

2011 National Household Survey: Education in Canada: Attainment, field of and location of study

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New data from the National Household Survey (NHS) show that 11,782,700 adults aged 25 to 64 had postsecondary qualifications in 2011, representing almost two-thirds (64.1%) of the total population aged 25 to 64. In comparison, the 2006 Census indicated that 60.7% of Canadians aged 25 to 64 had a postsecondary qualification.

Women held a higher share of university degrees among younger graduates than among older ones

In 2011, women accounted for 59.1% of young adults aged 25 to 34 with a university degree. This was higher than the 47.3% share they represented among older university degree holders aged 55 to 64.

Among all university degree holders, the difference between the share of younger and older women was the largest for those with a medical degree. Women represented about two-thirds (62.2%) of adults aged 25 to 34 with a medical degree, compared with just over one-quarter (28.0%) among adults aged 55 to 64 with a medical degree.

Nearly half (47.3%) of adults aged 25 to 34 with an earned doctorate were women, whereas this share was about one-third (31.6%) in the older age group (55 to 64). This was the only university degree held mostly by men among younger graduates.

Most Registered Apprenticeship certificates were held by men

At the trades level, about 8 in 10 Registered Apprenticeship certificates were held by men.

Men accounted for over three-quarters (78.9%) of Registered Apprenticeship certificate holders aged 25 to 34. This proportion was virtually the same as the proportion of men among those aged 55 to 64 (80.1%). Registered Apprenticeship certificate holders include, for example, electricians and plumbers.

Among the three postsecondary credentials, trades certificate was the only one held by a lower proportion of younger adults compared with older adults.

In 2011, 10.7% of adults aged 25 to 34 had a trades certificate compared with 12.8% among adults aged 55 to 64. On the other hand, a higher proportion of adults aged 25 to 34 had a university degree (31.9%) compared with adults aged 55 to 64 with the same credentials (20.2%). The proportion of college graduates was also higher at 22.1% among younger adults compared with 18.3% among older ones.

Women held a higher share of university STEM degrees among younger graduates than among older ones, but men still held the majority

STEM fields of study include 'science and technology,' 'engineering and engineering technology' and 'mathematics and computer sciences.'

In 2011, men represented the majority (67.4%) of adults aged 25 to 64 with STEM degrees at the university level. In comparison, among adults with a non-STEM university degree, 6 in 10 (60.6%) were women.



While women overall represented just under one-third (32.6%) of adults aged 25 to 64 with a university STEM degree, younger women had a larger share of university STEM degrees compared with older women. Young women aged 25 to 34 represented 39.1% of university STEM degrees in that age group, higher than the share of 22.6% in the older age group of 55 to 64. In non-STEM fields, younger women's share of university degree holders was 65.7% compared with older women's share of 53.6%.

In the STEM fields of 'science and technology,' younger women held the majority (58.6%) of university degrees compared with the share of 34.9% held by older women. Younger women also had a larger share (23.1%) of university degrees in 'engineering and engineering technology' compared with women's share in the older age group (8.5%). In 'mathematics and computer sciences,' the shares held by women were similar in the younger and older age groups at 30.4% and 29.3% respectively.

Immigrants held about half of the STEM university degrees

In 2011, immigrant adults aged 25 to 64 represented just under one-quarter (24.6%) of Canada's total adult population but over one-third (34.3%) of adults with a university degree. About half (50.9%) of all STEM degrees were held by immigrants, including those who have lived in Canada for many years, as well as newcomers.

Just over two-fifths of doctorate degrees were earned outside of Canada

The majority (73.8%) of Canada's 11.8 million adults aged 25 to 64 with a postsecondary qualification had studied in the province or territory in which they lived in 2011, while 9.9% had studied in another province or territory, and 16.3% studied in another country. Among those who studied in another country, 83.6% were immigrants and 7.5% were non-permanent residents.

Just over two-fifths (41.9%) of doctorate degree holders completed their credential in another country compared with 33.8% of those with a master's degree and 21.0% with a bachelor's degree.

Trades certificate holders were the most likely to have studied in their province or territory of residence (86.4%), a higher proportion than among college diploma (82.5%) and university degree (62.3%) holders.

Almost half of Aboriginal people aged 25 to 64 had a postsecondary qualification

In 2011, nearly 671,400 adults aged 25 to 64 reported an Aboriginal identity on the NHS questionnaire, representing 3.7% of the total population aged 25 to 64.

Almost half (48.4%) of the Aboriginal population aged 25 to 64 had a postsecondary qualification in 2011. In comparison, almost two-thirds (64.7%) of the non-Aboriginal population aged 25 to 64 had a postsecondary qualification.

More than 4 in 10 First Nations people aged 25 to 64 (44.8%) had a postsecondary qualification. The proportion of First Nations people with a postsecondary qualification was higher among those without registered Indian status (52.1%) than among those with registered Indian status (42.3%).

Over half (54.8%) of Métis aged 25 to 64 had a postsecondary qualification.

More than one-third (35.6%) of Inuit aged 25 to 64 had a postsecondary qualification.

Younger Aboriginal people had higher levels of education than older ones

In 2011, among Aboriginal people aged 35 to 44, 68.0% had at least a high school diploma, compared with 58.7% among those aged 55 to 64.

Younger Aboriginal women were more likely to be university graduates than older Aboriginal women. The proportion of Aboriginal women aged 35 to 44 with a university degree in 2011 was 13.6%, compared with 10.2% of those aged 55 to 64. It was 7.6% for men in both age groups.

Younger Aboriginal women and men were both more likely to have college diplomas than older ones. Among Aboriginal women aged 35 to 44, 27.1% had a college diploma in 2011, compared with 21.4% of those aged 55 to 64. With a proportion of 18.3%, Aboriginal men aged 35 to 44 were also more likely to have college diplomas than those aged 55 to 64 where the proportion was 14.1%.

Note to readers

Non-permanent residents: Non-permanent residents are persons from another country, who have a work or study permit or who are refugee claimants, and any non-Canadian born family member living in Canada with them.

Indian reserves and settlements: The majority of Indian reserves and settlements participated in the 2011 National Household Survey. However, 36 of the 863 inhabited reserves were incompletely enumerated because enumeration was either not permitted, was interrupted before completion, or because of natural events (for example, forest fires). Most of the people living on reserves are First Nations Registered Indians, and consequently, the impact of the incomplete enumeration will be greatest on data for this population.

'Younger' age group for Aboriginal people: In this study, the proportions of Aboriginal people with various education credentials are examined between two age groups to see how they have evolved between older and younger Aboriginal people. Previous research on First Nations women has indicated that they may defer their postsecondary studies until later in life compared with women in the total Canadian population. For this reason, the 'younger' age group chosen in the analysis is 35 to 44.

Educational attainment: Educational attainment in this study is measured using the variable 'highest certificate, diploma or degree.' Certain category names of this variable are shortened for ease of use in text. These short forms are outlined here:

The term 'university degree' includes 'bachelor's degree,' 'university certificate or diploma above bachelor level,' 'degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or optometry,' 'master's degree' and 'earned doctorate.'

The term 'medical degree' includes 'degrees in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or optometry.'

The term 'college diploma' refers to 'college, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma.'

The term 'trades certificate' refers to 'apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma' and is an aggregation which includes both 'Registered Apprenticeship certificates' as well as 'trades certificates other than Registered Apprenticeship certificates.'

The term 'Registered Apprenticeship certificate' includes those with a 'Certificate of Qualification'/'Journeyperson's designation.'

The terms 'postsecondary qualifications' or 'postsecondary credentials' include 'trades certificates,' 'college diplomas,' 'university certificates below bachelor level' and 'university degrees.'

The term 'high school diploma' refers to 'secondary (high) school diploma or equivalent.'

The term 'no certificate, diploma or degree' refers to those who have not completed high school nor any postsecondary certificates, diplomas or degrees.

National Household Survey

This is the second release of data from the NHS. The third release will be on August 14, 2013.

The analytical document [Education in Canada: Attainment, Field of Study and Location of Study](#) presents the results of the NHS on education. In addition, there is a companion analytical article in the *National Household Survey in Brief series* entitled '[The educational attainment of Aboriginal peoples in Canada](#).'

A second analytical document, [Portrait of Canada's Labour Force](#), also released today, analyses findings from the NHS on Canada's labour force. There are also two companion articles in the *National Household Survey in Brief series* for this topic entitled '[Commuting to work](#)' and '[Language use in the workplace in Canada](#).'

Data and highlights on key topics found in these analytical products are also available for various standard levels of geography in the [National Household Survey Focus on Geography Series](#).

Various data and reference products are also available from the [2011 National Household Survey \(NHS\)](#) website. A wide range of data on education, labour, place of work, commuting to work, language of work as well as mobility and migration are available for standard geographic areas in the [National Household Survey Profile](#) and [National Household Survey Data Tables](#).

Information on the quality of NHS data on education as well as explanations of concepts, classifications, questions and comparability with other data sources can be found in the [Education Reference Guide](#).

Other reference materials include the [National Household Survey Dictionary](#) which provides definitions of NHS concepts, universes and variables. As well, users can refer to the [National Household Survey User Guide](#) (released on May 8, 2013), which provides information on the methodology, collection, processing, evaluation and data quality of the NHS.

A brief portrait of education in Canada is presented on [video](#).

Users are also invited to [Chat with an expert](#) on June 28, from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5178.

The report *Education in Canada: Attainment, Field of Study and Location of Study* (99-012-X2011001) is now available from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*.

Additional analysis is also available in the *National Household Survey in Brief Series* article (99-012-X2011003): '[The educational attainment of Aboriginal peoples in Canada](#).'

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