

Labour Force Statistics ♦ July 2002

HIGHLIGHTS

- **B.C. seasonally-adjusted employment rose by 15,900 in July from June, adding to the gain of 27,200 in June.** Higher employment, along with a drop in the estimated number of unemployed persons (down 11,200), pulled down the B.C. unemployment rate to 8.2 per cent.
- **Full-time employment for B.C. in July rose by 9,900 from June, while part-time employment rose by 6,000.** Within the goods sector, gains in construction and manufacturing were only partly offset by decreases in agriculture and utilities. For services, gains in transportation and public administration more than offset decreases in professional, scientific & technical and education services.
- **The actual unemployment rate in July 2002 for B.C. students aged 15 to 24 planning to return to school in the fall, rose to 19.1 per cent from 15.8 per cent in July 2001.** Their employment rate (employment-to-population ratio), however, rose to 48.4 per cent in July 2002 from 48.1 per cent last July.
- **Provincial seasonally-adjusted employment growth in July was led by Alberta and B.C. for the second straight month.** Since the start of the year (as measured from December, 2001), employment is up 3.8 per cent in B.C., 3.2 per cent in Quebec, 2.9 per cent in Alberta, 2.2 per cent in Ontario, and 2.2 per cent for Canada overall.

Selected Statistics (SA)	Jul. 2002	Jun. 2002	Jul. 2001
B.C. Unemployment Rate	8.2%	8.7%	7.4%
Canada Unemployment Rate	7.6%	7.5%	7.1%
B.C. Help Wanted Index - (1996=100)	97.9	94.6	117.5
B.C. Employment - Change from prev. mo.	0.8%	-0.6%	-
B.C. Labour Force - Change from prev. mo.	0.2%	0.3%	-
B.C. Participation Rate	65.0%	64.6%	64.1%

* Unless otherwise indicated, all labour force variables are seasonally adjusted.

Labour Force Statistics is a joint compilation and review by BC STATS of the Ministry of Management Services and the Accountability Branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education of the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics Canada. For more information, call BC STATS (250) 387-0327 or Accountability Branch (250) 952-6111.

British Columbia Summer Student Labour Market Conditions - July 2002

Summary . . . This article focuses upon recent labour force activity of full-time students aged 15 to 24 in B.C. during the month of July who plan on returning to school in the fall. Overall, summer student labour market conditions were down in July 2002 from July 2001, particularly for younger students aged 15 to 19. The overall B.C. summer student unemployment rate rose to 19.1 per cent in July 2002 from 15.8 per cent in July 2001, the highest rate seen among the provinces. This was chiefly due to an upward jump in the unemployment rate of younger students. Older students aged 20 to 24 saw a positive rise in their employment rate (employment to population ratio) to 64.3 per cent, up from 61.2 per cent in July 2001. This gain by older students pushed up the overall student employment rate, though it fell slightly for younger students this July.

Introduction . . . The monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics Canada provides information on labour market characteristics of full-time students in B.C. A supplement to the Labour Force Survey conducted in the months of May to September focuses on the labour market performance of returning full-time students during the summer months.

Many post-secondary students are available for summer employment (especially full-time work) from May through August, while secondary school students will more likely be available for jobs (especially full-time work) in only July and August. This article focuses upon the month of July only, a period when most students are available for summer work.

Definitions and issues associated with student labour force data . . .

Full-time students - Youths (aged 15 to 24) are given the status of "full-time student" if they reported that they were attending school full-time in March of the current calendar year when they are surveyed in the summer months.

Returning and not returning students - Students are further categorised by their intentions to return or not return to school full-time in the Fall or if they are unsure of their intentions.

There was little change in levels of students during the 1980's as higher school participation rates offset a fall in youth population. The number of total full-time students aged 15 to 24 has risen substantially since the early 1990s, from 229,700 in July 1990 to 332,700 in July 2002, an increase of 45 per cent. The number of returning students grew over this period by 50 per cent, and students who were not returning (including students who are not sure if they are returning) grew by 24 per cent. The returning students category remains significantly larger in numbers and proportion than the "not sure/not returning" category. The proportion of returning students to total students stood at 83 per cent in July 2002.

Age of students surveyed - The two age groups of full-time students (returning or not) covered include those aged 15 to 19 (a good portion of whom would be secondary school students) and those aged 20 to 24 (most likely all attending either a public or private post-secondary institution). In terms of relative size, the age 15 to 19 group of full-time students (229 thousand in July 2002) is just over twice as large as the age 20 to 24 group (104 thousand).

Older students not covered in survey - Full-time students covered in the Statistics Canada supplemental summer survey are limited to students between the ages of 15 to 24. However, persons aged 25 and older are a growing and significant component of overall full-time post-secondary students in B.C. For example, the estimated number of full-time students in B.C. aged 25 to 29 more than doubled from 9,300 in November 1990 to 21,900 in November 2000.

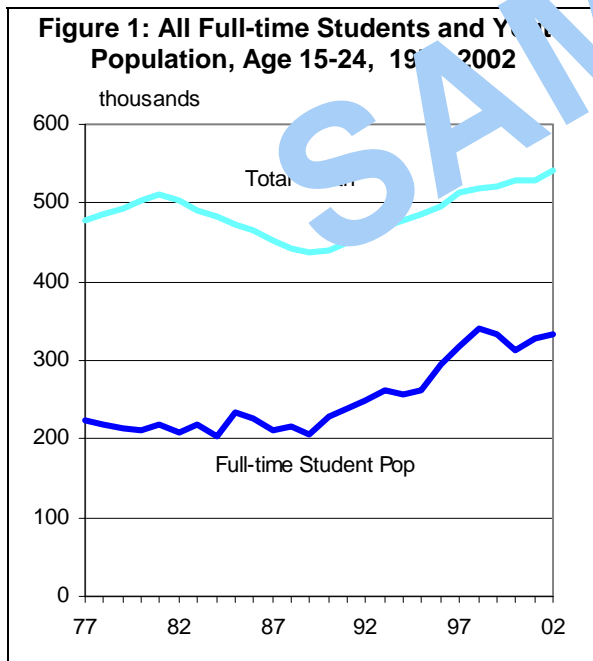
Part-time students not covered in survey - Students aged 15 to 24 who attend, or recently attended, school part-time are not reported in the summer student data published by Statistics Canada. However, it should be noted that there are significant and growing numbers of part-time students of all ages. In November 2000 there were 33,300 part-time students aged 15 to 24 compared to 17,300 in November 1990.

Semester systems and co-op programs may also complicate generalisations about the length and timing of the school year for those in post-secondary studies. Those on different semester systems who are not attending school full-time in March or are on a work placement program, may not be covered by the survey.

Growth in the student population . . .

Figure 1 shows that the estimated number of full-time students aged 15 to 24 in B.C. (both those returning and those not returning or undecided), remained relatively unchanged during the 1980s. While the population of this age group fell during the 1980s, student numbers held as participation rates in education rose.

The number of full-time students during the 1990s rose steadily due to both increased population and education participation increases. This large increase in numbers of students since the early 1990s has increased the competitiveness of the summer student job market relative to the situation in the late 1980s



After decreasing slightly in 1999 and 2000, the number of full-time students in B.C. aged 15 to 24 rose in July 2001 and again in July 2002. All of the increase in student population in July

2002 was due to an increase in those students not returning or undecided about returning, as the number of returning students was actually down from July 2001.

Employment for returning students . . .

Employment levels in the month of July for returning students in B.C. during the 1980s saw slow but steady increases (see Figure 2). In part, this reflected the extended recovery of the economy from the 1981/82 recession.

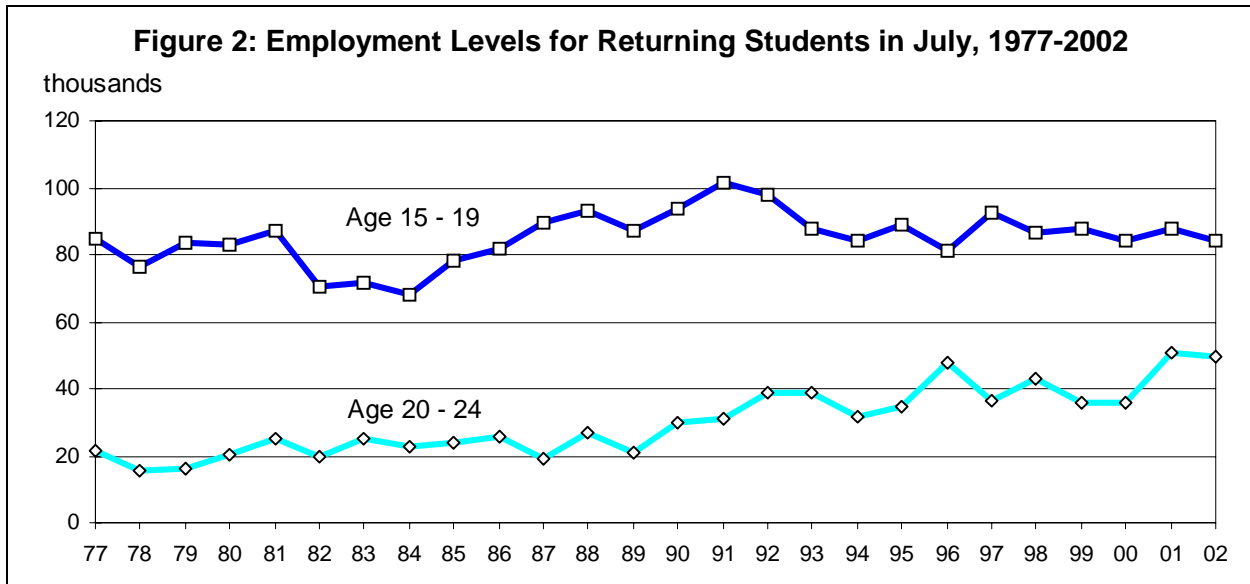
Beginning in 1991, the number of employed summer students aged 15 to 19 started declining back to levels seen in the mid 1980s. By contrast, employment for returning students aged 20 to 24 has generally been rising since 1987.

More recently, the employment level for returning students overall aged 15 to 24 in July 2002 was down 15,000 from July 2001. This result is less discouraging than it appears since the population of full-time returning students fell by 12,000 from July 2001.

Employment levels for returning students aged 15 to 19 fell to 84,200 in July 2002, down by 3,500 from July 2001. Summer employment of younger returning students remains well below their high of 102,000 in 1991, despite the fact the population of younger returning students has expanded by 36,000 since that time.

Employment levels for returning students aged 20 to 24 fell slightly in July 2002, down by 1,500 from July 2001; yet, the population of older returning students fell by 6,200 from July 2001, resulting in a rise in the proportion of older students employed (employment rate) this July from July 2001. However, the employment rate for older returning students is well below levels seen in the early 1990s.

Employment level changes alone provide insufficient information to gauge summer student labour market changes. Both population changes and focus upon those participating in the labour force also need to be considered. Employment rates (also called employment to population ratios) and unemployment rates incorporate these factors and are reviewed next.



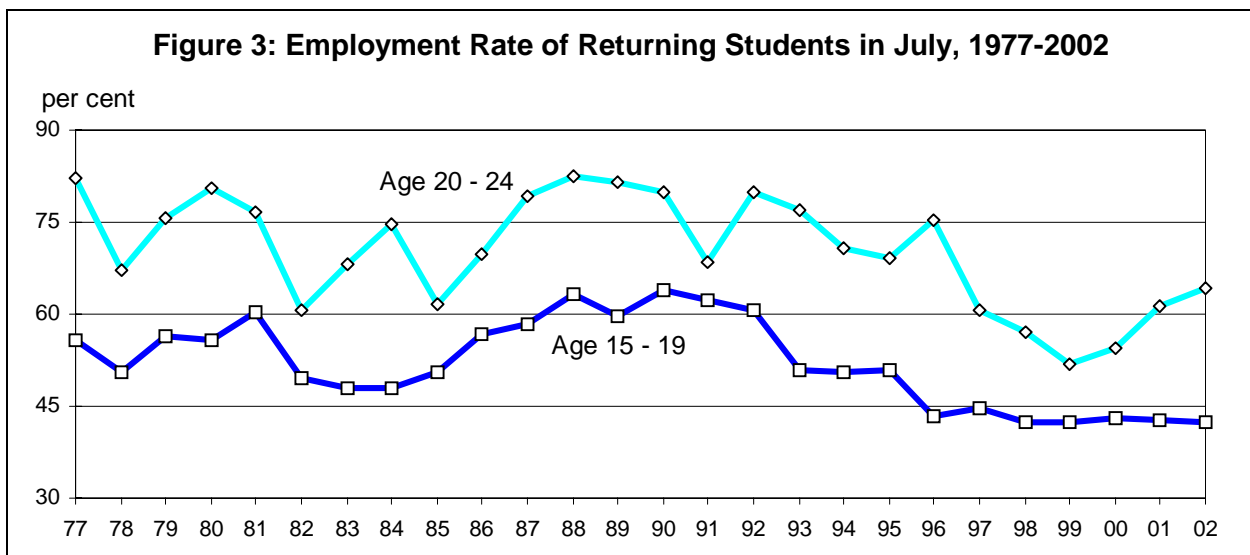
Employment rates for returning students ...

Figure 3 displays the employment rate (employment-to-population ratio) for returning full-time students in the month of July. This measure declined for both age groups in the first half of the 1990s, particularly for those aged 15 to 19. While it continued to edge lower for those aged 20 to 24 in the second half of the 1990s, it has seen some ongoing improvement since its low point in 1999.

The employment rate for full-time returning students overall aged 15 to 24 was 49.4 per cent in July 2002, up slightly from 48.7 per cent in July 2001 and well up from 44.7 per cent in July 1999; yet, this

remains significantly lower than the employment rate of 59.0 per cent for all returning students in July 1995 and well below levels just over 60 per cent in the early 1990s.

The proportion of B.C. returning students aged 15 to 19 who were employed (employment rate) was 42.3 per cent in July 2002, little changed from July 2001 and well below the 50.9 per cent level seen in July 1995. The employment rate of returning students aged 20 to 24 rose to 64.3 per cent in July 2002, up from the 61.2 per cent in July 2001. However, it also remains well below the employment rates of the early to mid-1990's.



Unemployment rates for returning students

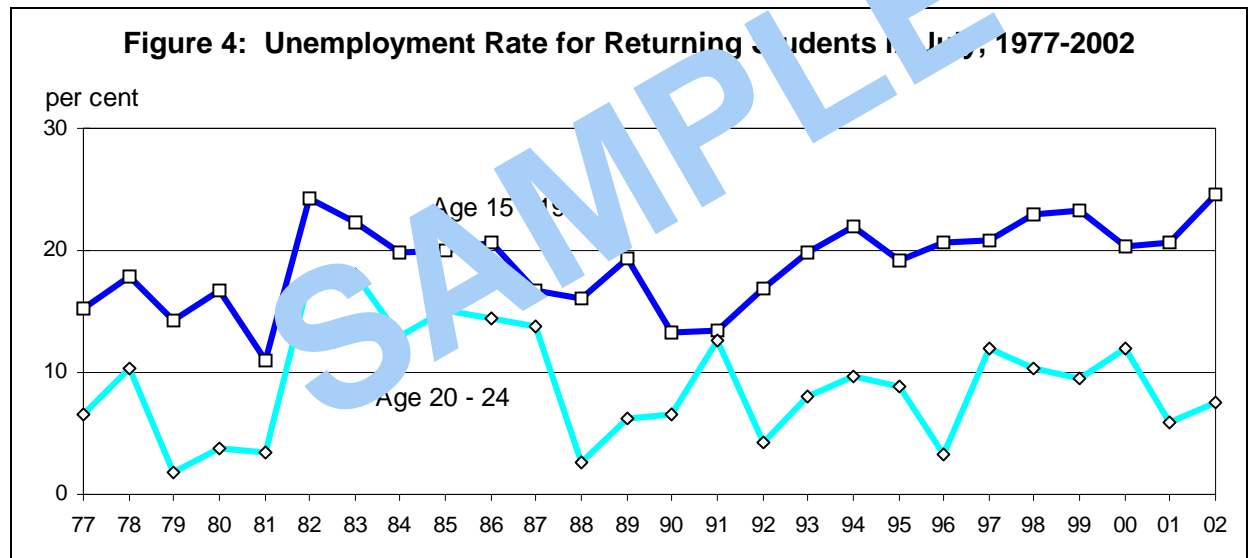
Figure 4 shows the unemployment rate for full-time returning students aged 15 to 19 rose sharply in the early 1990s, and has remained at or above 20 per cent since 1993. For older students, unemployment rates have fluctuated since 1990, and stand at less than half of the level of full-time students aged 15 to 19 in recent years.

The overall unemployment rate for returning students aged 15 to 24 stood at 19.1 per cent in July 2002, up from 15.8 per cent in July 2001. This was the highest overall returning student unemployment rate of any of the ten provinces in July 2002. The second highest was 17.8 per cent in Nova Scotia, the third highest was 17.1 per cent in Ontario, while the lowest rate was 11.2 per cent in Prince Edward Island.

The unemployment rate for returning students aged 15 to 19 in July 2002 stood at 24.6 per cent, up from 20.6 per cent in July 2001.

Unemployment rates for this younger group in B.C. had remained near the 20 per cent level in July for the previous eight years until this year. By comparison, the unemployment rates for returning younger students in July 2002 in other large provinces stood at 18.4 per cent in Alberta, 20.1 per cent in Ontario, and 20.7 per cent in Quebec.

The unemployment rate for the older group of students aged 20 to 24 rose slightly to 7.6 per cent in July 2002 from 5.9 per cent in July 2001. This increase occurred due to a contraction in employment that was greater in percentage terms than the contraction in the labour force for older returning students.



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