
Labour Force Statistics ♦ July 2001

HIGHLIGHTS

- **B.C.'s seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate rose to 7.2 per cent in July (up 0.2 percentage points from June).** A slight decline in employment (down 2,100) along with an increase in the estimated number of unemployed persons (up 4,700) pushed up the B.C. unemployment rate.
- **The actual unemployment rate in July 2001 for B.C. students aged 15 to 24 planning to return to school in the fall, fell to 15.8 per cent from 18.0 per cent in July 2000.** Their employment rate (employment-to-population ratio) rose to 48.1 per cent in July 2001 from 45.9 per cent last July.
- **Full-time employment for B.C. in July fell by 10,900 from June, while part-time employment rose by 8,800.** Within the goods sector, gains in construction offset a decrease in manufacturing. For services, gains in accommodation & food and transportation offset decreases in professional, scientific & technical and finance, insurance & real estate services.
- **Provincial seasonally-adjusted employment in July rose only in Saskatchewan, Quebec and Nova Scotia.** National unemployment remained at 7.0 per cent for the fifth consecutive month, ranging from a twenty-year low of 4.4 per cent in Alberta to 15.6 per cent in Newfoundland.

Selected Statistics (SA)*	Jul. 2001	Jun. 2001	Jul. 2000
B.C. Unemployment Rate	7.2%	7.0%	7.2%
Canada Unemployment Rate	7.0%	7.0%	6.8%
B.C. Help Wanted Index - (1996=100)	124.0	126.0	146.0
B.C. Employment - Change from prev. mo.	-0.1%	-0.8%	-
B.C. Labour Force - Change from prev. mo.	0.1%	-0.6%	-
B.C. Participation Rate	64.2%	64.2%	64.3%

* 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 Youth and Labour Market Services 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 YLMS (250) 952-6776.

British Columbia Summer Student Labour Market - July 2001

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 improved substantially in July 2001 from July 2000, particularly for older students. The overall summer student unemployment rate fell to 15.8 per cent in July 2001 from 18.0 per cent in July 2000. This was fully accounted for by older students aged 20 to 24. Older students aged 20 to 24 also saw a jump in their employment rate (employment to population ratio) to 61.2 per cent, up from 54.4 per cent in July 2000. This large gain by older students pushed up the overall student employment rate, though the level by younger students was little changed from a year ago.

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 recent 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, when both secondary and post-secondary 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 rose substantially since the early 1990s, rising from 229,700 in July 1990 to 328,300 in July 2001, an increase of 42.9 per cent. The number of returning students rose over this period by 56.7 per cent, and students who were not returning (including students who are not sure if they are returning) decreased by 12.4 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 87.8 per cent in July 2001.

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 (223 thousand in July 2001) is just over twice as large as the age 20 to 24 group (105 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.

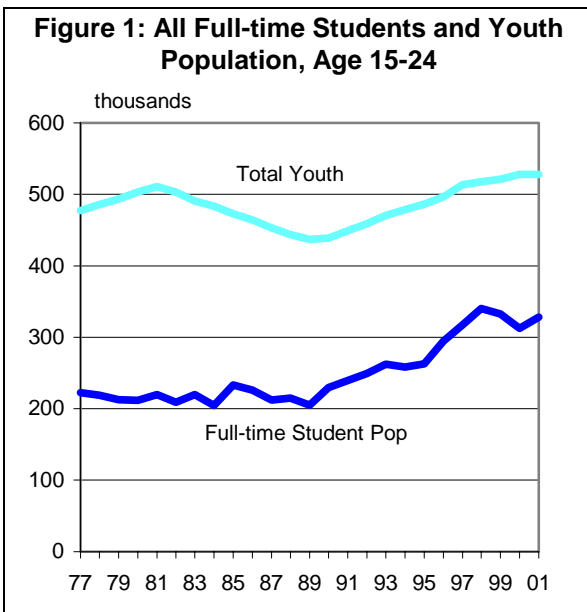
Part-time students not surveyed - Students aged 15 to 24 who attend, or recently attended school part-time are not reported in the summer student data published by Statistics Canada. However it should be noted that there are significant and growing numbers of part-time students of all ages. In November 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 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 by 15,600 in July 2001 from July 2000. This increase was all accounted for by

additional older returning students aged 20 to 24, likely nearly all who were at the post-secondary level.

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.

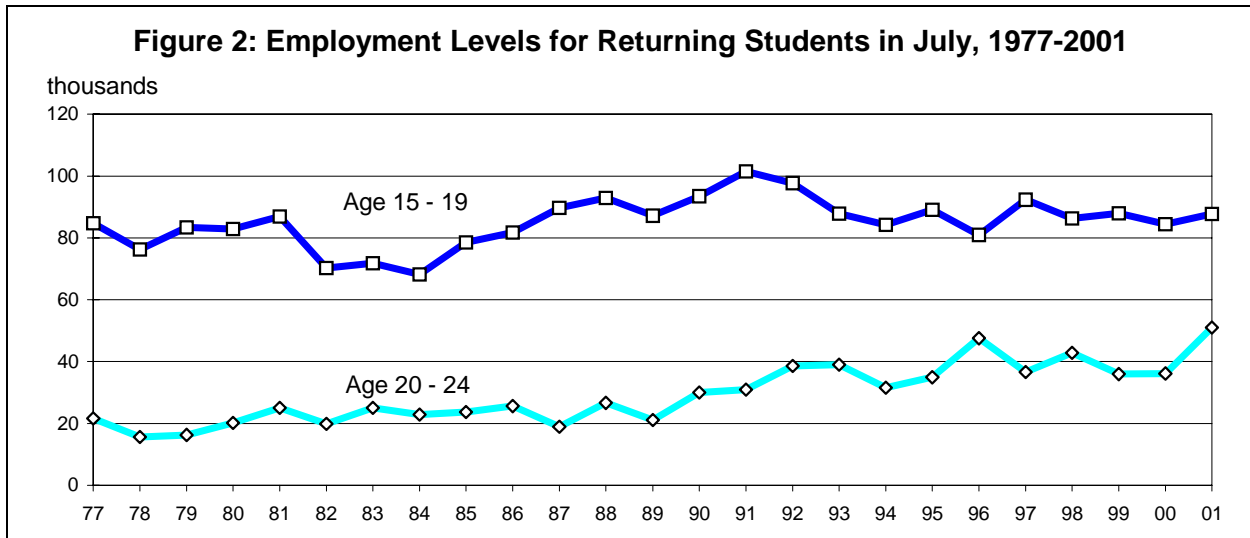
Beginning in 1991, the number of employed summer students aged 15 to 19 started declining back to levels seen in the mid 1980's. By contrast, employment for returning students aged 20 to 24 has generally been rising since 1987.

More recently the employment level for returning students overall aged 15 to 24 in July 2001 was up 18,200 from July 2000. This more than offsets the cumulative decline seen over the previous two years when the employment level of full-time returning students fell by 8,600.

Employment levels for returning students aged 15 to 19 increased to 87,700 in July 2001, up by 3,300 from July 2000. 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 40,000 since that time.

Employment for returning students aged 20 to 24 rose significantly to 51,000 in July 2001, up 14,900 from July 2000. This places employment levels for older returning students at an all-time high for the month of July, though the population of older returning students is also at an all-time high.

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 need also be considered. Employment rates and unemployment rates incorporate these factors and are reviewed next.



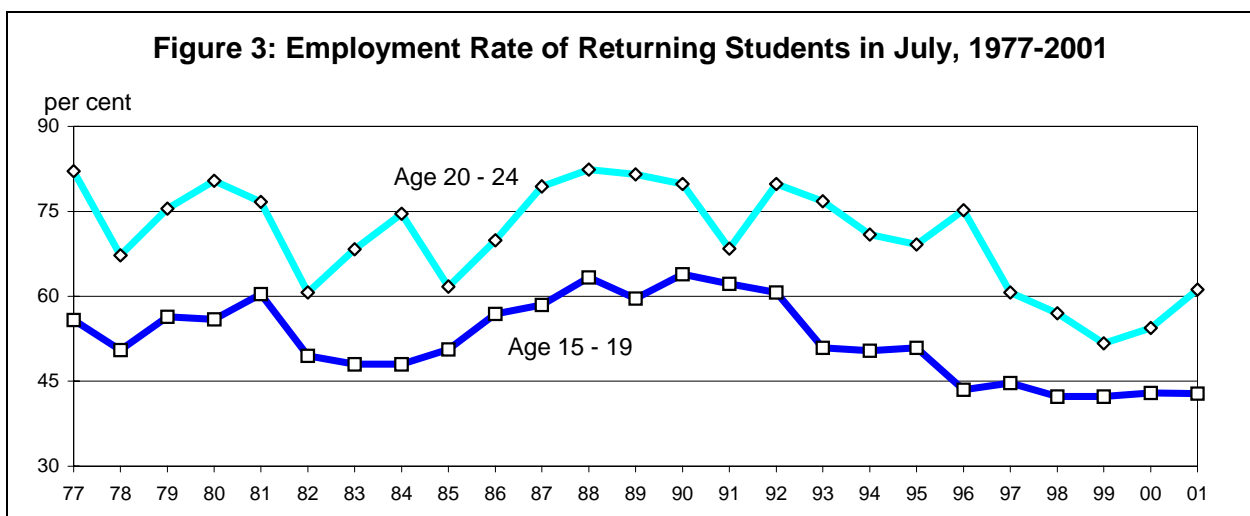
Employment rates for returning students ...

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 stabilized for the younger group since 1996.

The employment rate for full-time returning students overall aged 15 to 24 was 48.1 per cent in July 2001, up from 45.9 per cent a year ago.

This remains significantly lower than the employment rate of 55.0 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 2001, little changed from July 2000 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 61.2 per cent in July 2001, up from the 54.4 per cent seen in July 2000. However, it remains well below the employment rates of the early 1990s.



Unemployment rates for returning students

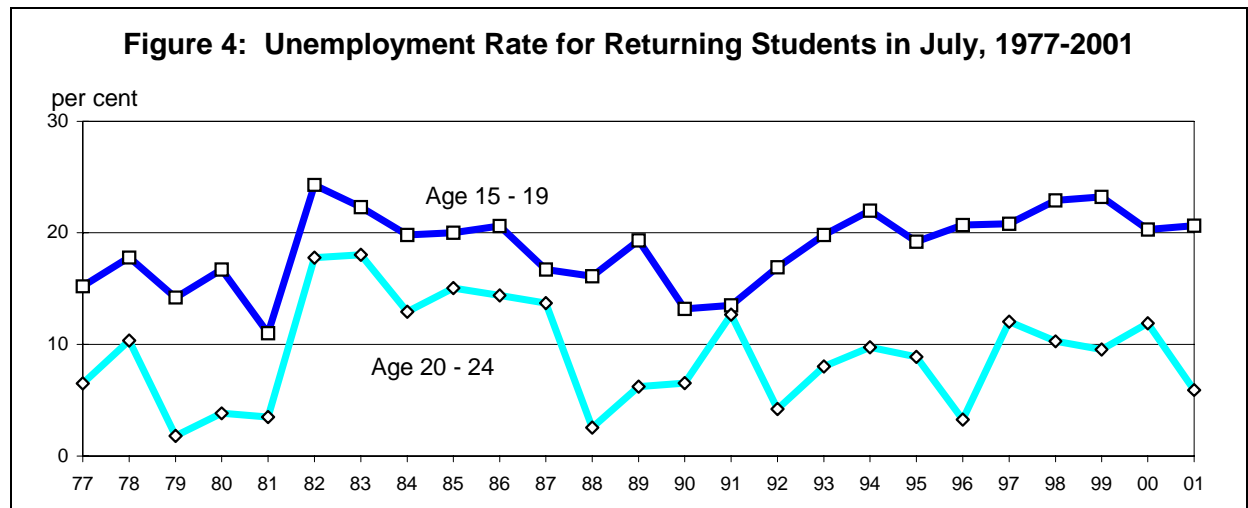
Figure 4 shows the unemployment rate for full-time returning students aged 15 to 19 rose sharply in the early 1990s, but has remained fairly stable since 1994. For older students, unemployment rates have fluctuated since 1990, and have remained at about half of the level of full-time students aged 15 to 19 in recent years.

The overall unemployment rate for returning students aged 15 to 24 stood at 15.8 per cent in July 2001, down from 18.0 per cent in July 2000, and stands at its lowest level since 1996.

The unemployment rate for returning students aged 15 to 19 in July 2001 stood at 20.6 per cent, up slightly from July 2000.

Unemployment rates for this younger group have remained near the 20 per cent level in July for the past eight years. Similarly high summer unemployment rates for returning younger students in the month of July are also typical in other provinces. For example, the unemployment rate for this group in July 2001 in Alberta was 18.1 per cent.

The unemployment rate for the older group of students aged 20 to 24 dropped significantly to 5.9 per cent in July 2001 from 11.0 per cent in July 2000. This decrease occurred due an upward jump in employment growth, which outpaced labour force growth for older returning students comparing July 2001 from July 2000.



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