



MARITIME PROVINCES HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION – The impact of COVID-19 on recent Maritime university graduates

April 29, 2021

Fredericton (NB) – The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) today released a report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on recent Maritime university graduates. Class of 2018 bachelor's graduates, surveyed between September and December 2020, were asked about changes in their employment, financial, and educational situations as a result of the pandemic.

Fifty-five percent of graduates reported that their employment situation changed. 14% of graduates reported working more, while 11% reported that they were still working, but working less, and 14% were temporarily laid-off or lost their job.

Compared to previous surveys, the percentage of unemployed graduates two years after graduation was higher for the Class of 2018 (14%) than for the Class of 2012 (8%) and the Class of 2014 (9%).

"Maritimers are experiencing significant challenges because of the COVID-19 pandemic and recent university graduates are no exception. The increase in the Class of 2018 unemployment rate compared to previous graduating classes can be tied to the pandemic," said Commission CEO, Catherine Stewart. "The Commission will soon be publishing a separate report that looks at the employment profile of graduates in more detail".

Fifty-five percent of graduates reported a change to their financial situation as a result of the pandemic. 30% reported that they used too much (or all) of their savings, 17% of graduates saved more money than usual, while 12% took on more debt as a result of the pandemic, and 15% had difficulty keeping up with bills.

Fifty-three percent of Class of 2018 graduates pursued some form of post-secondary education and 61% of those who pursued were still enrolled in a program at the time of the survey. Almost a third of Class of 2018 graduates reported a change in their plans for their education as a result of the pandemic. 13% of graduates reported delaying their studies, while 9% decided to pursue further education and 7% reported disruptions or delays to their program end date.

"While the Class of 2018 appears similar to previous classes in terms of their pursuit of further studies, delays or disruptions to their education could have an impact on their transition to the workforce" added Ms. Stewart. "The Commission is also monitoring the impact of the pandemic on university enrolment and persistence in the region."



MPHEC
Maritime Provinces
Higher Education
Commission

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Commission de
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des Provinces maritimes

The infographic: *How were recent Maritime university graduates impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?* and additional statistical tables can be found on the Commission's website at: www.mphec.ca

The total sample of 3,339 respondents represents 31.8% of the total Class of 2018 bachelor's graduate population of the 14 universities in the Maritime provinces that offer undergraduate degrees. The graduates were surveyed between September 16, 2020 and December 11, 2020. The report focuses on 2,437 first degree holders and results have a margin of error of $\pm 2.0\%$, 19 times out of 20. All statistics presented have been generated from weighted data; data were weighted on the basis of the university of graduation and gender.

Established in 1974, the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission is an arm's-length organization accountable to the Ministers responsible for post-secondary education in the Maritimes. The Commission Board is made up of 20 members representing universities, the public-at-large (including students), and the three Maritime provincial governments. The Commission's mission is to assist institutions and governments in enhancing the post-secondary learning environment. It achieves this by providing assurances that university programs in the region meet established standards of quality and by conducting research on post-secondary education.

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Media contact:
Lisa O'Connell
Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission
506-453-2844
e-mail: mphec@mphec.ca