

Study: The long-term labour market premiums associated with a postsecondary education, 1991 to 2010

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A new study that followed a group of men and women for two decades reports that over the study period, men who had obtained a bachelor's degree by 1991 had earned, on average, \$732,000 more than those whose education ended at a high school diploma. For women, the difference between the two groups was \$448,000.

Using longitudinal tax data linked to 1991 Census data, the study tracked individuals from 1991, when they were 35 years old, to 2010, when they were 54. Individuals were grouped according to their highest level of completed education by 1991. The labour market outcomes of bachelor's degree and college certificate graduates were compared with those of high school graduates. The dollar figures are expressed in 2010 constant dollars to account for inflation.

On average, men with a high school diploma earned \$975,000 over the 20-year period, while those with a bachelor's degree earned \$1,707,000. Men with a college certificate earned \$247,000 more than those with a high school diploma.

Similar patterns were evident among women. On average, women with a high school diploma earned \$525,000 over the two decades, while those with a bachelor's degree earned \$973,000. Women with a college certificate earned \$179,000 more than those with a high school diploma.

In addition, compared with high school graduates, college and bachelor's degree graduates experienced fewer layoffs and accumulated more years of service in employer-sponsored pension plans over the study period.

The research paper "An Investment of a Lifetime? The Long-term Labour Market Premiums Associated with a Postsecondary Education", part of the *Analytical Studies Research Paper Series* (11F0019M), is now available from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*.

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