

**OMNIBUS**  
Provincial Public Opinion Survey

November 2002

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Provincial Public Opinion Survey

Prepared for:

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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- In November 2002, federal issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include health care, international issues, the economy and jobs and unemployment.
- Provincial issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include agriculture, health care, jobs and unemployment and the economy.
- More than two thirds of residents give the areas of training and recruitment of health care professionals, attracting private investment in Saskatchewan's economy to create jobs and building and maintaining highways the highest rankings in terms of their having great value to the province.
- The majority of residents also give relatively high rankings for programs for disadvantaged children, air ambulance service, housing programs for senior citizens and low-income families, provision of crop insurance programs cost-shared with farmers, environmental protection and funding for construction of school, university and training facilities.
- Three quarters of residents think the post-secondary education and training system in Saskatchewan is the same or better than that of the rest of the country. The majority of residents think the quality of Saskatchewan's post-secondary education and training is good or excellent. More than three quarters of residents think the system does an adequate or better job of meeting their needs with information about its programs and services.
- The majority of Saskatchewan residents would go directly to post-secondary institutions in order to get information about post-secondary education and skills training opportunities in Saskatchewan.
- A plurality of Saskatchewan residents would search the Internet for career information. A plurality of residents also indicate they would search the Internet for information about job opportunities or to find workers.
- More than one third of Saskatchewan residents indicate they or one of their immediate family members have taken credited post-secondary education in the past year; the large majority took the education on campus at a Saskatchewan institution. The primary reason for taking the education is to gain new job related skills.
- More than three quarters of residents think the bus service provided by the Saskatchewan Transportation Company is important to their community and the majority of residents think a passenger and freight transportation system to rural Saskatchewan communities is a public policy initiative that the provincial government should fund.

# METHODOLOGY

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Fast Consulting conducted the November 2002 public opinion survey for the Government of Saskatchewan with a representative sample of the Saskatchewan population. The November Omnibus Survey contains questions designed to explore public opinion in the areas of:

- federal issues of importance to Saskatchewan residents;
- provincial issues of importance to Saskatchewan residents;
- learning; and
- Saskatchewan Transportation Corporation.

Questions for the survey were provided by various departments within the Government of Saskatchewan and assembled into an interview format by Fast Consulting. The questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure that all of the questions being asked in the interview were understood by the general public and the information being gathered addressed the public opinion research objectives.

The sample frame for this public opinion research survey was constructed to obtain complete interviews from a random sample of 1,032 households throughout Saskatchewan. To ensure proportionate representation from all areas of Saskatchewan, the province was divided into nine geographic sampling districts. Interview respondents were selected randomly from Saskatchewan telephone directories in each region using standard polling practices to ensure random selection of households and respondents. The sampling frame was also constructed to ensure proportionate representation of other important demographic characteristics evident within the provincial population such as gender, age, occupation, level of education and level of household income. This ensures that the opinions of all the various types of people who reside in Saskatchewan are proportionately represented in the statistical measurements documented in this report.

One thousand and thirty two residents of the province were interviewed between Tuesday, November 12 and Monday, November 25, 2002. Interviews were conducted by telephone at times that were appropriate and convenient for respondents - weekdays between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. and weekends between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. All interviews were conducted by Fast Consulting's in-house professional public opinion interviewers using our *Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing* (CATI) call centre.

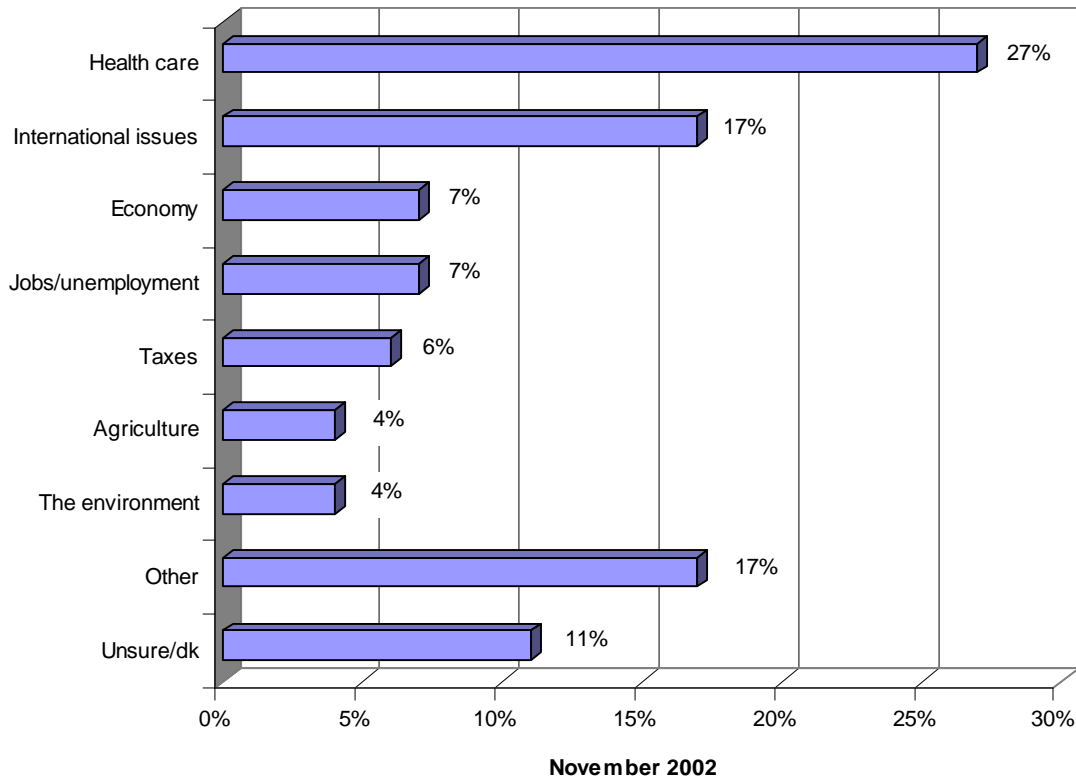
The Omnibus survey sample size of 1,032 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points: reliable results with low variability. Frequency charts for all public opinion issues are illustrated in this report.

Fast Consulting designed and implemented programs to facilitate the statistical analysis of data using the industry standard SPSS computer program (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Data checking procedures were utilized at all times to ensure accuracy of the data. In addition, statistical tests were conducted on the demographics to check for reliability and validity of the survey data.

# 1.0 GENERAL ISSUES

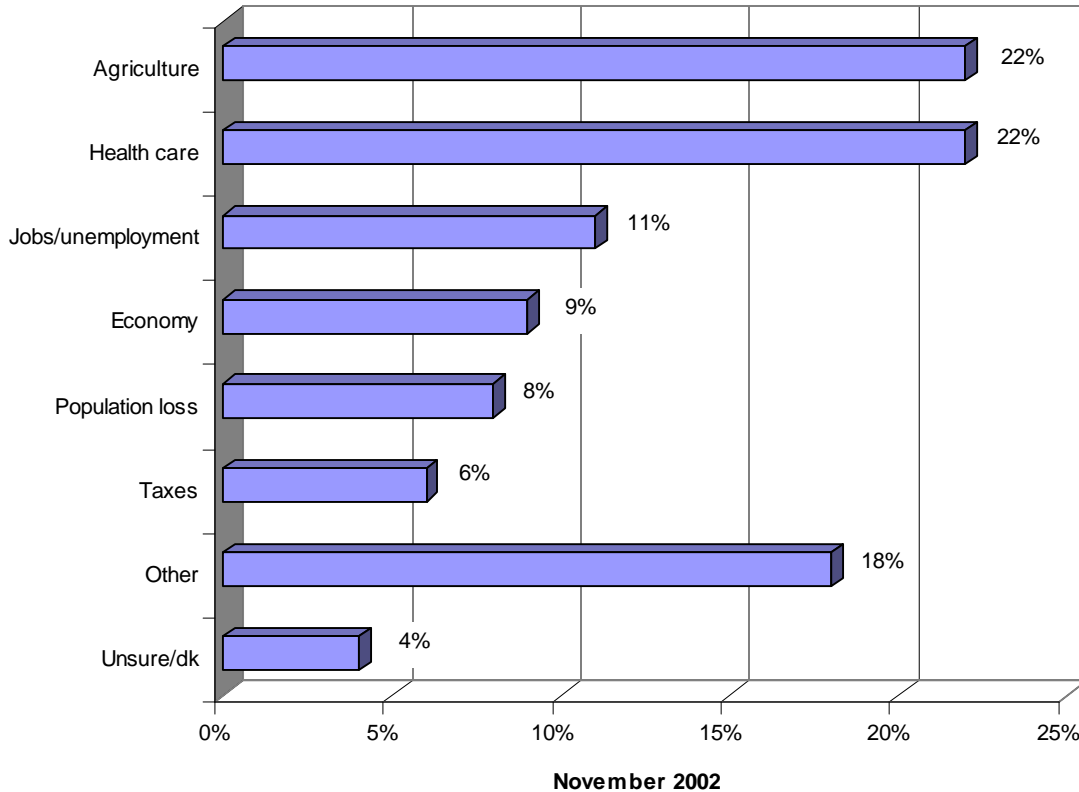
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**Question 1.** What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today?



- According to 27% of Saskatchewan residents, the most important issue facing Canada today is the health care system. Other important issues include international issues (17%), the economy (7%), jobs and unemployment (7%), federal taxes (6%), agriculture (4%) and the environment (4%).
- Approximately 17% of residents are primarily concerned with 'other' issues such as the federal government in general (6%), moral, social and religious issues (2%), crime and poverty (2%), Native issues (1%) and education (1%).

**Question 2.** What do you think is the most important issue facing the province of Saskatchewan today?



- The most important issue facing the province today, according to 22% of Saskatchewan residents, is agriculture; another 22% of residents are concerned primarily with health care. Approximately 11% are primarily concerned with jobs and unemployment, 9% with the provincial economy, 8% with population loss and 6% with provincial taxes.
- Included among 'other' important issues identified by 18% of residents are the provincial government in general (4%), Native issues (3%), business and industry (2%), crime and poverty (1%), moral, social and religious issues (1%), education (1%) and highways and transportation (1%).

**Question 3.** I am going to list a number of services provided by the provincial government. I would like to know how valuable you believe these services are, not just to you personally, but to the people of Saskatchewan. Please rank the degree of value on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being of little or no value and 5 being of great value.

	<b>Valuable (rank of 4-5)</b>
Support for training and recruitment of health care professionals	76%
Attracting private investment in Saskatchewan's economy to create new jobs	74%
Building and maintaining highways	73%
Support programs for disadvantaged children	66%
Air ambulance service	62%
Housing programs for senior citizens and low-income families	61%
Provision of crop insurance programs, cost-shared with farmers	59%
Environmental protection	57%
Funding for construction of school, university and training facilities	56%
Support for community groups that provide recreation and cultural programs	33%

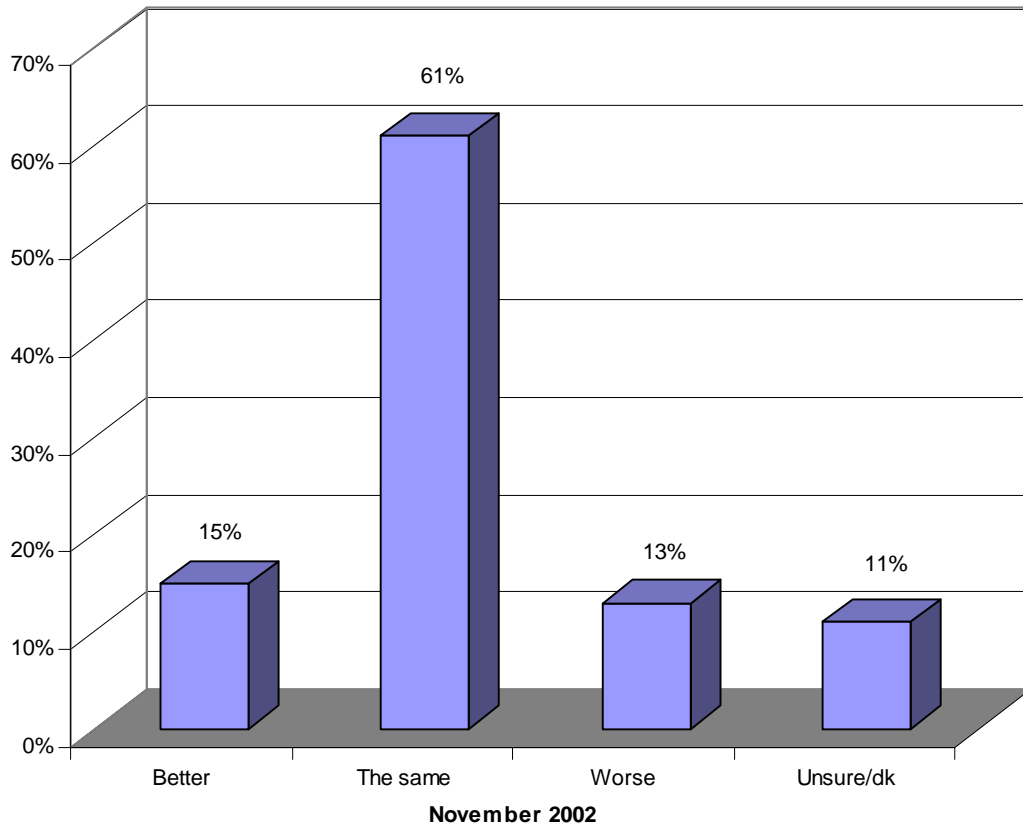
- More than two thirds of residents give the areas of training and recruitment of health care professionals (76%), attracting private investment in Saskatchewan's economy to create jobs (74%) and building and maintaining highways (73%) the highest rankings in terms of their having great value to the province.
- The majority of residents also give relatively high rankings for programs for disadvantaged children (66%), air ambulance service (62%), housing programs for senior citizens and low-income families (61%), provision of crop insurance programs cost-shared with farmers (59%), environmental protection (57%) and funding for construction of school, university and training facilities (56%).



## 2.0 LEARNING

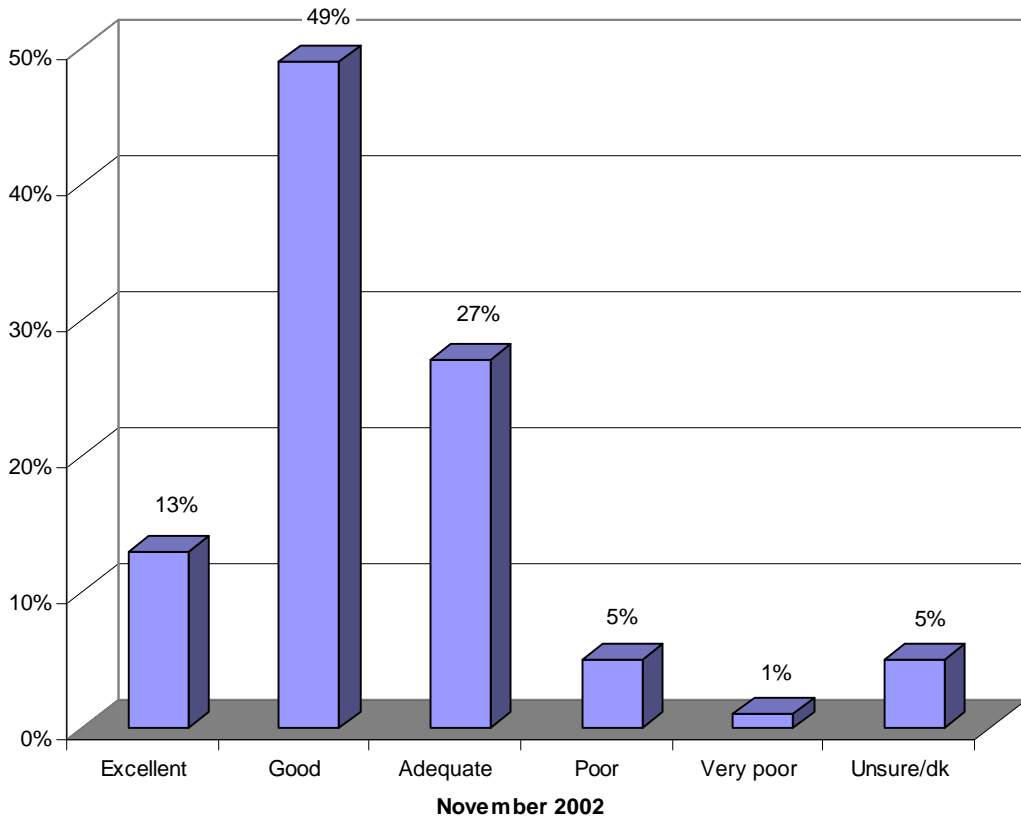
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**Question 4.** Compared to the rest of the country, do you think the education system in Saskatchewan is better, the same or worse?



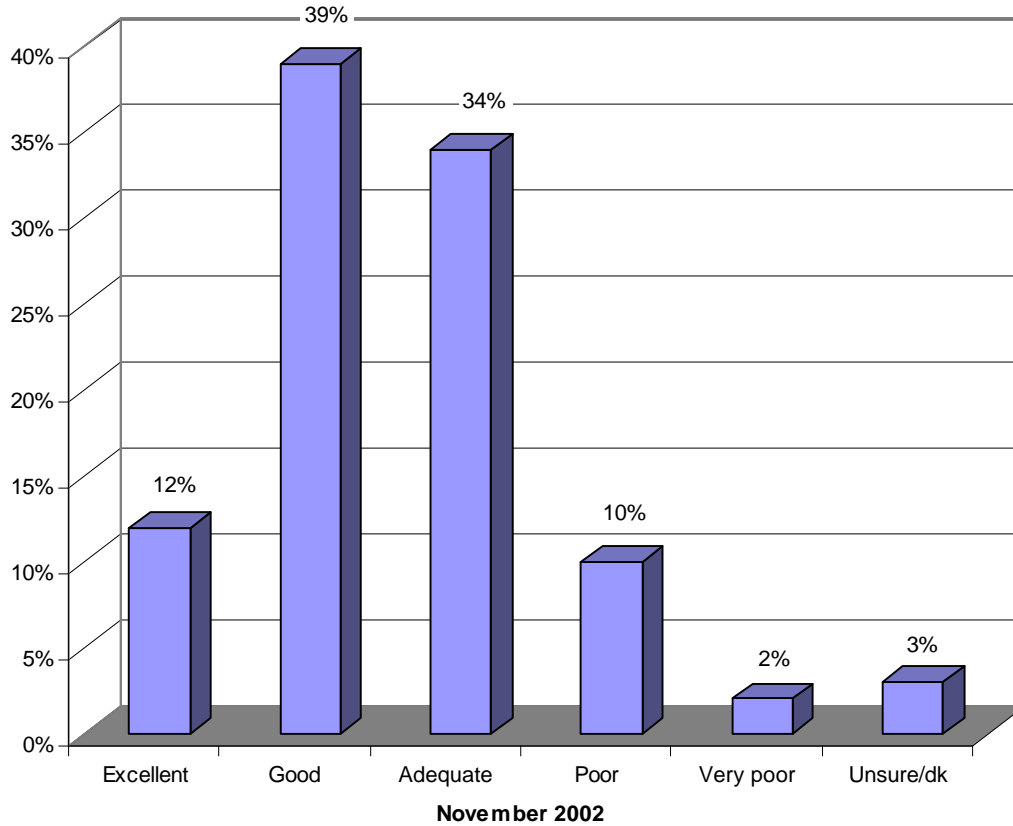
- Approximately three quarters (76%) of residents think the post-secondary education and training system in Saskatchewan is the same or better than that of the rest of the country.

**Question 5.** Do you think the quality of Saskatchewan's post-secondary education and training is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?



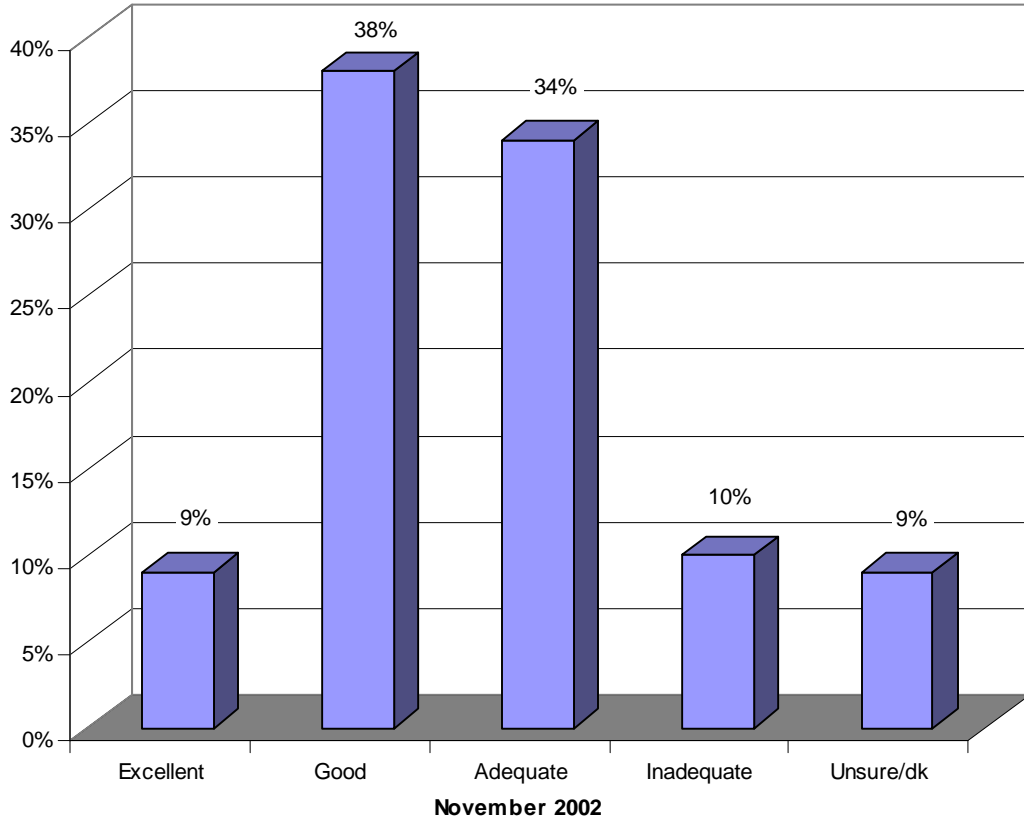
- The majority (62%) of Saskatchewan residents think the quality of Saskatchewan's post-secondary education and training is good or excellent.

**Question 6.** How would you rate your level of awareness of Saskatchewan's post-secondary education and training system? Would you say it is excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?



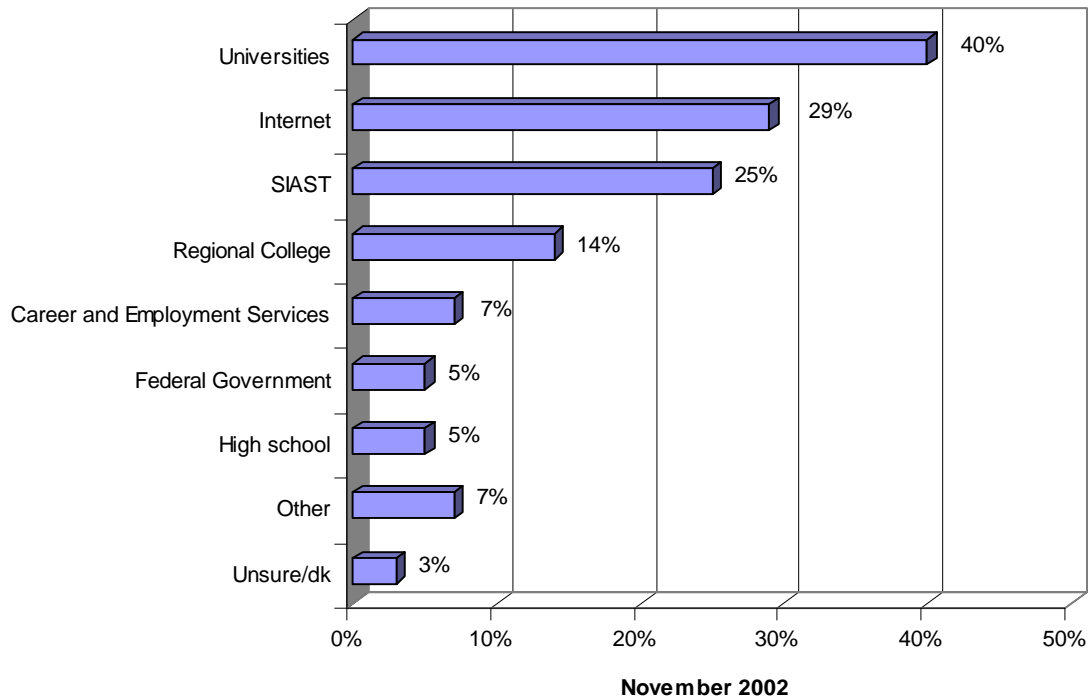
- The large majority (85%) of residents think their awareness of Saskatchewan's post-secondary education and training system is adequate or better.

**Question 7.** How well does the post-secondary education and training system in Saskatchewan meet your needs for information about its programs and services?



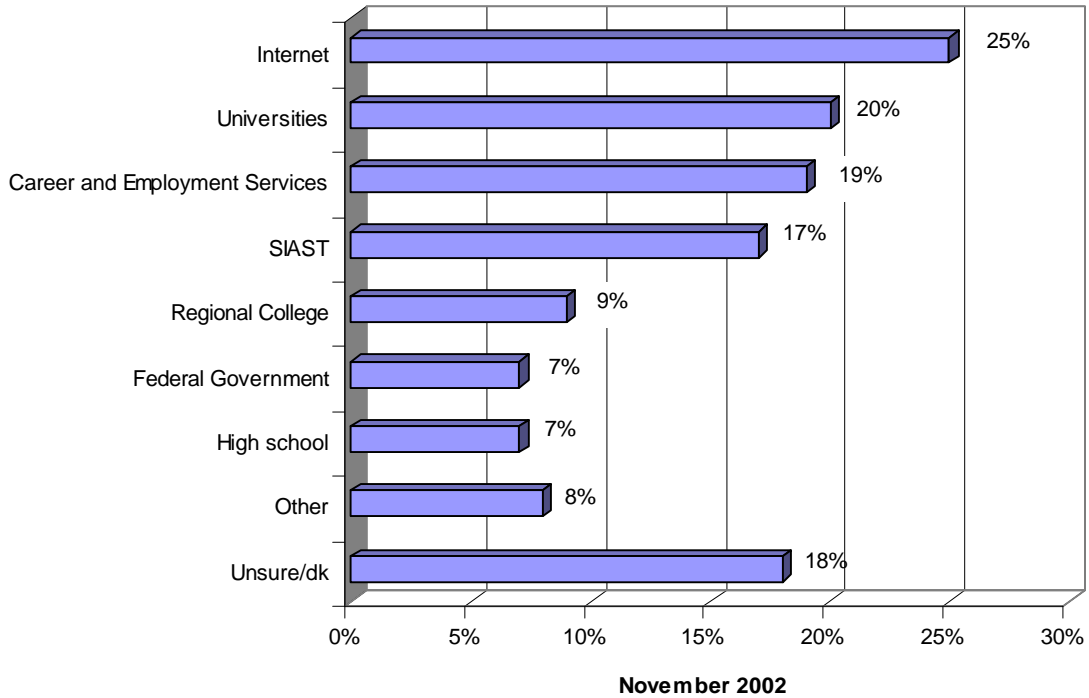
- More than three quarters (81%) of residents think the post-secondary education and training system in Saskatchewan does an adequate or better job at meeting their needs for information about its programs and services.

**Question 8.** Where would you go to get information about post-secondary education and training opportunities in Saskatchewan?



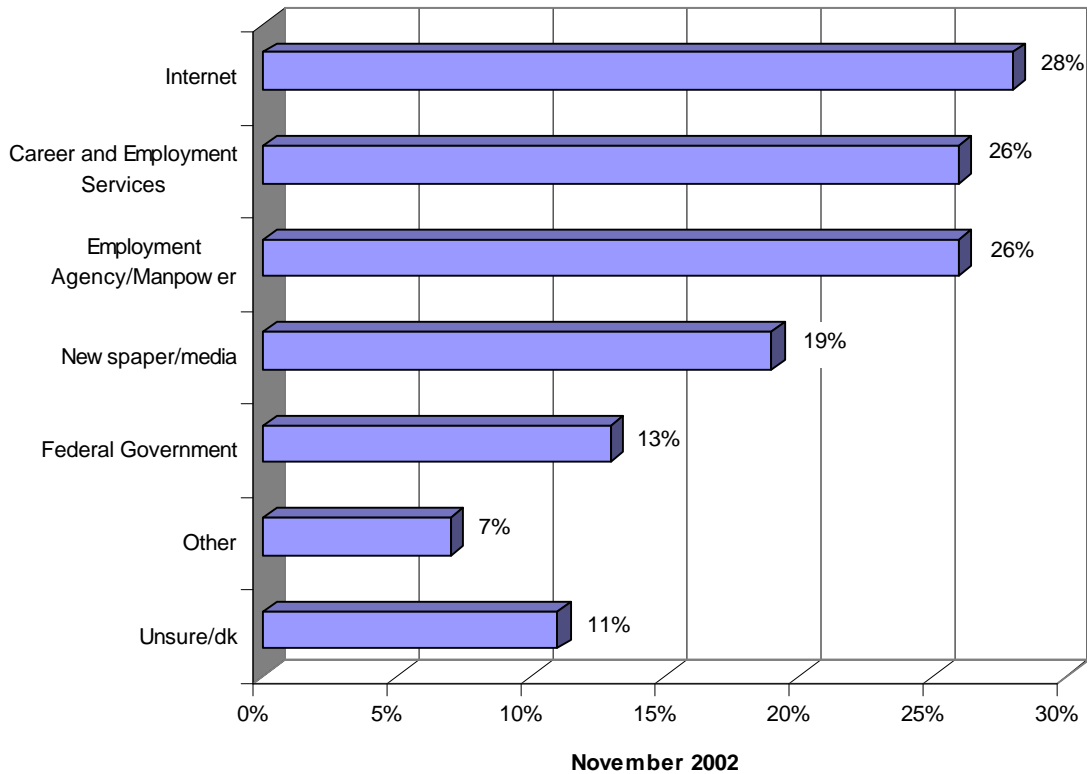
- The majority of Saskatchewan residents would go directly to post-secondary institutions in order to get information about post-secondary education and skills training opportunities in Saskatchewan.
- Almost one third (29%) of Saskatchewan residents would go to the Internet for information.

**Question 9.** Where would you go for career information?



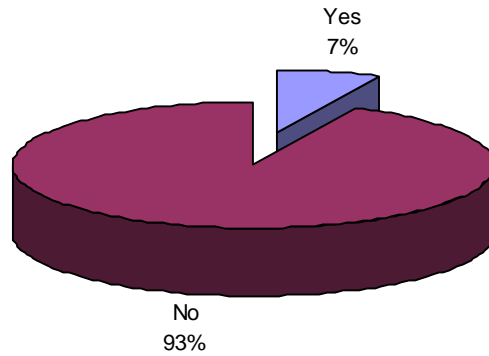
- A plurality of Saskatchewan residents (25%) would search the Internet for career information, 20% would go to a university, 19% would get information from Career and Employment Services and 17% would go to SIAST.

**Question 10.** Where would you go for information about job opportunities or to find workers?



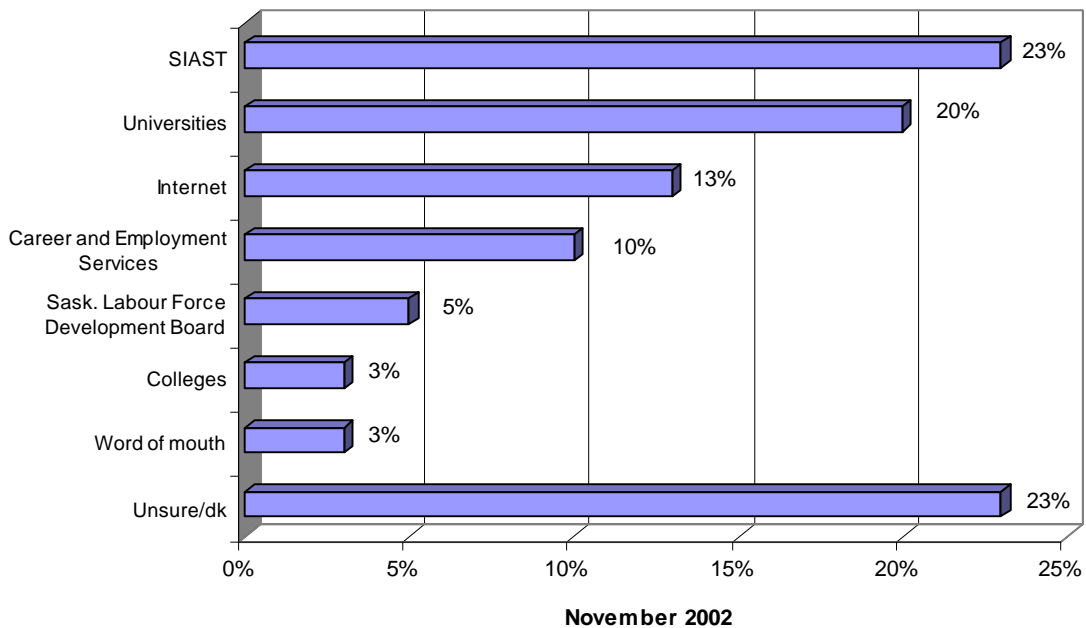
- A plurality of Saskatchewan residents (28%) also indicate they would search the Internet for information about job opportunities or to find workers.
- Others would go to Career and Employment Services (26%) and an employment agency or Manpower (26%) if they were looking for information about job opportunities or to find workers.

**Question 11.** Have you heard of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, or P.L.A.R.?



- Approximately 7% of Saskatchewan residents have heard of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (P.L.A.R.).

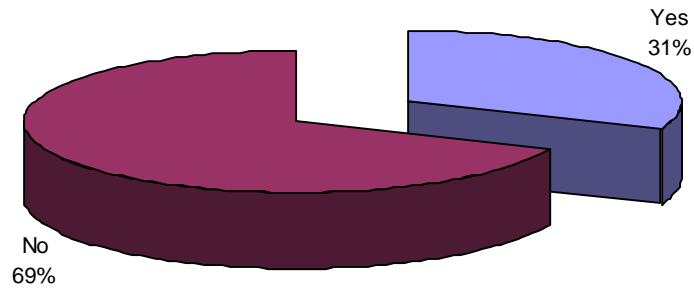
**Question 12.** Where would you go to get more information about P.L.A.R.?



- Approximately one quarter (23%) of those who have heard of P.L.A.R. indicate they would go to SIAST to get more information (2% of all respondents) and 20% would go to a university (1% of all respondents).

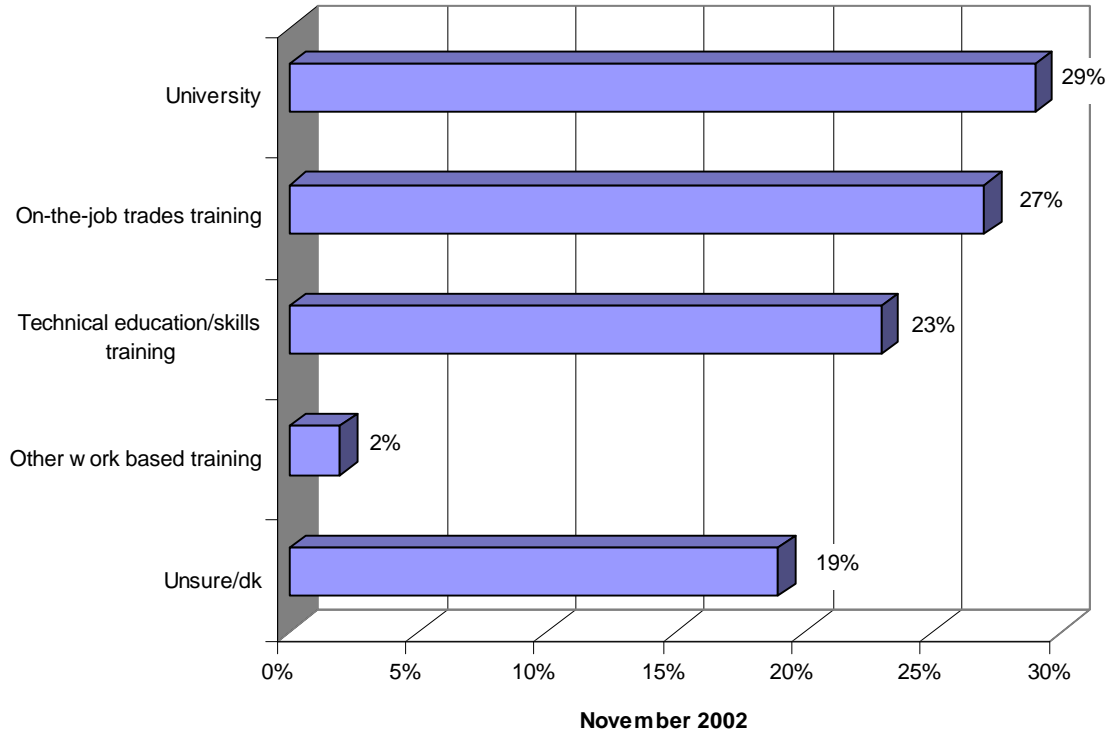


**Question 13.** Have you, or someone you know, used the P.L.A.R. process?



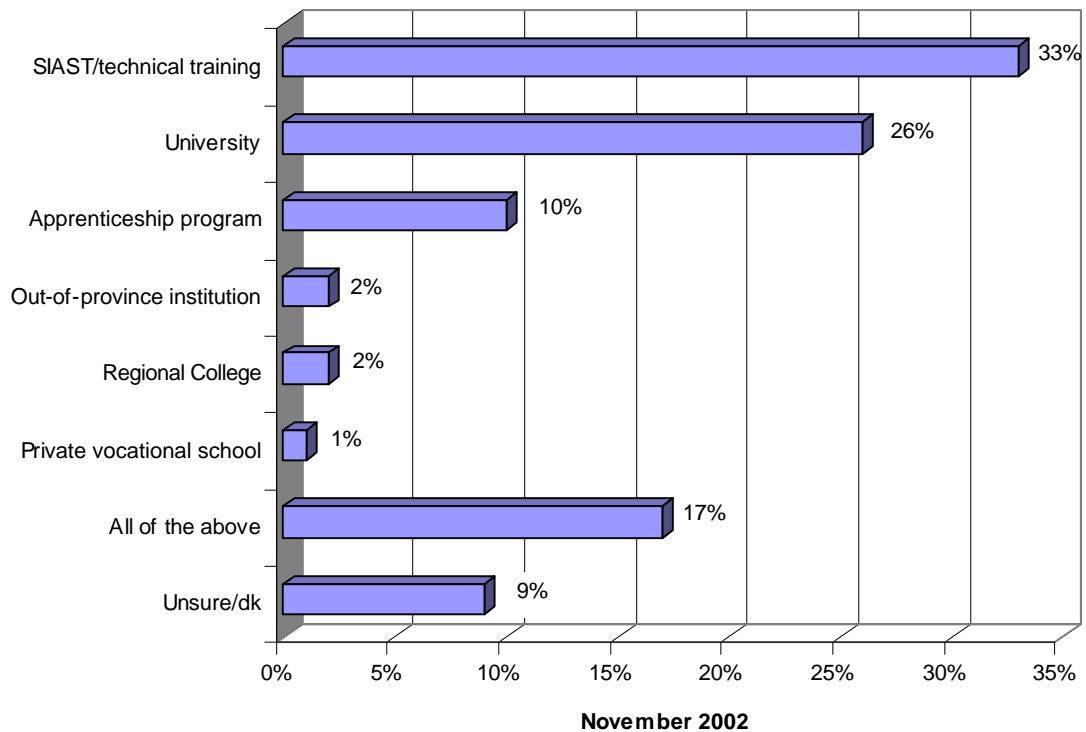
- Approximately one third (31%) of those residents who have heard of P.L.A.R. indicate they or someone they know has used the process (2% of all respondents).

**Question 14.** If you were advising a young person today, would you recommend they choose technical education and skills training, on-the-job trades training through apprenticeship, other work-based training, or university?



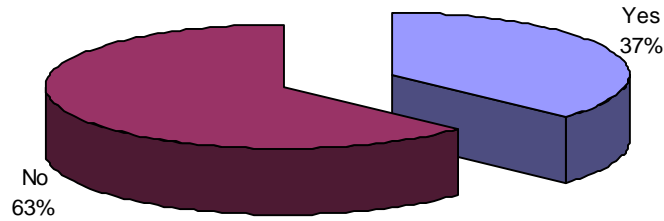
- Approximately 29% of Saskatchewan residents would recommend university if they were advising a young person today, 27% would recommend on-the-job trades training and 23% would recommend technical education and skills training.

**Question 15.** Which institution would you suggest they attend? Would you recommend SIAST/Technical training, university, apprenticeship programs, out-of-province institution, regional college, private vocational school or all of the above?



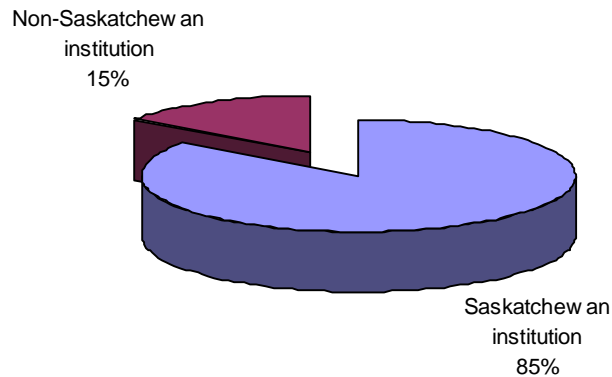
- If they were advising a young person today, one third (33%) of Saskatchewan residents would recommend they attend SIAST or technical training school and 26% would recommend they attend university.

**Question 16.** In the past year, have you or one of your immediate family taken credited post-secondary education?



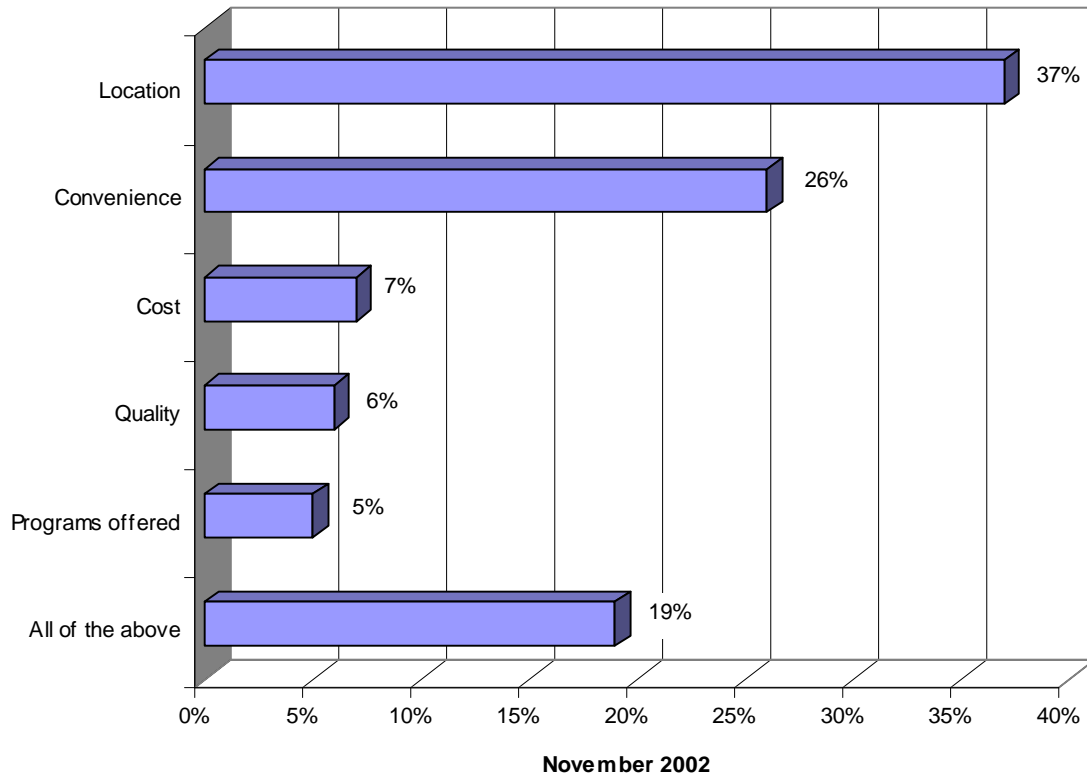
- More than one third (37%) of Saskatchewan residents indicate they or one of their immediate family members has participated in some type of credited post-secondary education.

**Question 17.** Was this education from a Saskatchewan or a non-Saskatchewan institution?



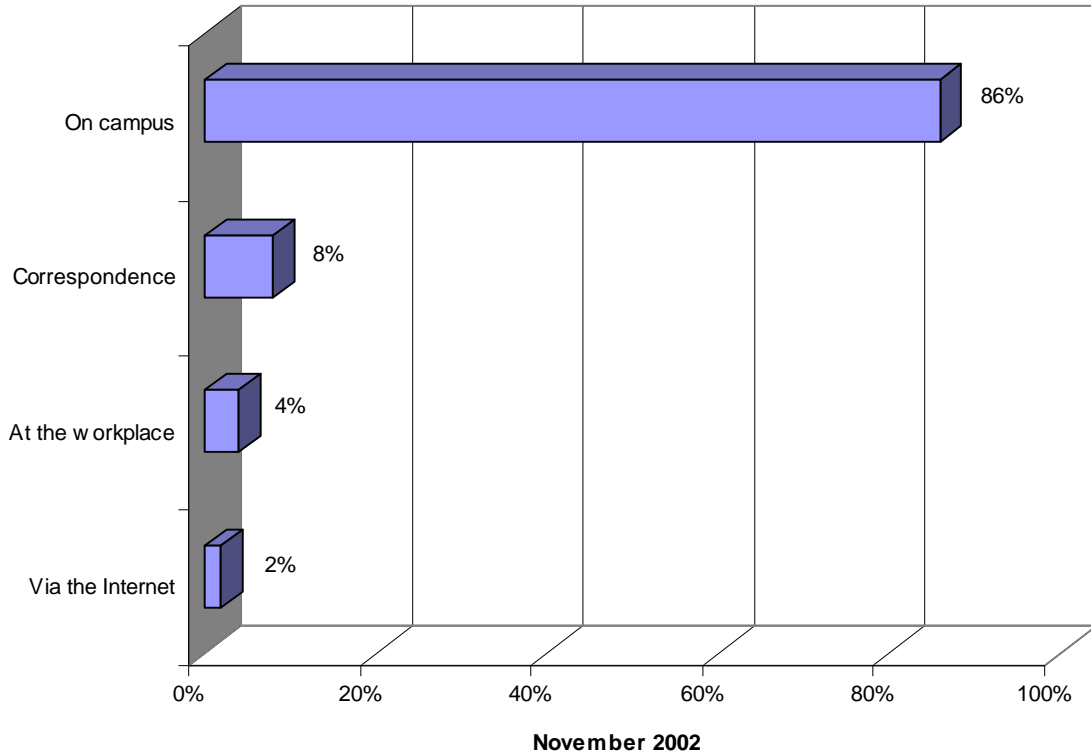
- Of those residents who indicate they or an immediate family member have taken credited post-secondary education, the large majority (85%) did so through a Saskatchewan institution.

**Question 18.** Did you or your family member choose a Saskatchewan institution because of cost, convenience, location, quality or other reasons? (ROTATE)



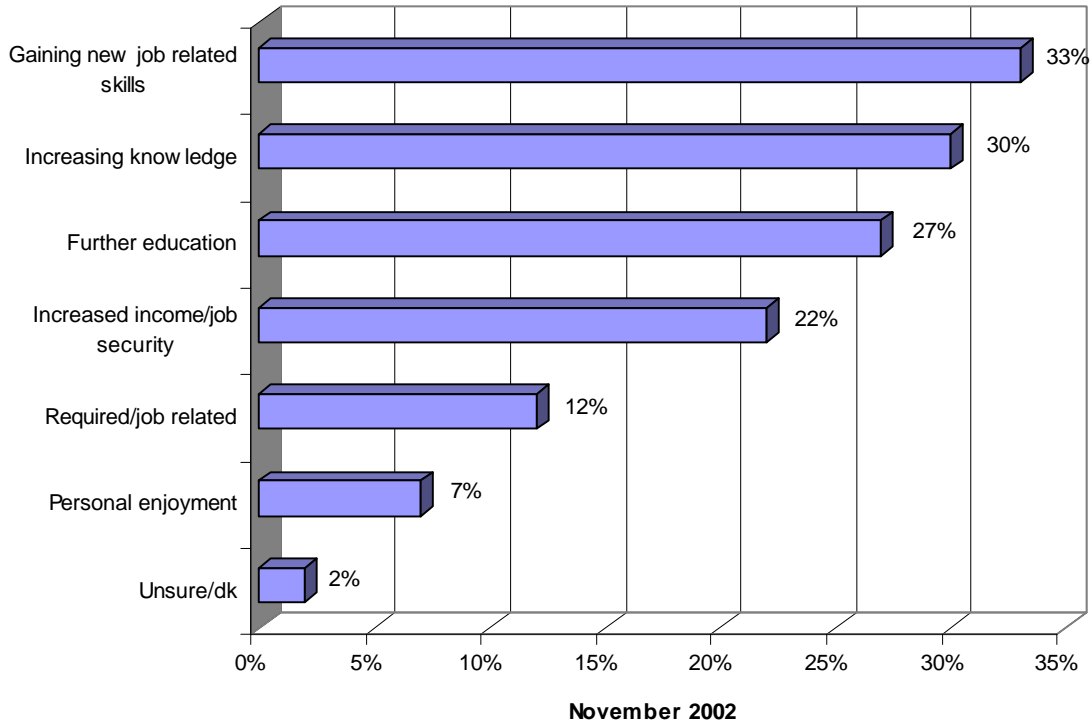
- More than one third (37%) of those who chose a Saskatchewan institution for credited post-secondary education did so because of location (12% of all respondents) and 26% chose a Saskatchewan institution because of convenience (8% of all respondents).

**Question 19.** Did you or your family member take this training/education in person at a campus location, through correspondence, at the workplace or via the Internet?



- The large majority (86%) of those residents who indicate they or an immediate family member have taken credited post-secondary education took the training in person at a campus location (32% of all respondents).

**Question 20.** What were the primary reasons for your participation in post-secondary education? Was it for increased knowledge/skills, increased income and/or job security, personal enjoyment, gaining new job related skills, required/job related, further education or other reasons? (ROTATE)

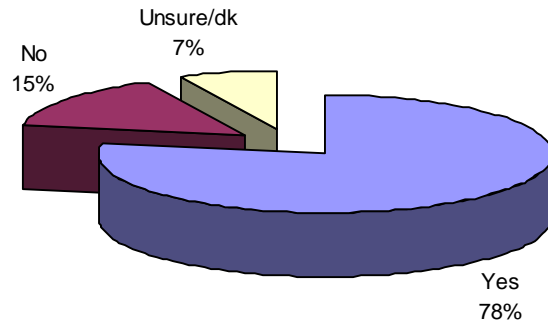


- One third (33%) of those residents who indicate they or an immediate family member have taken credited post-secondary education did so to gain new job related skills (12% of all respondents), 30% say it was to increase their knowledge (11% of all respondents) and 27% say the primary reason was to further their education (10% of all respondents).

### 3.0 SASKATCHEWAN TRANSPORTATION CORPORATION

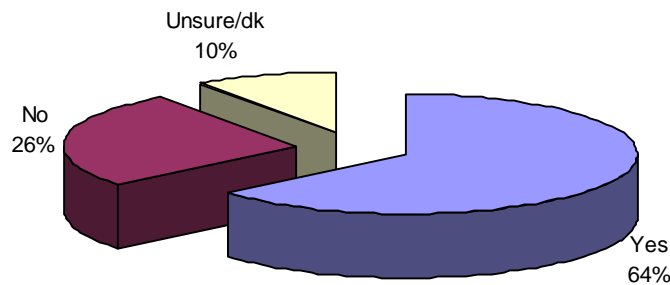
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**Question 21.** Do you think the bus service provided by the Saskatchewan Transportation Company is important to your community?



- More than three quarters (78%) of residents think the bus service provided by the Saskatchewan Transportation Company is important to their community.

**Question 22.** Is providing a passenger and freight transportation system to rural Saskatchewan communities a public policy initiative that the provincial government should fund?



- The majority (64%) of Saskatchewan residents think a passenger and freight transportation system to rural Saskatchewan communities is a public policy initiative that the provincial government should fund.

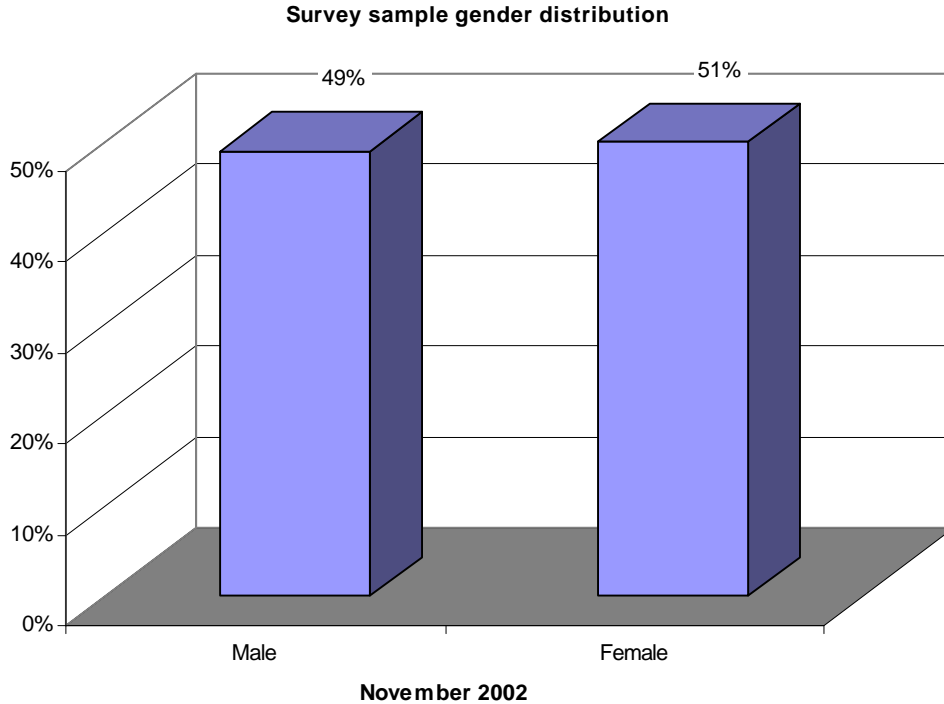


## APPENDIX II SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

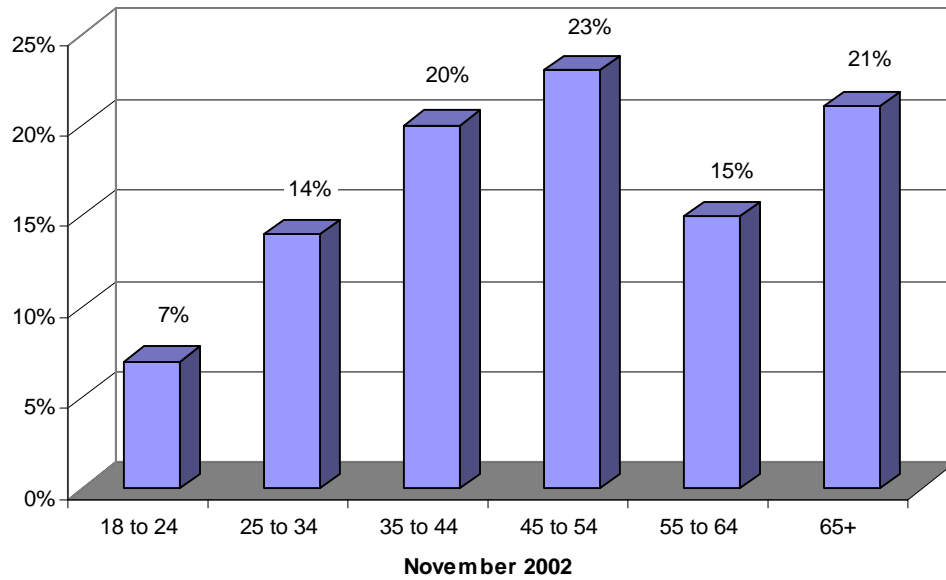
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The omnibus public opinion sample frame is constructed to facilitate proportionate representation of various demographic characteristics evident within the province of Saskatchewan. This ensures that opinions of all the various types of residents in Saskatchewan are proportionately represented in the statistical measurements documented in this report. The demographic distributions from the survey sample generally parallel the province's actual population distributions, as measured by Statistics Canada census data.

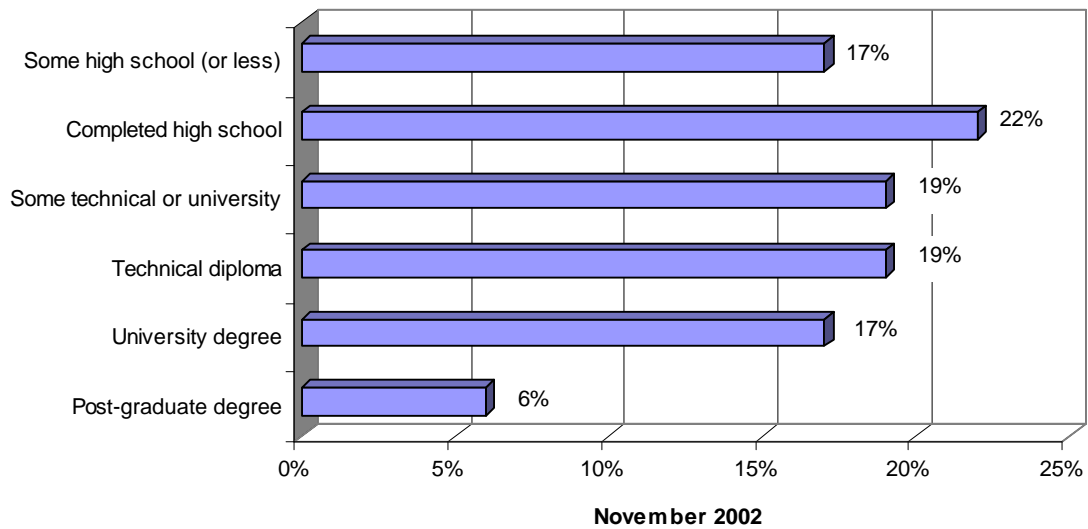
The omnibus survey sample size of 1,032 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error for the point estimates contained in this report of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.



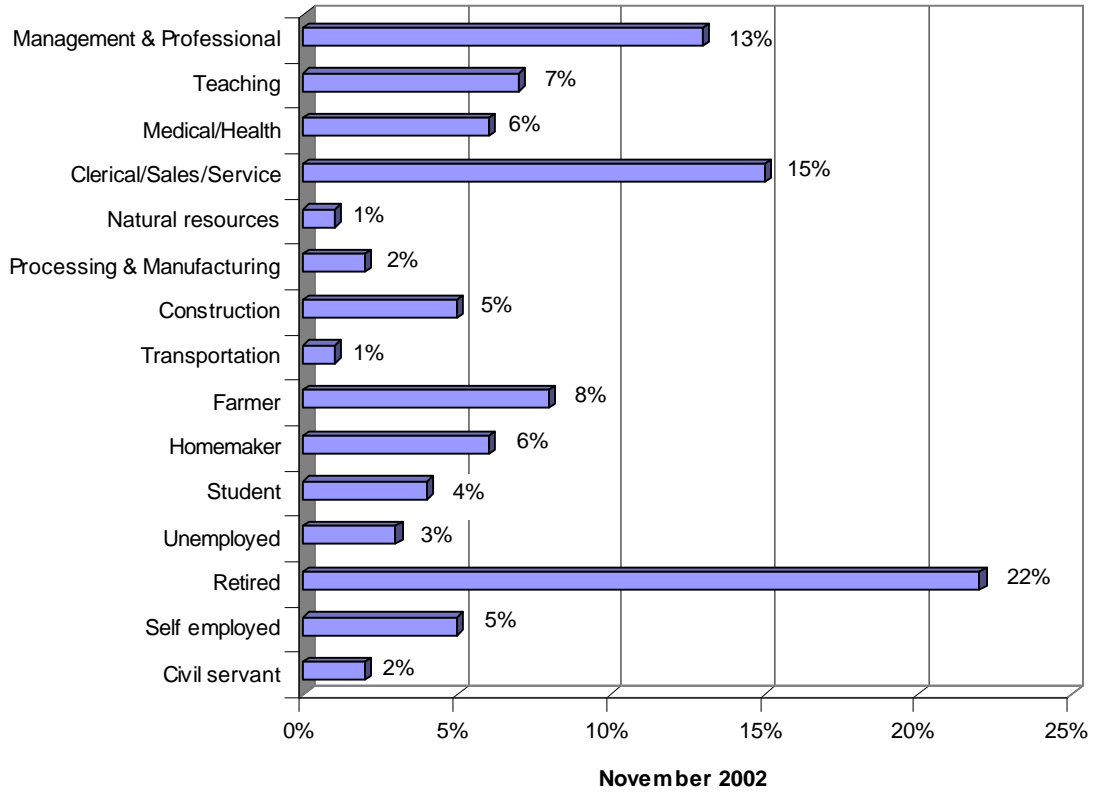
**Survey sample age distribution**



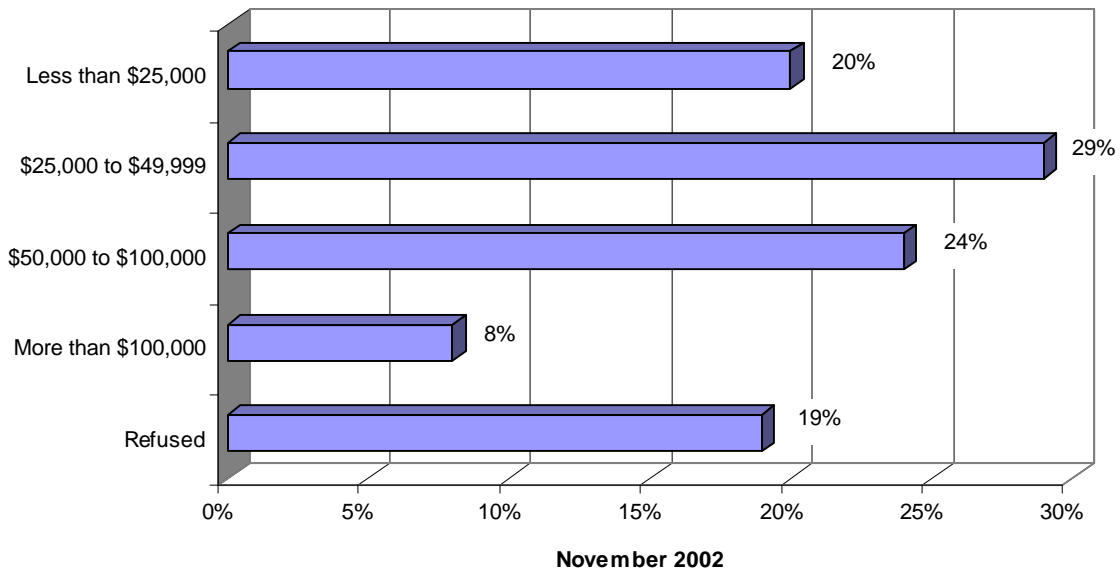
**Survey sample education distribution**



**Survey sample occupation distribution**



**Survey sample income distribution**



**Survey sample regional distribution**

