

TRENDS IN MARITIME HIGHER EDUCATION

Volume 17 Number 2

The Class of 2012 Six Years On

June 2020

Pursuing Education After a First Degree

Highlights

- Overall, 65% of Class of 2012 first-degree holders pursued some form of post-secondary education leading to a degree, diploma, or certificate within six years of graduation. Of those, 29% had not completed or were still enrolled in a program at the time of the 2018 survey.
- Physical and Life Sciences, and Mathematics (PLSM) graduates were the most likely to pursue education after their first degree (84%), followed by Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) graduates (76%), Commerce and Administration (CA) graduates (52%), and Applied Arts and Sciences, and Professional programs (AASP) graduates (44%).
- 44% of graduates who pursued further education did so at the graduate level (master's degree or PhD). 17% pursued a bachelor's degree, of which 7% were a Bachelor of Education. 16% pursued a college credential or apprenticeship. Another 7% enrolled in a professional degree such as medicine or law.
- 93% of graduates in the labour force said they used the skills acquired during their post-2012 programs in their job (62% to a great extent and 31% to some extent). Moreover, 90% of graduates in the labour force reported that the programs pursued after the first degree were related to their job (64% to a great extent and 26% to some extent). 75% said the programs were necessary for their job.

Introduction

Many graduates continue their education after the first degree; and do so for a variety of reasons, including, to enhance their employability, increase their financial prospects, change their career paths, or pursue their interests in more depth. This report presents results from the MPHEC's survey of the Class of 2012 Maritime university graduates in 2018 (six years after graduation). The Class of 2012 graduates were first surveyed in 2014, two years after graduation. This follow-up survey provides more insight into graduates' educational pathways. Analysis is limited to Maritime university graduates who had not completed any prior post-secondary education before graduating with a bachelor's degree in 2012 (first-degree holders).

When surveyed in 2014, 58% of the Class of 2012 first-degree holders had pursued another credential¹, this increased to 65% in 2018. The percentage of first-degree holders who pursued further education increased from 66% in 2014 to 76% in 2018 for HASS graduates, 74% to 84% for PLSM graduates and 38% to 44% for AASP graduates.

The programs pursued after the first degree vary by discipline clusters. HASS graduates who continued their education were much more likely than graduates of the other discipline clusters to pursue a Bachelor of Education (10%). PLSM graduates differed from other discipline clusters in the relatively high proportion who pursued a PhD (16%) or a professional degree (15%). AASP graduates were more likely to pursue a master's degree (49%), whereas CA graduates most commonly chose to pursue professional designation programs (39%).

Employment-related reasons were the most frequently identified reasons for pursuing further education. The majority of graduates pursued further education as "part of their chosen career path" (29%) or for "career advancement and promotion" (29%). Another 11% reported pursuing post-2012 studies as "a requirement for a position that they hold", while 9% did so to "make a career change". 15% of graduates selected personal and self-improvement motives as the most important reason for taking further education (i.e., "an interest in learning more about the subject" (12%) and "general self-improvement" (3%)).



Graduates who borrowed for the first degree were less likely to pursue further studies. 62% of graduates who had borrowed for the first degree pursued further studies, while 70% of those who had not borrowed pursued subsequent education.

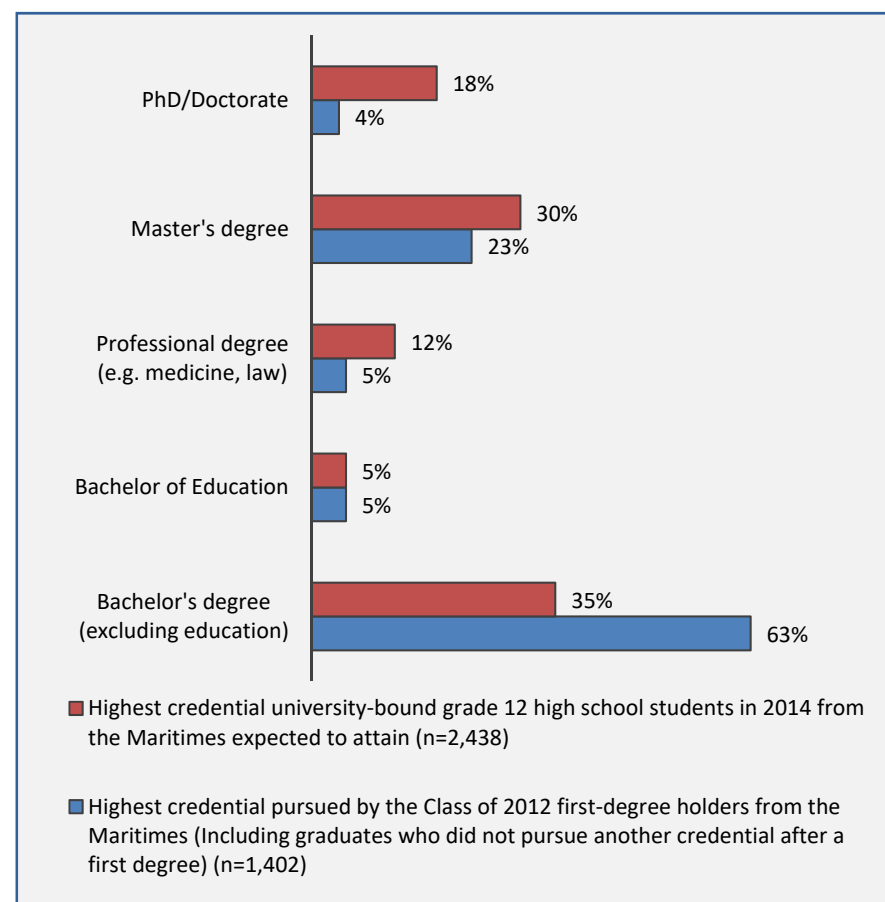
Of those who pursued further studies, 58% reported that they had borrowed money to finance their educational programs taken after their first degree. The proportion of graduates who had borrowed money for further studies ranged from a high of 64% for both HASS and PLSM graduates, to a low of 39% for CA graduates. 53% of AASP graduates borrowed money to finance their further studies.

The top financial sources for post-2012 programs were “employment earnings and personal savings” (43%) and “government student loans” (40%). Financial sources for pursuing further education differed across discipline clusters. 48% of HASS graduates and 44% of PLSM graduates reported “government student loans” as one of their top two sources for financing their post-2012 programs. 49% of AASP graduates cited “employment earnings and personal savings” and 37% of CA graduates cited their “employer” as one of the top two financial sources for pursuing further studies.

Female graduates (68%) were more likely than male graduates (60%) to pursue further studies. Females were more likely than males to pursue a second bachelor’s degree other than Education (12% versus 7%), a Bachelor of Education (8% versus 4%) or a master’s degree (38% versus 35%). Comparatively, males were more likely than females to pursue a PhD (8% versus 6%), a professional degree (9% versus 6%), or a professional designation (11% versus 6%).

Parents’ educational attainment was related to graduates’ likelihood of pursuing further education. 70% of graduates with more highly-educated parents (at least one parent had attained a bachelor’s degree or higher) had pursued further studies, 15 percentage points higher than those whose parents had not completed a post-secondary credential (55%). Graduates whose parents had completed a bachelor’s degree or above were more likely to pursue graduate level programs (master’s or PhD) than those whose parents’ highest level of education was a high school diploma or less (49% versus 40%). In contrast, graduates whose parents’ highest education was a high school diploma or less were more likely than graduates whose parents had a bachelor’s degree or above to pursue a college credential (19% versus 13%).

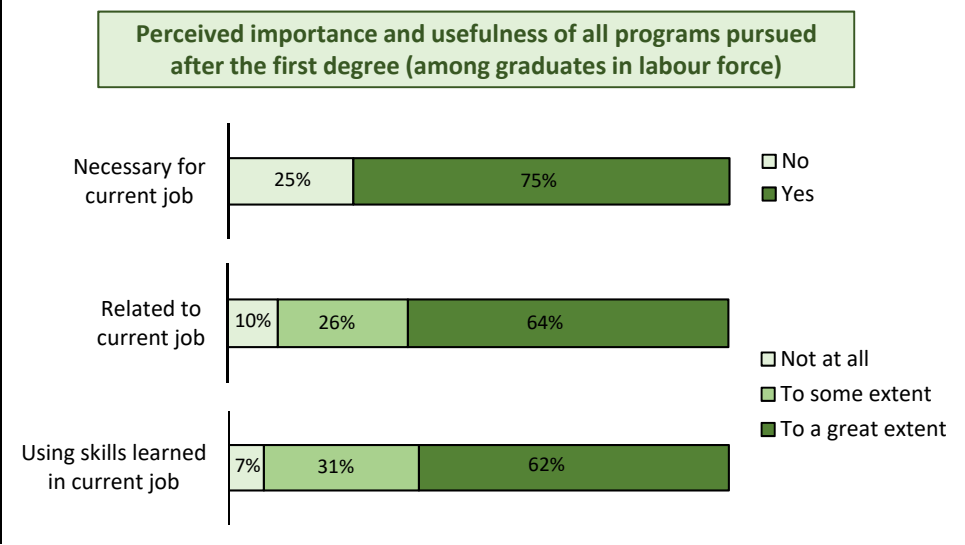
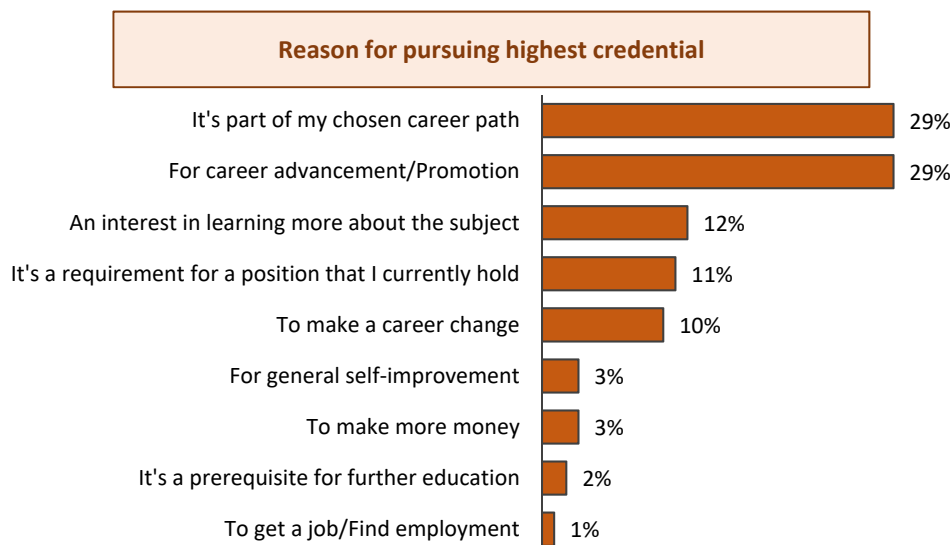
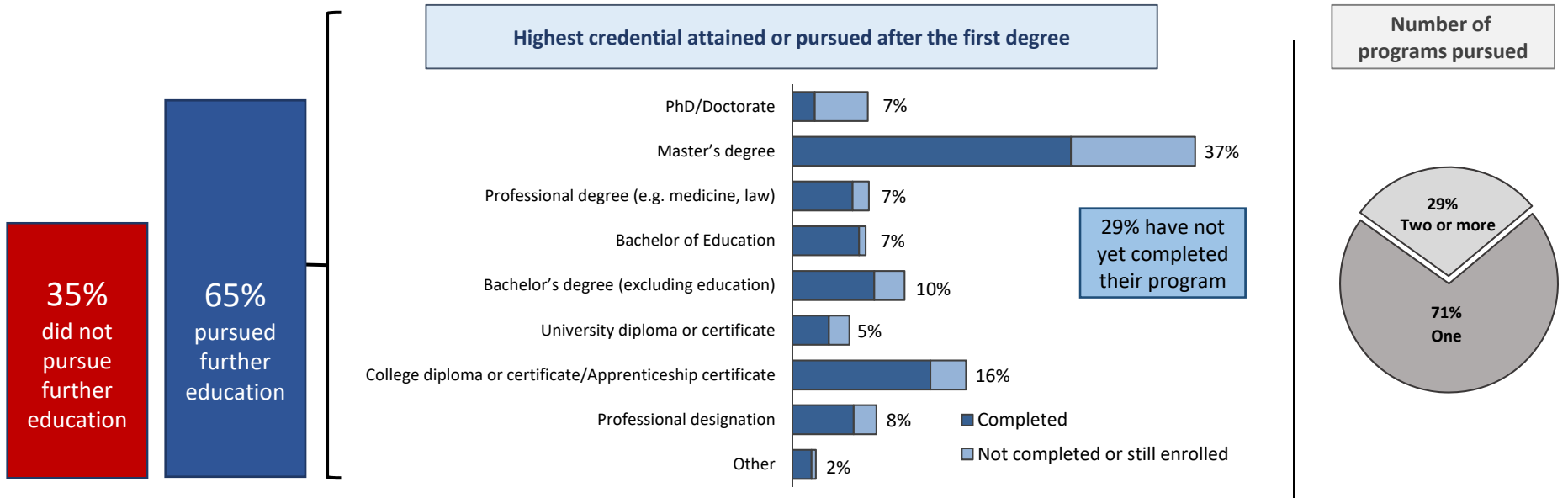
37% of all first-degree holders from the Maritimes attained or pursued a credential above a bachelor’s degree as their highest credential. 27% pursued a graduate degree, 5% a professional degree, and 5% a Bachelor of Education (which usually requires a first degree as an entry requirement). 63% did not pursue any education after their first degree, or pursued another bachelor’s or PSE below a bachelor’s. In 2014, the Commission surveyed grade 12 Maritime high school students and found that 65% of university-bound students expected to complete a credential above a bachelor’s (48% a graduate degree, 12% a professional degree, and 5% a Bachelor of Education)².





The Class of 2012 Six Years On: Pursuing Education After a First Degree

All Graduates

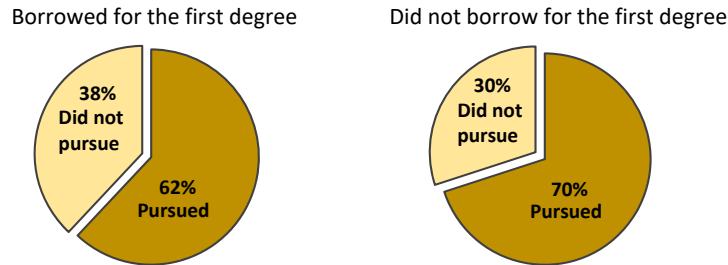




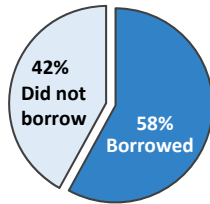
The Class of 2012 Six Years On: Pursuing Education After a First Degree

All Graduates

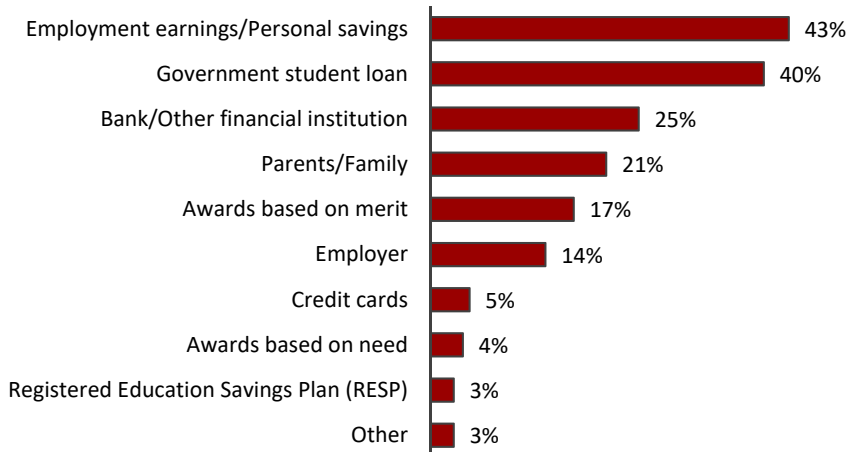
Graduates who borrowed money for the first degree less likely to pursue further education *



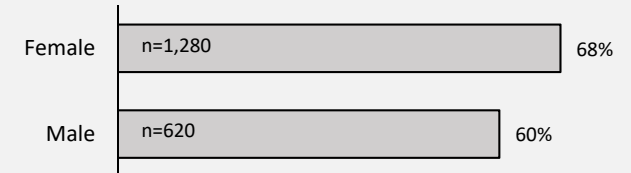
58% borrowed to finance programs pursued after the first degree



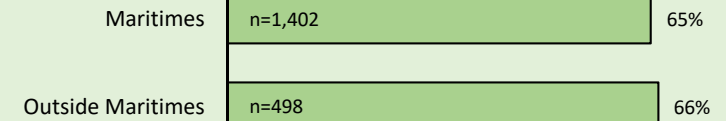
Top financial sources for post-2012 education



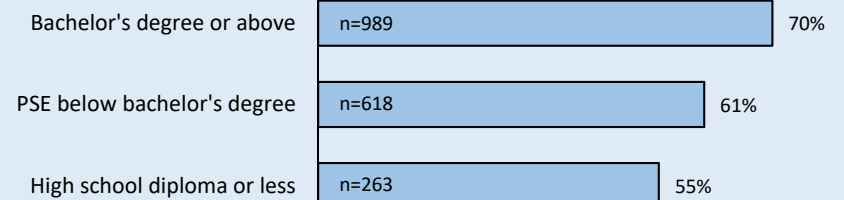
Female graduates more likely to pursue further education *



No significant difference between graduates from the Maritimes and those from outside Maritimes in pursuing further education



Graduates with more highly-educated parents more likely to pursue further education *



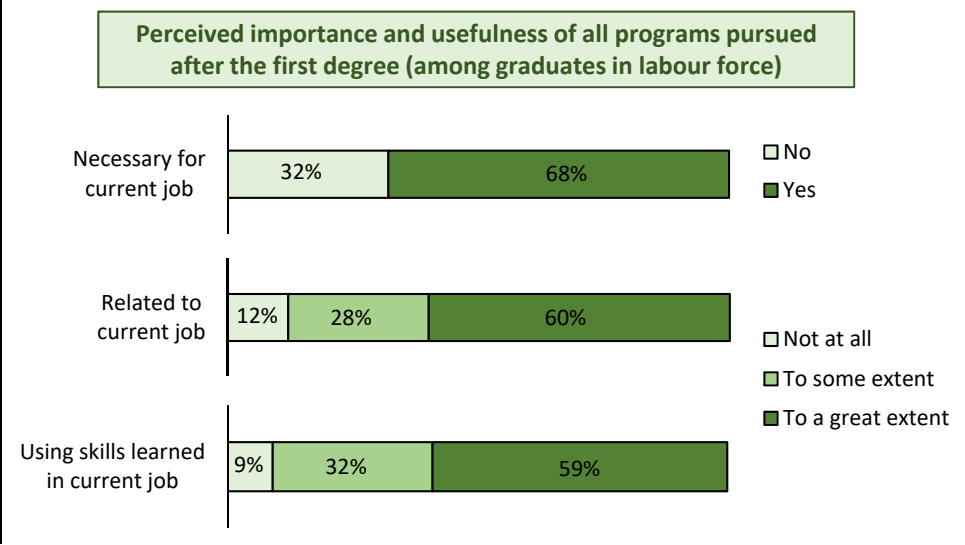
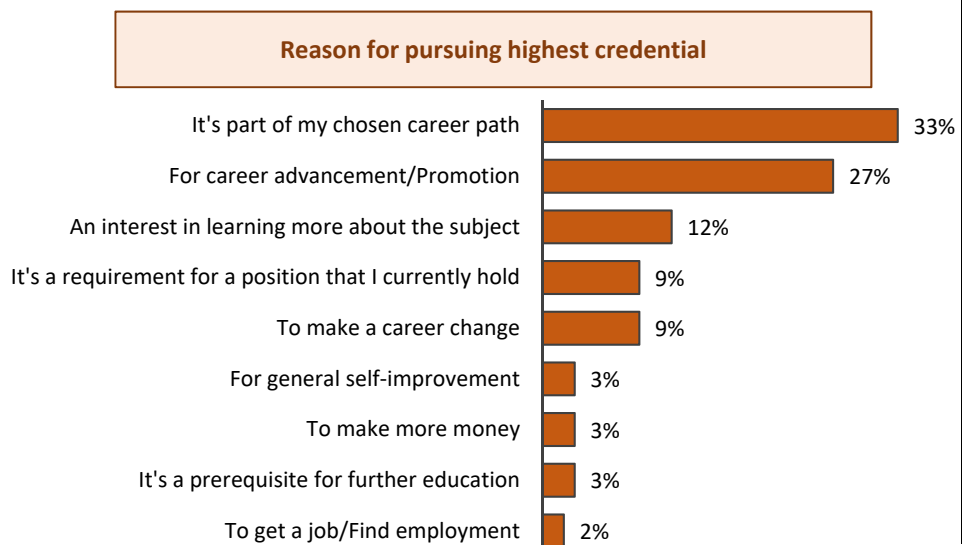
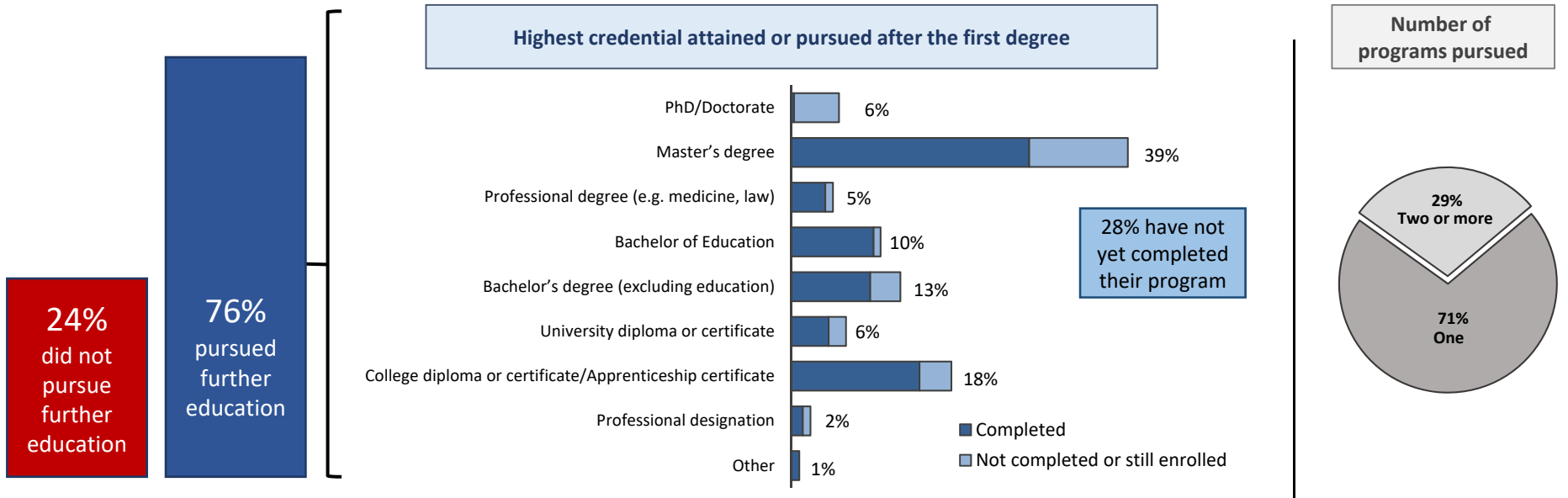
* denotes statistically significant differences





The Class of 2012 Six Years On: Pursuing Education After a First Degree

Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Graduates

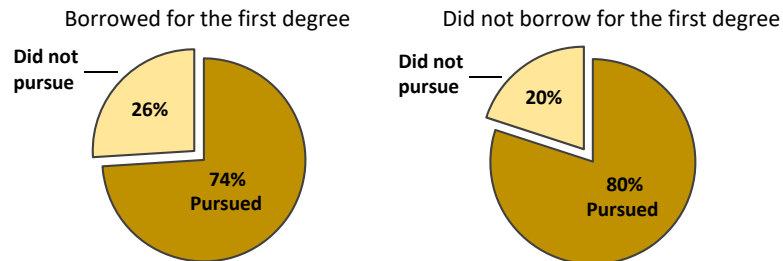




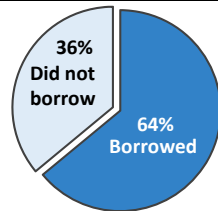
The Class of 2012 Six Years On: Pursuing Education After a First Degree

Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Graduates

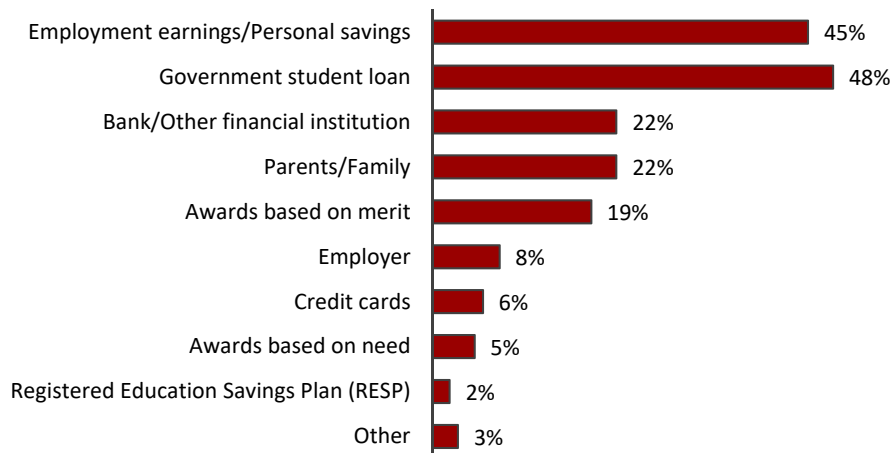
Borrowing for the first degree and pursuing further education



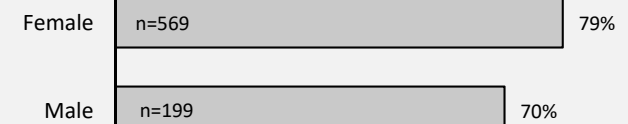
64% borrowed to finance programs pursued after the first degree



Top financial sources for post-2012 education



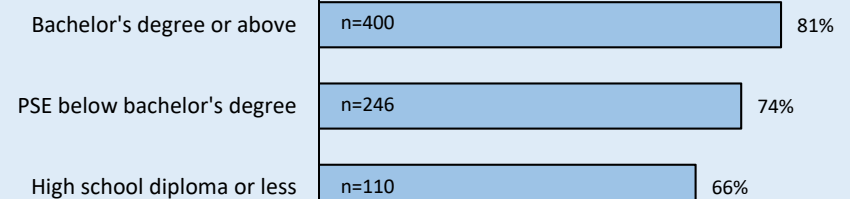
Percentage of graduates who pursued further education by gender *



Percentage of graduates who pursued further education by origin



Percentage of graduates who pursued further education by parents' educational attainment *



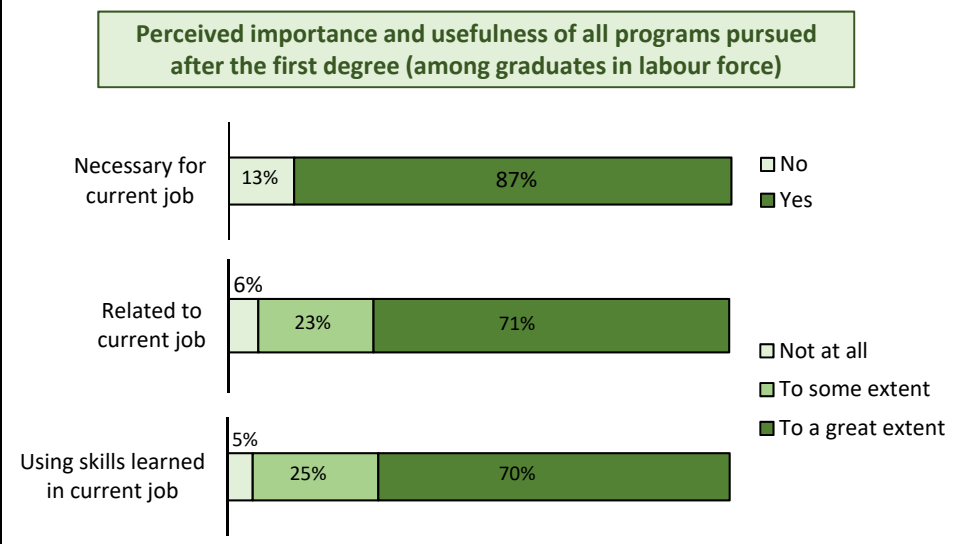
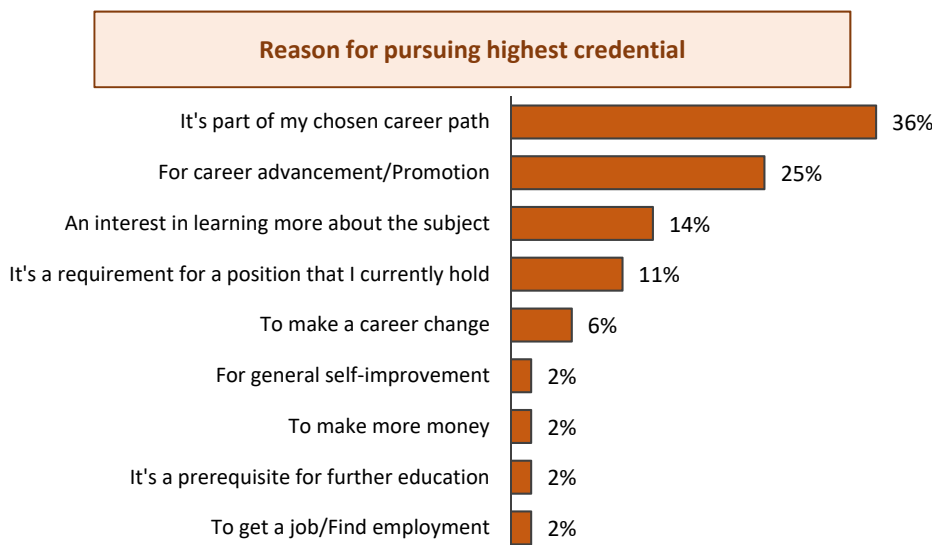
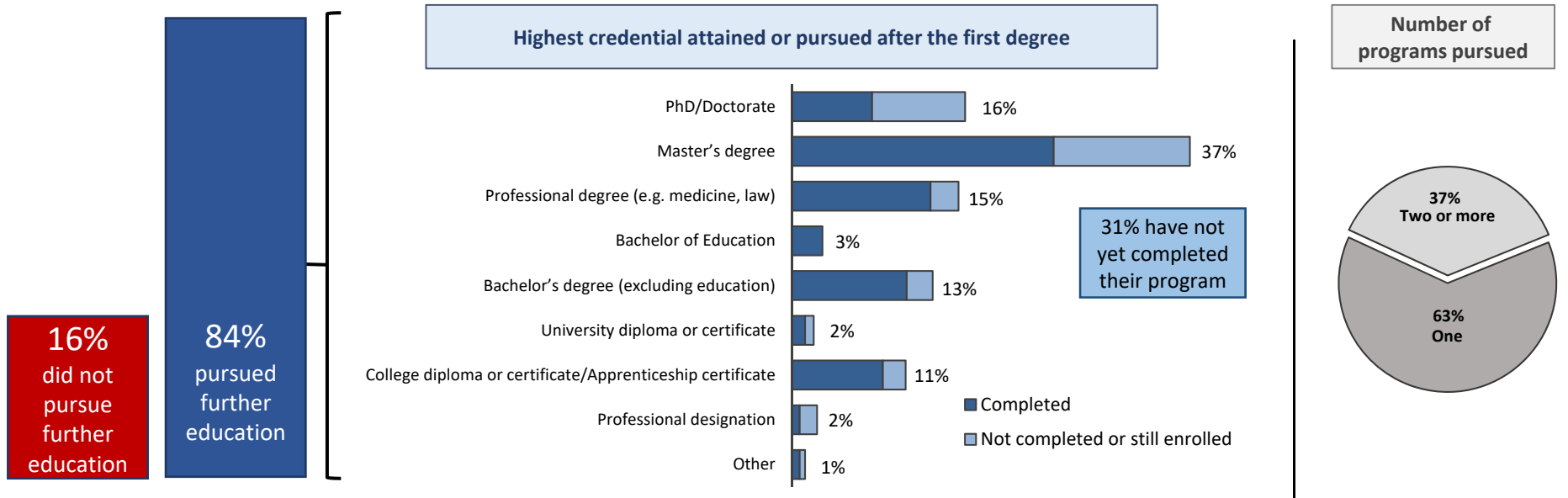
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The Class of 2012 Six Years On: Pursuing Education After a First Degree

Physical and Life Sciences, and Mathematics Graduates

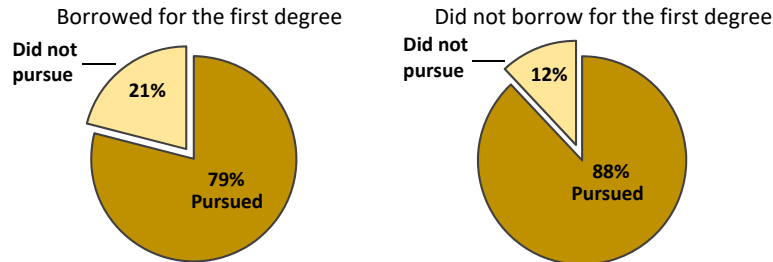




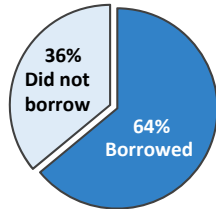
The Class of 2012 Six Years On: Pursuing Education After a First Degree

Physical and Life Sciences, and Mathematics Graduates

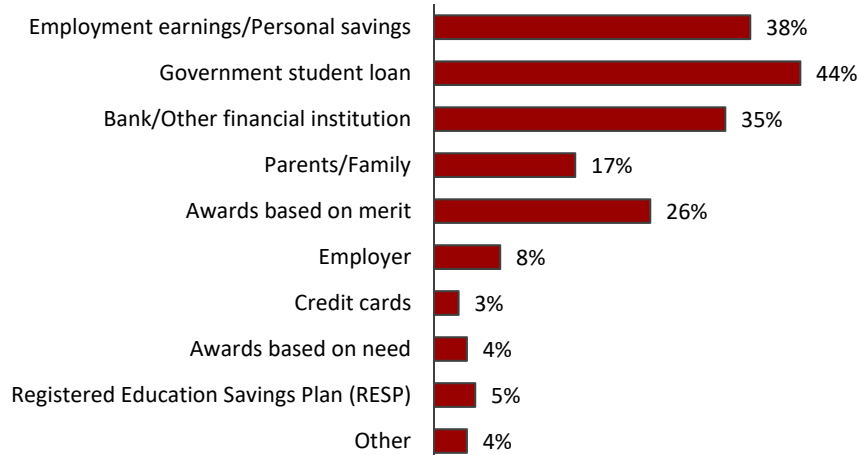
Borrowing for the first degree and pursuing further education *



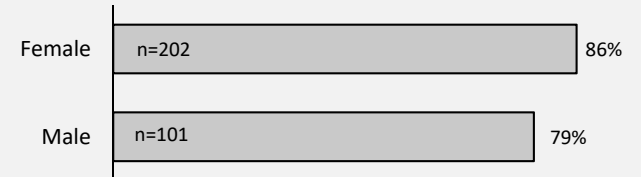
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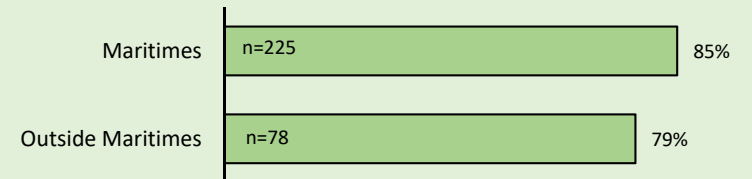
Top financial sources for post-2012 education



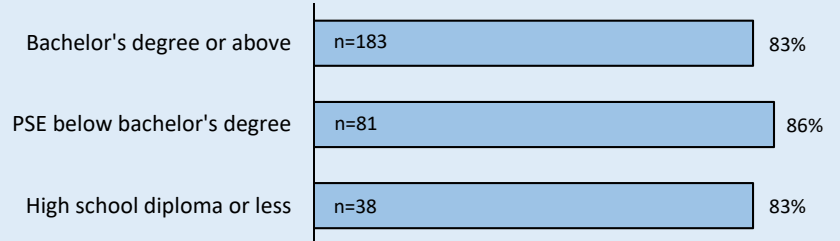
Percentage of graduates who pursued further education by gender



Percentage of graduates who pursued further education by origin



Percentage of graduates who pursued further education by parents' educational attainment



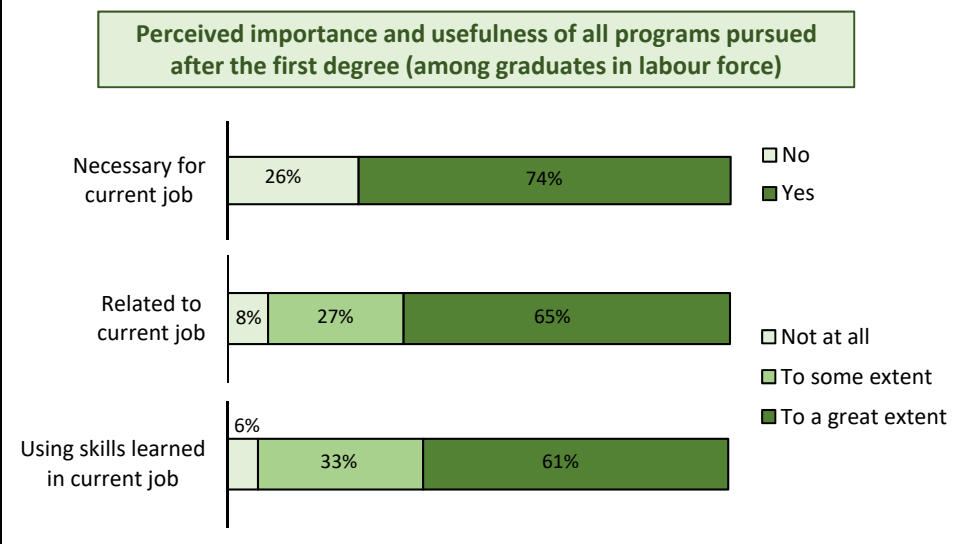
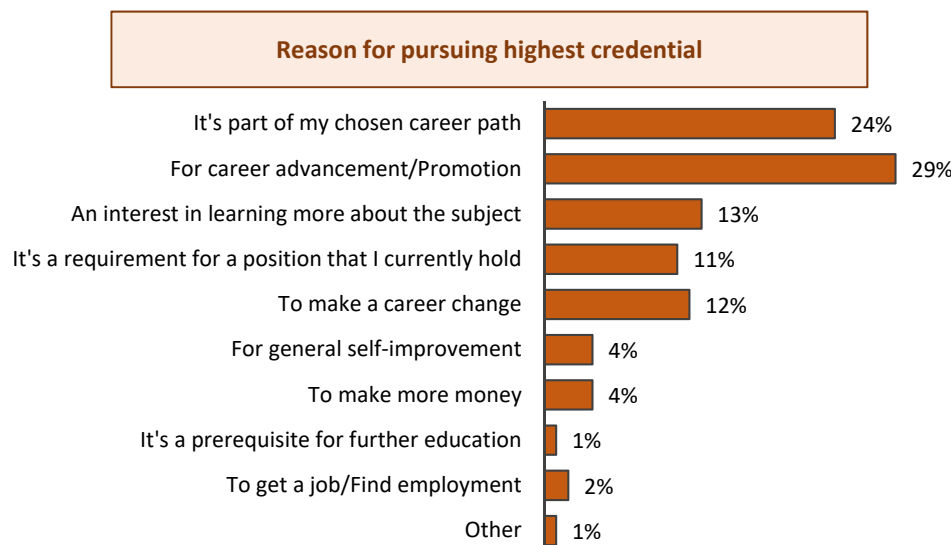
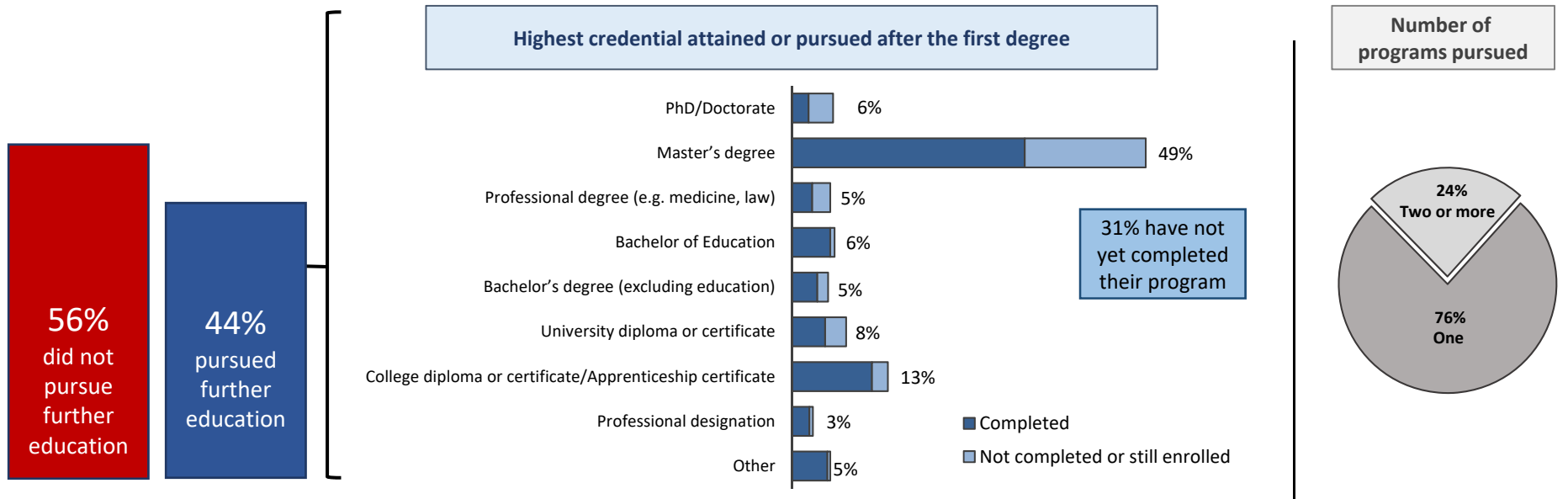
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The Class of 2012 Six Years On: Pursuing Education After a First Degree

Applied Arts and Sciences, and Professional Programs Graduates

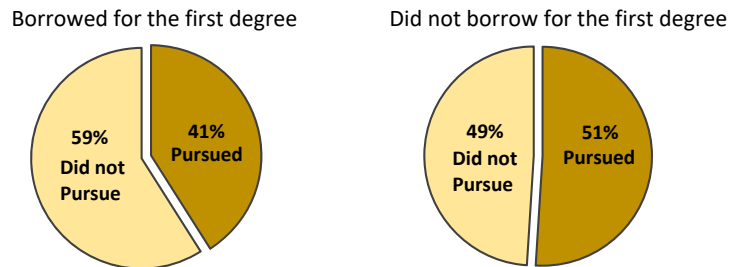




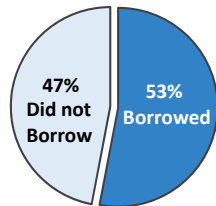
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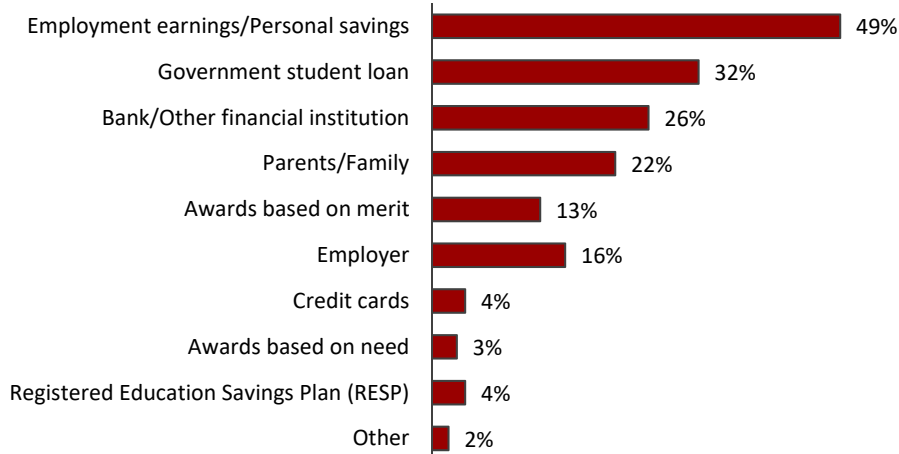
Borrowing for the first degree and pursuing further education *



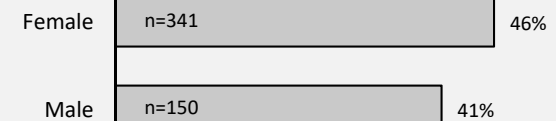
53% borrowed to finance programs pursued after the first degree



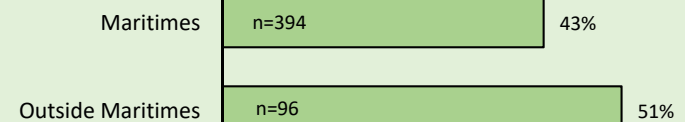
Top financial sources for post-2012 education



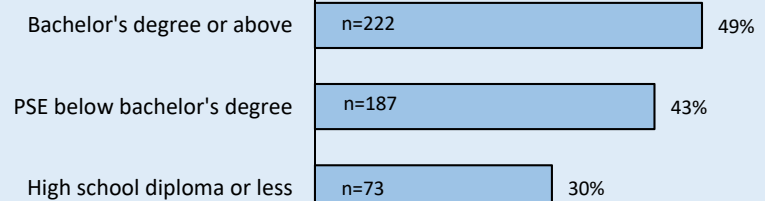
Percentage of graduates who pursued further education by gender



Percentage of graduates who pursued further education by origin



Percentage of graduates who pursued further education by parents' educational attainment *



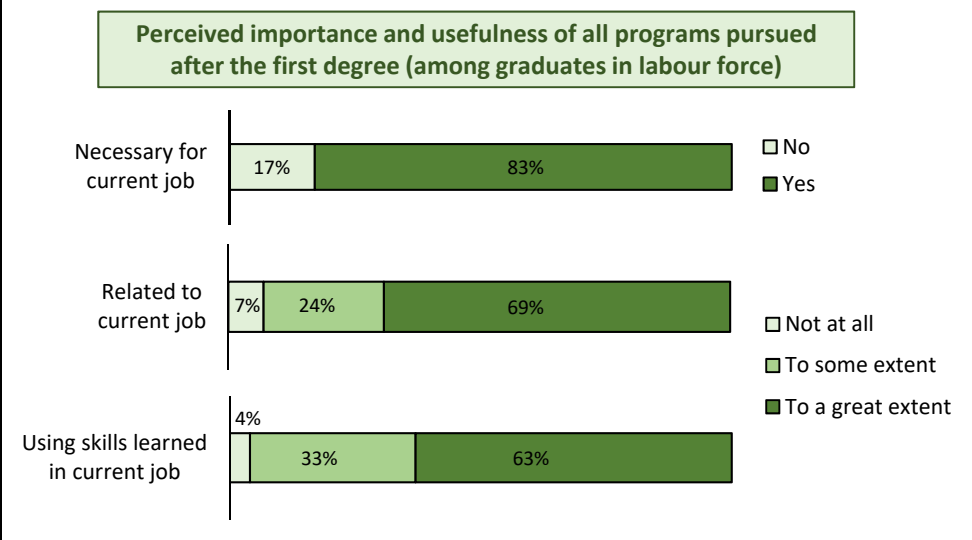
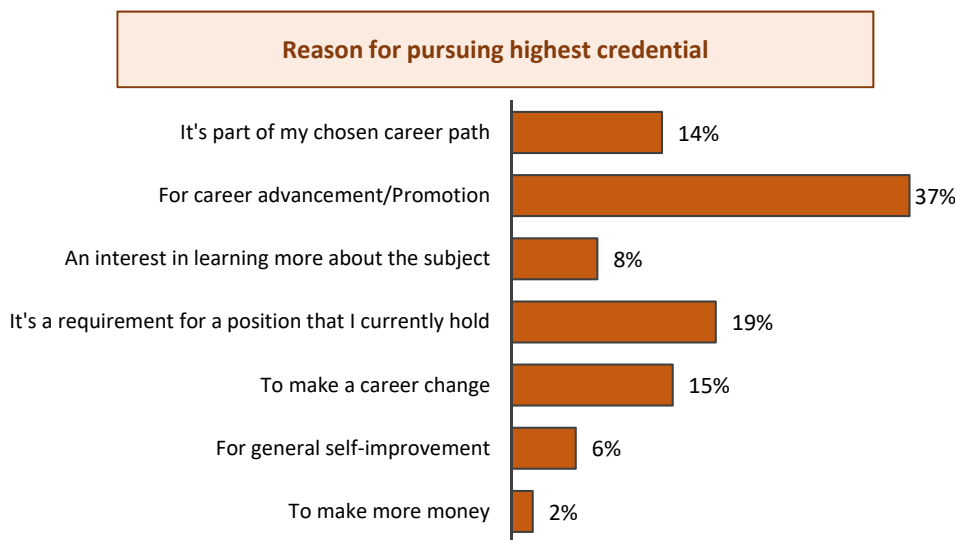
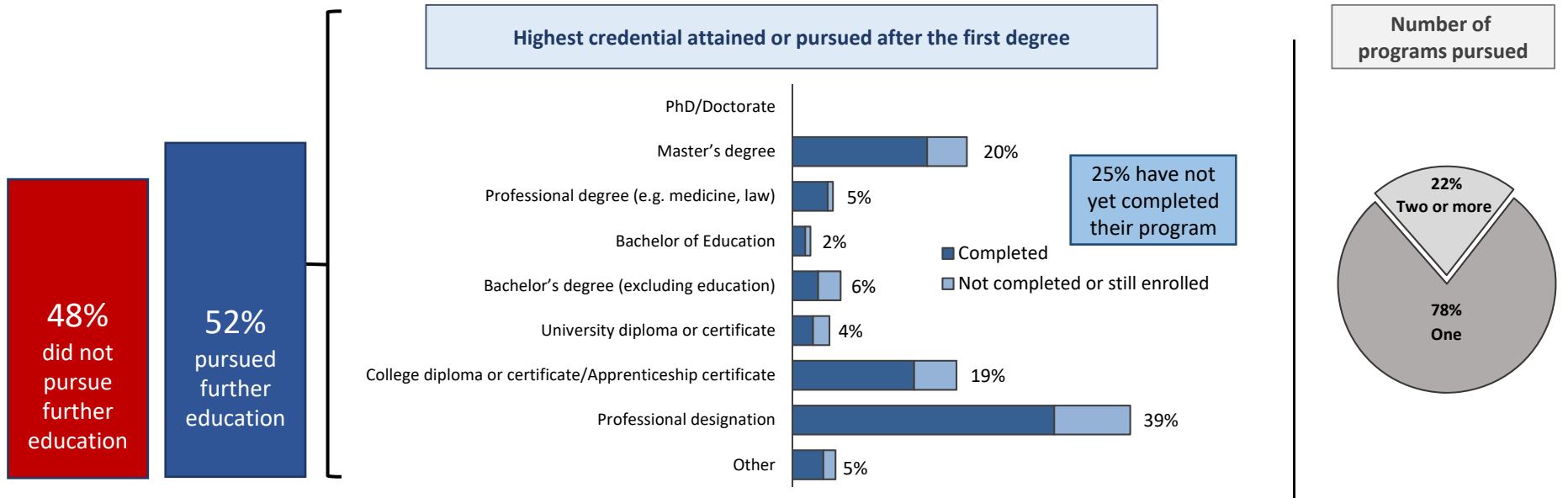
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The Class of 2012 Six Years On: Pursuing Education After a First Degree

Commerce and Administration Graduates



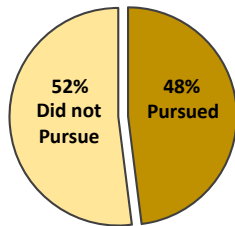


The Class of 2012 Six Years On: Pursuing Education After a First Degree

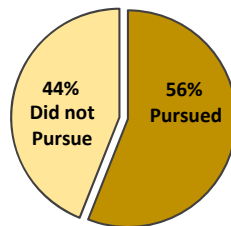
Commerce and Administration Graduates

Borrowing for the first degree and pursuing further education *

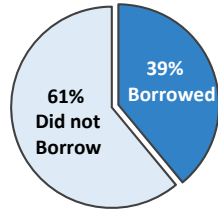
Borrowed for the first degree



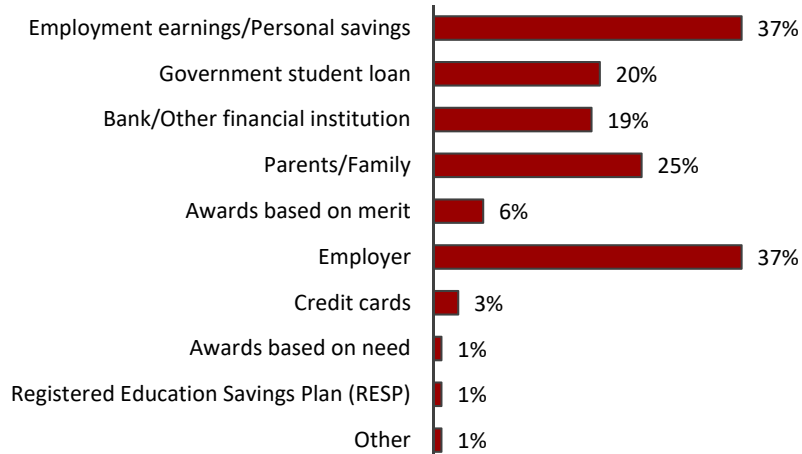
Did not borrow for the first degree



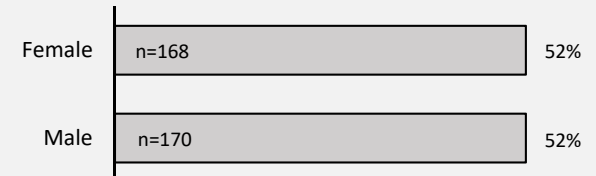
39% borrowed to finance programs pursued after the first degree



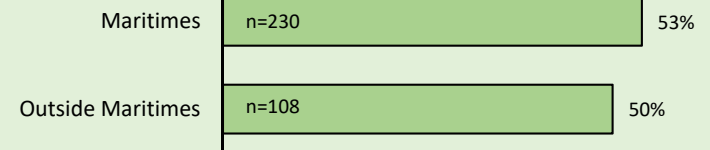
Top financial sources for post-2012 education



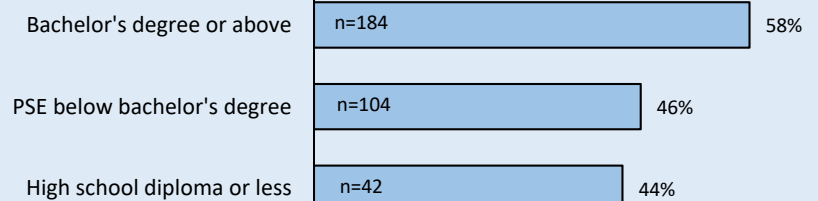
Percentage of graduates who pursued further education by gender



Percentage of graduates who pursued further education by origin



Percentage of graduates who pursued further education by parents' educational attainment



* denotes statistically significant differences



Methodological Notes

What You Should Know About This Survey

The follow-up survey of the Class of 2012 was conducted in the fall of 2018, six years after graduation. This cohort of graduates was previously surveyed in 2014. The total sample of 2,630 respondents represents 25% of the total Class of 2012 bachelor's graduate population of the 14 universities in the Maritime provinces that offer undergraduate degrees. The research sample for the 2018 survey was comprised of 1,901 Maritime university first-degree holders. First-degree holders are defined as graduates who enrolled in university without prior post-secondary credentials and graduated with their first degree in 2012. All statistics presented in this report have been generated from weighted data; data were weighted on the basis of the university of graduation and gender. Statistical differences were analyzed using Chi-square tests (SPSS version 25). The results have a margin of error of $\pm 2.2\%$, 19 times out of 20. Statistics in charts may not sum to 100% due to rounding. More information about the methodology of the Class of 2012 survey in 2018 is available at:

http://www.mphec.ca/media/181581/Class-of-2012-in-2018_Profile-of-First-Degree-Holders_Trends.pdf

DEFINITIONS

Pursued Further Education

Graduates who reported that they had completed or were pursuing an educational program of three months or more, leading towards a diploma, certificate, or degree after graduating in 2012. At the time of the survey, they were asked whether they had completed the program they pursued or they were still enrolled.

Discipline Cluster of Degree Completed in 2012

Major fields of study are grouped into four broad categories or clusters for analytical purposes:

- Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) (n=769)
- Physical and Life Sciences, and Mathematics (PLSM) (n=303)
- Applied Arts and Sciences, and Professional programs (AASP) (n=491)
- Commerce and Administration (CA) (n=338)

A list of majors comprising each discipline cluster may be found at:

<http://www.mphec.ca/media/84665/DisciplineClustersCIP.pdf>

Highest Credential Attained or Pursued

The highest diploma, certificate, or degree completed or pursued by a graduate. For those graduates who had completed or were pursuing two or more programs (29% of all graduates), the highest credential attained or pursued was considered. Credentials were classified into the following levels:

- 1) PhD/Doctorate
- 2) Master's degree (including those who pursued both master's degree and professional health doctorate)
- 3) Professional degree (e.g., Medicine, Dentistry, Law)
- 4) Bachelor of Education
- 5) Bachelor's degree (excluding education)
- 6) University diploma or certificate
- 7) College diploma or certificate/Apprenticeship certificate
- 8) Professional designation (e.g., Chartered professional accountant, dietetics)

Reason for Pursuing Further Education

Graduates reported their main reason for continuing each educational program they had pursued after the first degree. For those graduates who had pursued two or more programs, the main reason provided for the highest credential attained or pursued was considered.

Labour Force

The labour force includes graduates who are employed as well as those who were unemployed but looking and available for work at the time of the survey.

Top Financial Sources

Graduates selected up to two sources of funding for the programs that they had pursued after the first degree. Statistics in charts add up to more than 100% as each graduate could select up to two reasons.

Methodological Notes

Parents' Educational Attainment

Parents' educational attainment comprises three categories:

- High school diploma or less
- PSE below bachelor's degree (includes trade, college or hospital based certificates or diplomas, and completion of a university certificate or diploma below the bachelor's level)
- Bachelor's degree or above (includes bachelor's, professional, master's or PhD degrees, and graduate level certificates/diplomas)

These categories combine the parents/guardians' highest level of education, and the category is assigned based on the highest level of education between them.

Graduates' Origin

Graduates reported their region of residence in the 12 months prior to enrolling in the degree program from which they graduated in 2012. Graduates were categorized into two groups:

- Maritimes (those who were living in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, or Prince Edward Island)
- Outside Maritimes (those who were living in rest of Canada or other countries)

REFERENCES

1. MPHEC. 2016. *Class of 2012 Maritime university graduates: Pathways to employment*. Trends in Maritime Higher Education. http://www.mphec.ca/media/133167/Trends_Class_of_2012_Pathways_to_Employment.pdf
2. MPHEC. 2015. *Why grade 12 students choose university*. http://www.mphec.ca/media/109904/Infographics_Why_Grade12_students_Choose_University_EN.pdf

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