

## Labour Force Statistics ♦ August 2001

### HIGHLIGHTS

- **B.C.'s seasonally adjusted employment fell by 20,300 in August.** An increase in the number of job seekers pushed the unemployment rate up from 7.2 per cent in July to 7.9 per cent in August.
- **Goods and services sector employment were both down by 1.0 per cent in August.** Within the goods sector, a decrease in construction in August more than offset gains in this industry in recent months. The services sector sustained the bulk of the employment losses in August, primarily in the management, administrative and other support industry, followed by health care and professional, scientific and technical services.
- **Three-quarters of the employment decreases in B.C. in August were accounted for by part-time work (down 15,400) while full-time work decreased by 4,800.** Only young women aged 15-24 sustained no job loss in August. Women aged 25+ experienced the largest decline in employment (down 10,700), almost all of it in part-time work.
- **Nationally, the unemployment rate rose to 7.2 per cent, driven primarily by unemployment increases in B.C. and Ontario.** Provincial seasonally adjusted employment in August rose in Saskatchewan, Quebec, New Brunswick and Newfoundland.

<b>Selected Statistics (SA)*</b>	<b>Aug. 2001</b>	<b>Jul. 2001</b>	<b>Aug. 2000</b>
B.C. Unemployment Rate	7.9%	7.2%	7.8%
Canada Unemployment Rate	7.2%	7.0%	7.1%
B.C. Help Wanted Index - (1996=100)	123.0	124.0	147.0
B.C. Employment - Change from prev. mo.	-1.0%	-0.1%	-
B.C. Labour Force - Change from prev. mo.	-0.3%	0.1%	-
B.C. Participation Rate	63.9%	64.2%	65.1%

\* 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 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) 952-6111.*

## Post-Secondary Education Participation in B.C.

**Introduction . . .** In the past, post-secondary education (PSE) participation rates have frequently been calculated using administrative enrolment data. However, there are a number of challenges associated with such administrative data. For example, these data are not always consistent across the provinces and often omit vocational or private post-secondary participants. This article uses Labour Force Survey data from Statistics Canada that captures participation in post-secondary education programs for credit, including those in public trade/vocational programs and private training institutions as well as those in public career-technical and academic post-secondary programs. The reference period for the data is the fourth quarter average (October to December) of each year to avoid inconsistencies caused by the summer months when post-secondary programs are often in recess. The primary focus will be on the PSE participation of individuals aged 18 to 29, with breakdowns for those aged 18 to 24 and 25 to 29. A secondary focus will be on individuals aged 30 to 54.

**PSE Participation Rates in B.C. and Canada . . .** Estimates from the Labour Force Survey indicate that there were over 1.3 million 18 to 29 year olds in Canada participating in full and part-time post-secondary education programs in 2000. Between 1976 and 2000, the PSE participation rate in B.C. for persons aged 18 to 29 increased from 14.4% to 28.6%. Over the same period, the PSE participation rate for Canada increased from 15.2% to 27.2%. By 1997, the PSE participation rate in B.C. exceeded that of Canada for the first time at 27.1% versus 26.7%. Since 1997, the PSE participation rate in B.C. has continued its upward movement and exceeded the Canadian average by 1.4 percentage points in 2000.

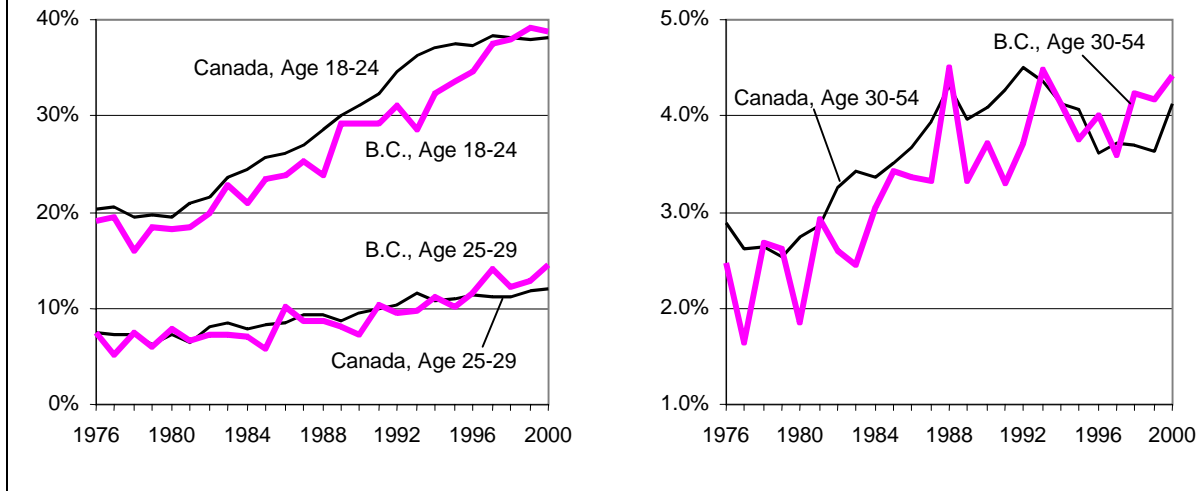
The 18 to 29 age group is broken down into two age groups in Figure 1, those aged 18 to 24 and those aged 25 to 29. For those aged 18 to 24 in Canada, PSE participation increased from

20.3% to 38.1% between 1976 and 2000. In B.C., the participation rate for the same age group increased from 19.2% to 38.7%. For most of the period, the rate in B.C. was just below the national average. During 1993 and 1994, B.C. had a considerably lower participation rate amongst 18 to 24 year olds; yet, by 1997 the gap closed considerably. In 1999, the rate in B.C. surpassed the national average.

As would be expected, the participation rate of those aged 25 to 29 is significantly lower than the rate for 18 to 24 year olds. There has been a gradual increase in the PSE participation of this age group in Canada from 7.4% in 1976 to 12.1% in 2000. The rate in B.C. has increased from 7.5% in 1976 to 14.6% in 2000. In contrast to the rate for the 18 to 24 age group, the rate for the 25 to 29 age group in B.C. has exceeded the national average nearly half the time since 1976. More importantly, since 1996, the PSE participation rate of those aged 25 to 29 in B.C. has exceeded the national average. Increases in PSE participation for 25 to 29 year olds reflect longer transitions from school to work and returning to school by workers.

Figure 1 also depicts the PSE participation rate of those aged 30 to 54 in Canada and B.C. The participation rate in Canada has generally increased since 1976, yet the rate fell back to 3.6% in 1996 following a peak of 4.5% in 1992. The rate somewhat recovered in 2000 to 4.1%. B.C.'s participation rate for this age group has kept pace with the national average and has exceeded it a third of the time. The rate in B.C., like the national average, diminished following a peak of 4.5% in 1993 to a low of 3.6% in 1997. Despite the low rate in 1997, B.C.'s participation rate has recovered and exceeded the national average from 1998 onwards. In 2000, B.C.'s PSE participation rate amongst 30 to 54 year olds was 4.4% versus the national average of 4.1%.

**Figure 1: PSE Participation Rate, Selected Age Groups, Canada and B.C., 1976 to 2000**



**Inter-Provincial Comparison of PSE**

**Participation Rates . . .** Figure 2 provides a breakdown of the PSE participation rate of those aged 18 to 24, 25 to 29, 18 to 29 and 30 to 54 in Canada and the provinces for the years 1990 and 2000. As can be expected, for both years and in all of the provinces, the participation rate of younger age groups is significantly higher than the rate for older age groups.

In both 1990 and 2000, PSE participation rates varied from province to province; however, Quebec continues to have the highest rate for those aged 18 to 24. This result reflects Quebec’s unique CEGEP college system, which increases their overall PSE participation rate, especially for younger age groups. However, while Quebec had the highest rate for 18 to 24 year olds, it also had the second highest PSE participation rate for those aged 25 to 29 in both 1990 and 2000.

For those aged 18 to 24, B.C. had the third highest PSE participation rate in 2000 at 38.7%, behind Quebec at 43.0% and Newfoundland at 41.9%. B.C. also had the third largest increase in participation between 1990 and 2000 rising 9.4 percentage points, compared to a 7.8 percentage point rise in Quebec. Newfoundland

and P.E.I. experienced the largest gains in PSE participation between 1990 and 2000. New Brunswick experienced the smallest gain at 4.2 percentage points.

In 2000, B.C. had the highest PSE participation rate for 25 to 29 year olds at 14.6%, and saw the largest increase in participation with a near doubling between 1990 and 2000. Quebec had the second highest rate in 2000 at 13.0%, followed by Ontario at 11.9%. Alberta saw no change in PSE participation amongst 25 to 29 year olds between 1990 and 2000. Large increases were seen in Newfoundland (up 6.1 percentage points) and P.E.I. (up 5.2 percentage points); but these provinces had participation rates among the lowest in 1990.

B.C. had the second highest PSE participation rate for those aged 30 to 54 at 4.4% in 2000, behind Ontario at 4.5%. It also had the second largest increase in participation between 1990 and 2000 (up 0.7 percentage points). P.E.I. and Nova Scotia experienced large increases in participation. In contrast to the other age groups, there were decreases in participation for this older age group in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec, New Brunswick and Newfoundland.

**Figure 2: PSE Participation Rate, Selected Age Groups, Canada and Provinces, 1990 and 2000**

	1990				2000			
	Age 18-24	Age 25-29	Age 18-29	Age 30-54	Age 18-24	Age 25-29	Age 18-29	Age 30-54
<b>Canada</b>	<b>31.1%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>21.0%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>38.1%</b>	<b>12.1%</b>	<b>27.2%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
<b>B.C.</b>	29.3%	7.2%	19.0%	3.7%	38.7%	14.6%	28.6%	4.4%
<b>Alberta</b>	24.9%	11.3%	18.4%	5.0%	31.6%	11.3%	23.0%	3.9%
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	26.0%	7.9%	17.6%	4.1%	33.0%	10.3%	24.1%	3.0%
<b>Manitoba</b>	28.3%	10.6%	20.1%	3.9%	34.4%	11.1%	24.5%	4.2%
<b>Ontario</b>	31.8%	9.8%	21.4%	4.0%	37.8%	11.9%	26.6%	4.5%
<b>Quebec</b>	35.2%	10.6%	23.3%	4.3%	43.0%	13.0%	30.8%	4.0%
<b>New Brunswick</b>	27.8%	4.9%	17.7%	2.7%	32.0%	6.9%	21.3%	2.2%
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	31.0%	7.1%	20.3%	2.4%	36.5%	8.8%	25.0%	3.1%
<b>P.E.I.</b>	24.6%	4.8%	16.0%	1.7%	37.8%	10.0%	26.7%	2.3%
<b>Newfoundland</b>	27.6%	5.1%	18.6%	2.6%	41.9%	11.2%	29.5%	2.0%

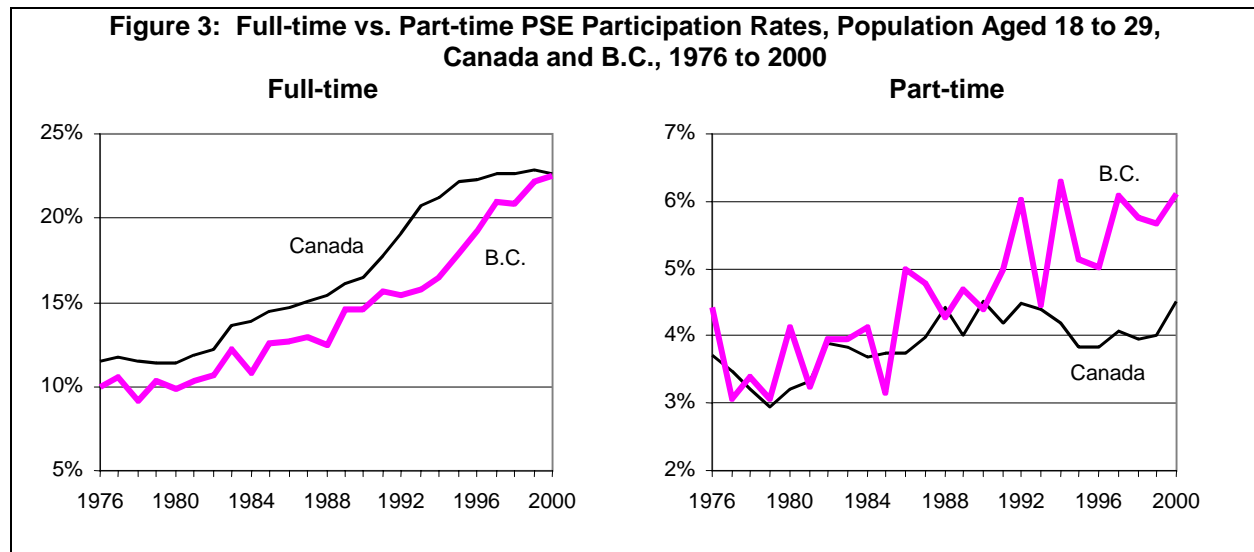
**Full-time vs. Part-time PSE Participation . . .**

The full-time and part-time PSE participation rates of those aged 18 to 29 for Canada and B.C. between 1976 and 2000 are contrasted in Figure 3. Full-time PSE participation in Canada has been above full-time participation in B.C. throughout the period; however, participation has doubled in both Canada and B.C. Full-time participation in Canada increased steadily from 11.5% in 1976 to 22.7% in 2000, while in B.C. it increased from 10.0% to just under the national average at 22.5%. From 1976 to 1990, the full-time participation rate in B.C. increased at a rate comparable to the national average but did not increase as much during the early 1990s.

As the rate for Canada leveled off during the mid to late 1990s, the full-time PSE participation rate in B.C. was able to catch up to the national average.

In contrast to the full-time PSE participation rate, the part-time PSE participation rate in Canada has been below the part-time PSE participation rate in B.C. for the majority of the period from 1976 to 2000. In fact, since 1991, the part-time participation rate in B.C. has been above the part-time participation rate in Canada. Part-time participation in Canada grew from 3.7% in 1976 to a high of 4.5% in 1990 and 1992 before decreasing to 3.8% in 1995.

**Figure 3: Full-time vs. Part-time PSE Participation Rates, Population Aged 18 to 29, Canada and B.C., 1976 to 2000**



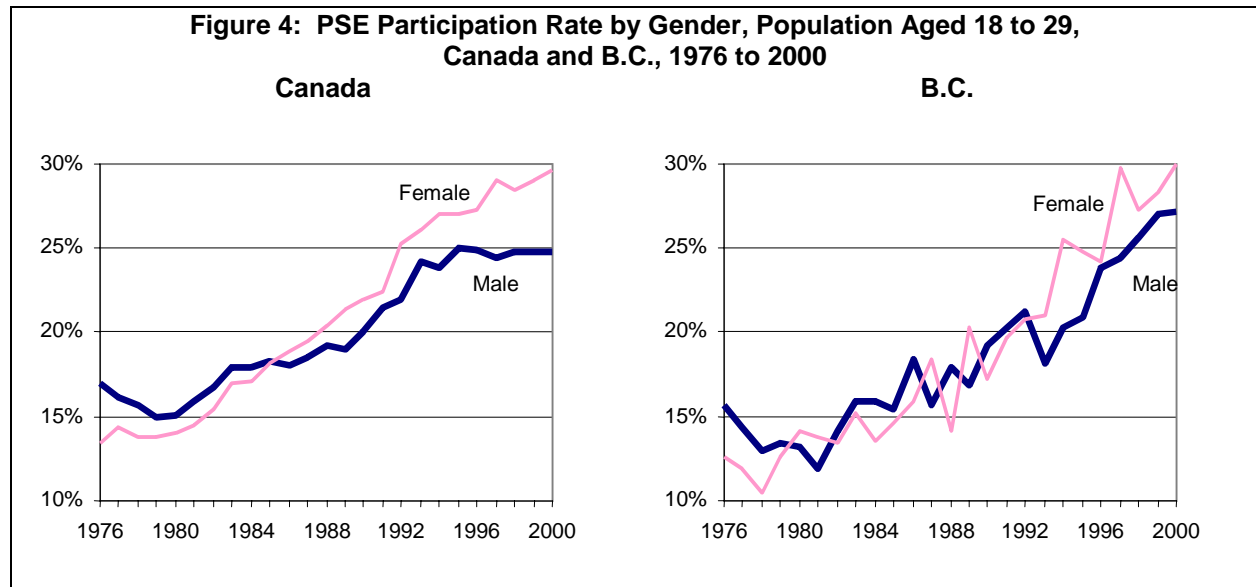
In 2000, the rate stood at 4.5%. The part-time participation rate in B.C. has been more variable than in Canada; however, this is due, in part, to the small sample sizes and higher variation associated with more focused analysis. Part-time participation in 1976 was 4.4%, much higher than the national average. When Canada's part-time rate peaked in 1992 at 4.5%, B.C.'s rate was 6.0%. B.C. experienced some decrease in part-time participation during the mid to late 1990s, as did the national average; however, in 2000, the B.C. rate increased to 6.1% from 5.7% in 1999.

**PSE Participation Rates by Gender . . .**

Figure 4 breaks down PSE participation of those aged 18 to 29 by males and females for Canada and B.C. between 1976 and 2000. In Canada, up until 1985, the male participation rate was higher than the rate for females. Beginning in 1986, however, the PSE participation rate of females surpassed that of males. The margin between the sexes has increased significantly since 1995 as male participation leveled off at

approximately 25% and female participation increased further. By 2000, the national participation rate for women rose to 29.6% versus 24.8% for men.

B.C. has experienced trends similar to the national average in terms of male and female PSE participation for those aged 18 to 29. Male participation has grown at a slower rate than for females since the early 1990s. Despite fluctuations, since 1993, female participation has exceeded male participation in B.C. (In 1993, male participation was 18.2% versus 21.0% for female participation. The margin between the genders in 2000 was approximately the same as in 1993 in B.C. as the female participation rate was 30.1% and the male rate was 27.2%.) The participation rate of women in B.C. has been approximately equal to the national average since 1997; however, it was slightly higher than the national average for women in 2000. Since 1998, the PSE participation rate for men has exceeded the national average for Canadian men.



Next month's article will expand upon the overall trends noted here by examining inter-provincial comparisons by the different

categories of post-secondary education participants (college versus university).

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<b>January 2001</b>	Demand and Supply Indicators for Workers with Post-Secondary Education	<b>July 2001</b>	British Columbia Summer Student Labour Market - July 2001