



## **MARITIME PROVINCES HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION (MPHEC) – More than four years: time to first bachelor's degree**

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September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Fredericton (NB) - An infographic released today by the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) shows that, on average, university graduates in the Maritimes take 4.8 years to complete their first degree.

The Commission looked at the records of more than 6,700 students who enrolled in a Maritime university in 2004, right after high school, and graduated by 2012. Three out of four of these graduates completed their first degree at the same university and in the same field of study in which they first enrolled. The telling statistic is that even these graduates took, on average, not 4, but 4.6 years to complete their first degree.

“The path a student takes can impact the time it takes to complete that first degree,” said Commission CEO, Mireille Duguay. “This information is useful for students who are starting their first degree or thinking about switching programs.”

On average, switching field of study or transferring to another university adds almost half a year to a degree. Students who transfer to another university and switch field of study add a full year to their degree, taking on average 5.6 years to complete their first degree.

“We have established the first benchmarks for the average time-to-degree in the Maritimes,” continued Duguay. “This is important information for all of our stakeholders – students, institutions, and governments.”

In the Maritimes, 94% of bachelor's degrees are designed to be completed within four years. This number includes a small number of general 3-year degrees. Universities in the region also offer 5-year professional or combined degrees. Participation in programs such as co-op or study abroad can also extend the time-to-degree.

“We will be taking a closer look into the students' educational pathways to gain a better understanding of what increases or decreases the average time-to-degree,” said Duguay. “Did students need to take extra courses when they switched programs? Did they take a break from their studies when they switched institutions? Did they study part-time? Did some students take a heavier course load or summer courses to complete in less time than expected? To what extent was money a factor?”

The Commission has also released statistical tables and a series of online interactive graphs that allow its stakeholders to explore how variables such as gender, province or country of origin, and field of study are linked to time-to-degree.



**MPHEC**  
Maritime Provinces  
Higher Education  
Commission

**CESPM**  
Commission de  
l'enseignement supérieur  
des Provinces maritimes

“As part of our mandate, the MPHEC makes value-added sources of information available to governments, students, and the public-at-large to increase dialogue on Maritime post-secondary education issues,” added Ms. Duguay.

The infographic “How many years does it take to complete a first university degree? The impact of student pathways on time-to-degree”, related statistical tables and interactive graphs are available from [www.mphec.ca](http://www.mphec.ca)

**About the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC):** The MPHEC was established in 1974. The MPHEC is an arm’s length organization accountable to the ministers responsible for postsecondary education in the Maritimes. The Commission comprises 20 members representing universities, the public-at-large (including students), and the three Maritime governments. The Commission’s primary orientation in carrying out its duties is to give first consideration to improving and maintaining the best possible service to students as lifelong learners.

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Media contact

Lisa O’Connell  
Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission  
506-453-2844  
e-mail: [oconnell@mphec.ca](mailto:oconnell@mphec.ca)

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## Broadcast News

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The Commission looked at more than 6,700 students who enrolled in a Maritime university in 2004 and graduated by 2012. Three out of four of these graduates completed their first degree at the same university and in the same field of study in which they first enrolled, and took on average in 4.6 years to complete their degree. Switching field of study or transferring to another university added almost half a year to a degree. Students who switched both, added a full year, and took on average 5.6 years to complete their first degree.

Commission CEO, Mireille Duguay said: “This information is important for students who are starting their first university degree or thinking about switching programs.”