in Canada (35%).

Overall, the majority of graduates (59%) were female. This trend held true for all sectors except for Polytechnical where 57% of graduates were male.

The average age of graduates at the time of surveying was 30.1 years with almost one third (31%) being aged 23 to 25. On average, graduates with a degree in Education were the oldest (34.5 years) while those with a degree in Recreation were the youngest (27.1 years). Masters and Doctoral graduates had the highest average ages (37.8 and 38.8 years, respectively).

The majority of post-secondary graduates (69%) were single and had never been married when they began attending their post-secondary program. Older graduates were far more likely to be married or living with partner: 64% of graduates aged 31 or older had been married or living with partner at the start of their program, compared to 11% of graduates aged 30 or younger. Graduates were more likely to be single at the start of their program if they earned an Applied or Bachelor degree (82%) or a Diploma (73%). Graduates who earned graduate degrees were more likely to be married (Masters 56%, Doctoral 50%) or divorced/separated/widowed (Masters 4%, Doctoral 4%).

Overall, most graduates (79%) were not responsible for any dependents. However, 95% of graduates aged 30 or younger reported not having a dependent, whereas only 45% of those aged 31 or older reported the same.

Less than one in twenty (4%) graduates self-identified as Aboriginal. Of these graduates, 50% identified as Métis, 38% identified as Status Indian, 10% identified as Non-status Indian, and 2% identified as Inuit. Aboriginal graduates tended to be older than non-Aboriginal graduates. The average age of Aboriginal graduates was 31.9, while the average age of non-Aboriginal graduates was 30.0. Nearly one quarter (22%) of Aboriginal graduates had a parent who had completed a university degree, versus two fifths (40%) of non-Aboriginal graduates. Finally, just over one third of Aboriginal graduates (36%) reported having at least one dependent compared to 21% of non-Aboriginal graduates.

Almost one fifth (17%) of graduates reported being a visible minority. These respondents tended to be older (31.4 years) than non-minority graduates (29.7 years). In addition, 29% of visible minority graduates reported having a dependent compared to 19% of non-minority graduates.

Three percent of respondents self-identified as having some form of disability. Among these graduates, the most commonly identified disabilities were learning disabilities such as dyslexia (33%), physical impairments (19%), depression, anxiety, and other mental health challenges (17%), ADHD (8%), auditory impairments (5%), and visual impairments (5%). Graduates attending institutions in all sectors were approximately equally likely to report having some form of disability.

## SECTION 3: SATISFACTION

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Graduates reported that they had received various benefits to some extent or to a great extent (ratings of 4 or 5 out of 5) from their post-secondary education. The benefits graduates most often reported were an opportunity to improve themselves (86%), followed by knowledge of a particular field of study (85%).

Respondents indicated that the skills, knowledge, and abilities they most often received (ratings of 4 or 5 out of 5) through their respective programs were:

- Learning independently (79%);
- Working independently (78%);
- Analyzing information (77%);
- Solving problems (75%); and
- Working well with others (74%).

Overall, most graduates reported being either satisfied or very satisfied (ratings of 3 or 4 out of 4) with their overall educational experience (92%), along with the quality of teaching they experienced (91%) and their chosen program overall (90%).

Average reported satisfaction regarding the quality of teaching was 3.5 (out of 4); 46% of graduates were satisfied (rating of 3 out of 4), while 45% were very satisfied (rating of 4 out of 4). Sectors with the highest proportion of graduates who reported being very satisfied with the quality of teaching were Independent Academic Institutions (65%), Baccalaureate & Applied Studies (52%), and Comprehensive Community (52%). Compared to other sectors, graduates from Specialized Arts & Culture Institutions were least likely to have been very satisfied (28%) and most likely to report having been very dissatisfied or dissatisfied (14%).

The only field of study with more than half (56%) of their graduates reporting having been very satisfied with the quality of teaching in their program was Legal and Security programs. Conversely, graduates from Physical, Natural, and Applied Sciences programs (36%) were least likely to report being very satisfied and, together with Education programs, were most likely to report being either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (11%).

Graduates' average level of satisfaction with their program of study was 3.3 (out of 4). Nearly half (44%) of graduates were satisfied (rating of 3 out of 4) with their program, while 46% were very satisfied (rating of 4 out of 4). More than half of graduates from Independent Academic institutions reported being very satisfied with their program (58%) compared to other sectors. Conversely, graduates from Specialized Arts and Culture Institutions reported the highest rate of dissatisfaction (either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied) (21%).

Sectors with more than half their graduates reporting they were very satisfied with the overall quality of their educational experience include: Independent Academic Institutions (60%), Baccalaureate & Applied Studies Institutions (54%), and Comprehensive Community Institutions (52%). Conversely, Specialized Arts and Culture Institutions had the lowest rate of graduates who were very satisfied (31%) and highest rate of graduates who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (19%).

Overall, the majority (88%) of respondents would recommend their program of study to someone else, while 12% would not. When asked if they would recommend the institution they attended, as opposed to their specific program, 95% reported that they would.

The majority of graduates either agreed (55%) or strongly agreed (31%) that the benefits they received from their program were worth the financial cost. There was minimal variation across sectors among those graduates who strongly agreed that the benefits from their program outweighed the costs (29%-32%), with the exception of Specialized Arts & Culture Institutions (13%). In addition, the proportion of graduates who strongly agreed was highest (34%) when total loans accessed was less than \$5,000 and was lowest (28%) when graduates had accessed \$25,000 or more in student loans. Similarly, the proportion of respondents who strongly agreed was highest for those who reported earning \$75,000 or more annually (43%) and lowest when respondents earned less than \$25,000 (24%).

Overall, 5% of graduates participated in a study abroad program, which may have included field school experience, course taken abroad, a studying abroad program, co-op/practicum, or internship outside of Canada. The average level of satisfaction with graduates' study abroad programs was 3.6 (out of 4). Of those graduates who participated in a study abroad program, over two-thirds (69%) reported being very satisfied with the overall quality.



## SECTION 4: FINANCING

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Two thirds of respondents (67%) reported being employed during their studies. In their final year, employed respondents worked an average of 22.8 hours per week.

Almost three quarters (71%) of female respondents worked during their schooling, compared to 60% of males. Respondents aged 41 and older (74%) were most likely to have been employed during their post-secondary education, while those aged 22 and younger (52%) were least likely to have been employed. Graduates who attended Baccalaureate and Applied Studies institutions were the most likely to work while studying (80%), compared to those who attended Comprehensive Community Institutions (57%), and Polytechnical Institutions (60%). Education graduates were the most likely to work while studying (80%), while Trades and Technologists (48%), Physical, Natural, and Applied Sciences (53%), or Legal and Security (60%) program graduates were least likely.

Two-fifths (41%) of respondents received government-sponsored student loans. Those who attended Independent Academic Institutions (57%) were more likely to have received government-sponsored student loans, while those who attended Polytechnical Institutions (36%) were less likely than average. In addition, graduates were most likely to have received government-sponsored loans if they were obtaining an Applied or Bachelor Degree (46%) or a Diploma (43%), versus those who achieved a Certificate (31%).

The average amount owed at the time of graduation by respondents who received government-sponsored student loans was \$20,100, with a median amount of \$16,000. Graduates of Polytechnical Institutions owed the least (mean of \$14,500 and a median of \$13,000), while graduates of Comprehensive Academic and Research Institutions owed the most (mean of \$25,500 and a median of \$22,400). In addition, graduates in Health Sciences (mean \$24,400, median \$20,000) and Education (mean \$21,500, median \$20,000) fields of study had the highest mean and median amounts owed for government-sponsored loans. Trades and Technologists program graduates had the lowest amounts owed with a mean of \$14,100 and a median of \$13,000.

One-fifth (20%) of respondents received loans for education-related expenses from private financial institutions, such as banks. Graduates in Legal and Security programs (28%) were most likely to have received a non-government education loan, while those in Trades and Technologists programs were least likely (14%).

Overall, graduates who had accessed non-government student loans owed an average of \$15,800, with a median of \$10,000. Comprehensive Academic and Research Institutions graduates owed the most for non-government loans, with a mean of \$21,500. As this mean is much higher than that of other institutions, with the median amount owed of \$10,000, this suggests that a portion of graduates from these institutions owed high loan amounts. Specialized Arts and Culture Institutions graduates owed the least, with a mean of \$9,300 owed and a median of \$5,000. With respect to field of study, graduates of Legal and Security programs (mean of \$25,000, median of \$12,000) and Health Sciences programs (mean of \$22,700, median of \$12,000) owed by far the most.

Independent Academic Institution (63%) or Specialized Arts and Culture Institution (60%) graduates were more likely to take out some form of loan. Both government-sponsored and non-government loans were more often accessed if graduates attended an Independent Academic Institution (15%) or a

Comprehensive Academic and Research Institution (14%). Graduates of Specialized Arts and Culture Institutions more commonly only accessed non-government loans (15%), while those who attended Independent Academic Institutions more commonly only accessed government-sponsored loans (43%). Among respondents, 41% reported having received money from family to help finance their education. Graduates were most likely to have received financing from family if they attended a Specialized Arts and Culture Institution (62%), and least likely if they attended a Comprehensive Community Institution (31%). Related to field of study, graduates were most likely to have received family loans if they studied in the areas of Recreation (51%), Physical, Natural, and Applied Sciences (48%), or Language Arts (46%), and least likely if they studied Health Sciences (35%), Legal and Security (36%), Business (37%), or Trades and Technologists (38%).

Graduates who received loans from family owed an average of \$6,400 and median amount of \$0 (this includes the 2,307 graduates [57%] who were not required to pay back family members for the loan). Specialized Arts and Culture graduates owed the most with mean of \$10,300 and median of \$1,000, compared to those who attended Comprehensive Academic and Research Institutions, Comprehensive Community Institutions, Polytechnical Institutions, Independent Academic Institutions, and Baccalaureate and Applied Studies Institutions (each owing a mean between \$5,000 and \$7,800).

Overall, the mean amount owed at graduation for government-sponsored and non-government loans combined was \$22,200. More specifically, more than one-third (34%) of respondents owed \$25,000 or more, while only 17% owed less than \$5,000. Comprehensive Academic and Research graduates owed the most for government-sponsored and non-government loans, with a mean of \$30,000 and a median of \$23,000, while Polytechnical graduates owed the least, with a mean of \$15,000 and a median of \$12,000.

Total debt from all sources (government-sponsored, non-government, and family) for only 2011/12 graduates who received any form of loan was \$18,900, with a median amount owed of \$12,000.

Nearly two thirds (66%) of respondents reported having received a scholarship, grant, or bursary. Three-quarters (75%) of graduates aged 23 to 25 at the time of surveying, had received scholarships, grants, or bursaries, compared to 61% of those aged 31 to 40 and 47% aged 41 or older. Graduates who did not have any dependents (70%) were more likely to have received scholarships, grants or bursaries compared to those with at least one dependent (52%). Graduates of Independent Academic Institutions were more likely to have received scholarships, grants, or bursaries (84%), while Comprehensive Community Institutions (52%) and Polytechnical Institutions (56%) graduates were least likely.

On average, graduates received \$8,500 (median of \$4,000) in scholarships, grants, or bursaries (excluding graduates who did not receive any scholarships, grants, or bursaries). Comprehensive Academic and Research Institutions graduates received the most, on average, in scholarships, grants, and bursaries, with a mean of \$13,200 and a median of \$5,500, whereas Polytechnical Institutions (mean of \$4,100, median of \$2,500) and Comprehensive Community Institutions graduates (mean of \$4,600, median of \$2,500) received the least.

## SECTION 5: TRANSITIONS

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Nearly half (47%) of respondents transitioned from high school into post-secondary studies immediately after graduation. Aboriginal graduates (44%) waited three years or longer than non-Aboriginal graduates (25%) to begin their post-secondary studies. Finally, those who completed high school outside of Canada (31%) were less likely to transition directly into post-secondary studies within one year after high school, compared to those who completed high school in urban Alberta (50%), rural Alberta (49%), or elsewhere in Canada (46%). Comparatively, respondents who completed high school outside of Canada (33%) were more likely to begin their post-secondary studies six years or more after finishing high school than those who completed high school in Canada (22%). This difference may be attributable to those graduates who completed high school outside of Canada and who came to Canada for their graduate education (24% of graduates who completed their high school education outside of Canada). It is likely that these graduates were continuing their post-secondary education.

An immediate transition from high school to post-secondary studies was most likely for those who attended Comprehensive Academic and Research Institutions (65%) or Independent Academic Institutions (60%). Comprehensive Community Institution graduates (28%) were most likely to wait six or more years before beginning their studies. Respondents were most likely to have transitioned into post-secondary education immediately after high school if they had earned a Doctoral degree (67%), an Applied or Bachelor degree (63%), or a Masters degree (57%), compared to those who earned a Diploma (37%) or a Certificate (26%). Graduates who earned these Certificates or Diplomas were more likely than average to have waited three to five years (14% of Certificates, 12% of Diplomas) or six years or longer (28% of Certificates, 19% of Diplomas).

Graduates felt that institution websites (67%) provided the most useful information source for planning their post-secondary education, followed by parents or other relatives (53%), friends (51%), online institutional calendars (49%), and teachers (48%). Graduates who were living outside of Canada when they applied for post-secondary studies tended to rate all information sources as more useful than other graduates.

Almost half of graduates (48%) had completed some post-secondary courses (not adult upgrading) prior to their post-secondary enrollment. Among those more likely to have completed previous post-secondary courses prior to their enrollment are: female respondents (50%, versus 44% of males), respondents 31 years or older (66%), those having at least one dependent (59%), and those who reported having a disability (54%).

Overall, 9% of respondents reported having completed a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) assessment (tools for post-secondary institutions to evaluate knowledge and skills of incoming students which may lead to credit toward one's program). Older graduates were more likely to have completed a PLAR assessment, with 15% of respondents aged 41 or older and 11% of those aged 31 to 40 reported having done so, versus only 5% of those aged 26 to 30, 5% of those aged 23 to 25, and 8% of those aged 22 and younger. In addition, graduates who identified as a visible minority (13%) or as having a disability (14%) were also more likely to have completed a PLAR assessment (compared to 8% non-visible minority, 9% person with no disability). This effect may be due to graduates who identified as a visible minority and/or having a disability being older than those who did not identify as a visible

minority or having a disability. While a written challenge exam (46%) was the most common type of PLAR assessment exam completed, a product assessment (6%) was the least common.

Of those who completed a PLAR assessment, 80% were successful and awarded credits. Of those awarded credits, 42% received three credits (one course equivalent), 38% received six to twelve credits (two to four courses equivalent), 11% received 15 to 30 credits (five to ten courses equivalent), and 10% received greater than 30 credits (11 courses or more equivalent). More specifically, female students (84%) were more successful on their PLAR assessments than males (74%) and visible minority graduates (86%) were more successful than non-minorities (77%). While all those who completed a PLAR assessment at Specialized Arts and Culture institutions were successful (100%), only half of respondents (50%) were successful at Independent Academic Institutions.

Nearly one-third of respondents (32%) took some classes through online or distance learning, with 16% taking at least half of their classes via these alternatives. Older graduates aged 41 or older (57%) reported having used some online or distance learning, compared to 39% of those aged 31 to 40, 28% of those aged 26 to 30, 24% of those aged 23 to 25, and 22% of those aged 22 and younger. Older graduates aged 41 or older (29%) were most likely to have completed the entirety of their program via online or distance learning. As well, those who were living elsewhere in Canada were more likely to make use of online and/or distance learning (48%), versus those living in urban (29%) or rural (31%) Alberta, or outside of Canada (27%).

Younger students aged 25 and under (30%) were more likely to continue their education, compared to 21% of those aged 26 to 30, 20% of those aged 31 to 40, and 14% of those aged 41 and older. Comprehensive Academic and Research institutions graduates (42%) were most likely to return to post-secondary studies, followed by graduates from institutions outside of Alberta (20%). Very few graduates who were furthering their education graduated from Independent Academic Institutions (2%) or Specialized Arts and Culture Institutions (< 1%).

Overall, 64% of respondents who returned to post-secondary studies were studying full-time. Younger graduates aged 22 and younger (79%) and those aged 23 to 25 (75%) were more likely to have reported studying full-time, compared to those aged 26 to 30 (61%), 31 to 40 (47%), and 41 and older (32%). Also, graduates without any dependents (68%) were more likely to continue their education compared to those who had at least one (44%).

Graduates continuing their post-secondary education were most likely to have been working toward an undergraduate degree, such as a Bachelor's degree (28%). Graduate programs (such as a Masters or PhD, were also common) at 26%.

Overall, 27% of graduates had permanently relocated after completing their studies. The most common reasons provided for having relocated was to attain employment (34%), continue education (15%), and family reasons (15%). Men were more likely to have moved in order to attain employment than women (41%, versus 30%) and improve their employment situation (12%, versus 7%), whereas women were more likely to have moved for family reasons (19%, versus 8%) or to have moved back to their family home (10%, versus 5%). Also, graduates with at least one dependent were more likely to have relocated for family reasons (24%) than those without dependents (13%). Conversely, those without dependents were more likely to have moved to acquire further education (16%, compared to 8% of graduates with at least one dependent).

Respondents who permanently relocated were most likely to have moved to urban Alberta (44%). More than one-quarter (27%) moved elsewhere in Canada, while 23% relocated to rural Alberta. A small proportion of respondents (6%) relocated outside of Canada.

## SECTION 6: OUTCOMES

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Respondents' most common goals were the completion a specific degree or diploma (59%) and obtaining employment (15%). The least common goal was obtaining high school equivalency (< 1%). Women were more likely to have set the goal of obtaining a degree or diploma than men (62% versus 55%). Graduates aged 22 or younger (59%), 23 to 25 (66%), and 26 to 30 (59%) were more likely to have set the goal of completing a specific degree or diploma, compared to 53% of those aged 31 to 40 and 49% of those aged 41 and older. As well, those without dependents (62%) were more likely to have set the goal of obtaining a degree or diploma, compared to those with at least one dependent (51%).

Overall, most respondents (81%) fully achieved their primary goal, while an additional 9% mostly achieved it. Only 3% did not achieve their primary goal. Non-minority respondents (83%) were more likely to have achieved their primary goal than visible minority respondents (74%). Those without any disability (82%) were also more likely to have achieved their goals compared to 72% of graduates with a disability.

Nearly one-quarter (24%) of respondents who had not achieved their primary goal indicated it was because they had either changed programs or changed their career plans/goals. Lack of employment opportunities in the graduates' field of study accounted for the inability to achieve their primary goals for 23% of respondents, while 21% indicated that they were enrolled in further education in pursuit of their goal.

At the time of surveying, 88% of graduates reported being employed. Of these graduates, 87% were working full time (30 hours or more per week) and 7% were self-employed. The remaining 12% of graduates includes 6% who were continuing their post-secondary education full time, 4% who were unemployed, and 2% who had withdrawn from the labour force. Graduates without a disability (89%) were more likely to be employed than those with a disability (77%). Graduates who were more likely to have been employed were those who studied in the areas of Legal and Security (92%), Education (92%), and Health Sciences (91%), compared to those who studied Language Arts (84%) and Physical, Natural, and Applied Sciences (86%).

Most respondents who reported being employed had a single job (81%), 16% were working two jobs, and 4% were working three or more jobs. Women were more likely than men to have been working more than one job (21%, versus 16%) and respondents with a disability were more likely than those without to have been working more than one job (24%, versus 18%).

Related to sector of employment, 26% of graduates reported working in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector. High proportions of graduates also worked in Mining, Oil, and Gas (13%), Education Services (12%), and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (10%).

Employed respondents reported mean annual incomes (at only their main job) of \$58,100, with a median of \$52,000. When accounting for graduates who had more than one job, graduates reported a mean total annual income of \$60,300, with a median of \$54,600. Women (23%) were less likely than men (26%) to have been earning between \$55,000 and \$74,999, and much less likely (19%) than men (35%) to have been earning \$75,000 or more. Related to age, the likelihood of earning \$75,000 or more ranged from 41% for graduates aged 41 and older to only 15% for graduates aged 22 and younger.

Comprehensive Academic and Research Institutions graduates had the highest average incomes (\$70,100), while those from Specialized Arts and Culture Institutions had the lowest (\$34,000).

Overall, 58% of employed respondents indicated that their main (or only) job was very related to the program from which they had graduated, and also to the subject-area knowledge they acquired. Sixty-five percent of respondents felt that their job was very related to the general skills and abilities they had acquired through their program.

Employed respondents with secondary jobs were less likely to have reported these as being related to their education, with only 41% indicating that their other jobs were very related to their completed program. Furthermore, respondents working part-time (less than 30 hours per week) more commonly reported their current job as not related to the program (28%, versus 14%) or subject-area (26%, versus 13%) from which they graduated than those working full-time.

Most employed respondents reported that their current primary job required the completion of either a Bachelor degree (29%) or a non-university post-secondary credential (27%), whereas 23% indicated that their job required completion of less than a post-secondary degree.

Most employed graduates (63%) felt that they were qualified for their primary job. One-third (33%) felt that they were either somewhat or very over-qualified, while only 4% felt somewhat or very under-qualified. Those who earned a Doctoral degree (41%) or a Masters degree (39%) were more likely to report being somewhat over-qualified or very over-qualified, compared to between 31% and 33% of graduates who earned other credentials. In addition, graduates who studied Recreation (44%), Language Arts (43%), or Business (40%) were more likely to report being somewhat over-qualified or very over-qualified, compared to those who studied Physical, Natural, and Applied Sciences (31%), Education (32%), Health Sciences (25%), and Trades and Technologists (28%).

Overall, most employed graduates (89%) indicated that they were either satisfied (50%) or very satisfied (39%) with their primary job, whereas only 11% reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

While the majority of graduates had obtained employment and reported being satisfied with their post-secondary education, approximately one in ten graduates (12%) experienced at least one type of employment challenge and one-quarter of graduates reported income challenges (24%). Further, 28% of graduates were dissatisfied with an aspect of their post-secondary education (28%).

## **SECTION 7: PRIVATE REPORT**

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The private report reflects the findings drawn from 1,107 surveys completed by graduates approximately two years after graduating from Private Vocational Training (PVT) Institutions. Of these graduates, 569 (51%) completed the survey over the phone and 538 (49%) completed the survey online.

### **7.1 Demographics**

The majority of graduates (89%) were female except in the case of Physical, Natural, and Applied Sciences programs which had higher proportion of male PVT graduates (59%). The average age of graduates at the time of surveying was 33.7 years with 28% aged 41 and older. On average, male graduates were older than female graduates (38.2 years, versus 33.1 years). While half (50%) of graduates were single at the time they entered their program, 39% were married or living with partner and 11% were divorced, separated, or widowed. Six percent of respondents self-identified as an Aboriginal person (53% Status Indian, 10% Non-status Indian, and 37% Métis). The majority of Aboriginal graduates (94%) were female, and their average age was 32.1 years. Nearly one-quarter (23%) of graduates considered themselves to be a member of a visible minority. Graduates who were a member of a visible minority were more likely to be male (20%) than non-visible minorities (8%). They were also older, on average, than non-visible minorities (37.1 years compared to 33.0 years).

### **7.2 Transitions**

Thirty-five percent of respondents waited six years or more after high school before entering their post-secondary program, while 23% entered directly following high school (less than one year). The information sources that most graduates rated very useful when helping them decide which program and institution to enroll in were: institutional websites (33%), friends (32%), family members (33%), and teachers (30%). Most respondents (82%) were still living in the same location where they completed their post-secondary education. For graduates who had moved (18%) since completing their program, 26% reported family move/obligations as the primary reason, and 17% moved to attain employment. Among graduates who relocated after graduation, 81% remained within Alberta and 28% were returning to their hometown.

### **7.3 Goals and Satisfaction**

Over one-third (34%) of graduates reported that completion of a specific degree or diploma was their primary goal, while 31% reported that their primary goal was to obtain employment. At the time of surveying, 68% of graduates had fully achieved their primary goal, while 9% had not. Those who had set obtaining employment as their primary goal (17%), were more likely to have not achieved it. Furthermore, for graduates who had not fully achieved their primary goal, nearly one-quarter (23%) attributed this to lack of employment in their field. Forty-one percent of graduates reported they were very satisfied with the quality of teaching they received and with the overall quality of their program. Graduate most often indicated that their program provided them with the skills and abilities to both work (74%) and learn (72%) independently. The majority of graduates (75%) would recommend their program to others and either agreed (48%) or strongly agreed (20%) that their chosen program was worth the financial cost to them and/or their family.



#### **7.4 Financing**

A majority (55%) of graduates had received government-sponsored student loans and owed an average of \$12,500, with a median of \$11,000. A small proportion of graduates (14%) accessed non-government loans from, for example, financial institutions and owed an average of \$10,800, with a median of \$8,000. Twenty-two percent of graduates had received financing from family for education-related expenses. For respondents who had accessed government-sponsored or non-government loans, the average amount owed was \$13,300, with a median of \$11,000. Close to half (44%) of graduates had received a scholarship, grant, or bursary with the total average amount received being \$6,600.

#### **7.5 Outcomes**

The employment rate for 2011/12 PVT Institution graduates at the time of this survey was 82%, with 15% being self-employed. The unemployment rate for 2011/12 graduates was 7% with 5% of graduates not in the labour force and 5% enrolled as students at the time of the survey. The mean annual income of graduates was \$39,500, with a median income of \$37,400. Three-fifths (60% to 61%) of graduates felt that their main job was very related to the skills and abilities and subject-area knowledge they acquired through their education, and to their post-secondary program overall. Sixty-two percent of graduates indicated that they were qualified for their main job, while 33% indicated that they were either somewhat or very over-qualified. Finally, most graduates (92%) were either satisfied (48%) or very satisfied (44%) with their main job.