

Labour Force Statistics ♦ July 1998

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Seasonally adjusted employment in B.C. rose in July by 4,300 from June, bringing employment gains since January to 35,000.** The estimated number of unemployed persons fell in July by 6,000 pulling down the unemployment rate.
- **Actual employment levels in B.C. for students aged 15 to 24 planning to return to school in the fall, were up by 4,000 from July 1997.** All of this rise was accounted for by older students aged 20 to 24.
- **Actual average B.C employment levels for July 1998 compared to July 1997 were up 1,000.** Year over year gains in the service sector of 38,000 offset a decrease of 37,000 in goods sector employment.
- **Seasonally adjusted employment for Canada overall rose slightly in July, by 27,000 (0.1 per cent) from June.** Monthly gains were led by Manitoba (1.4 per cent), Quebec (0.6 per cent) and Alberta (0.4 per cent).

Selected Statistics (SA): *	July 1998	June 1998	July 1997
B.C. Unemployment Rate	9.1%	9.4%	8.6%
Canada Unemployment Rate	8.4%	8.4%	9.0%
B.C. Help Wanted Index (1996=100)	124.0	122.0	119.0
B.C. Employment - Monthly Change	0.2%	0.0%	- - -
B.C. Labour Force - Monthly Change	-0.1%	-0.3%	- - -
B.C. Participation Rate	64.7%	64.8%	65.3%

* 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 Finance and Corporate Relations and the Labour Market Information Services Unit of the Centre for Education Information Standards and Services of the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics Canada. For more information, call BC STATS (250) 387-0327 or CEISS 1-888-629-3995.

STUDENTS IN THE LABOUR MARKET - JULY 1998

This article focuses on recent labour force activity of full-time students aged 15 to 24 in B.C. during the month of July. Summer employment conditions did improve somewhat in July 1998 for older students aged 20 to 24 who saw a drop in their unemployment rate from July 1997. Students aged 15 to 19 experienced a higher unemployment rate this July from a year earlier.

1. 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 will seek summer employment (especially full-time work) from May until August, while secondary school students will be more likely available for jobs (especially full-time work) in July and August. Given these differences, this article focuses upon the month of July only, when both secondary and post-secondary students are available for summer work.

2. 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.

Returning and not returning . . . Students are further categorized by their intentions to return or not return to school full-time in the fall or if they are unsure of their intentions. The number of all full-time students aged 15 to 24 has risen by just over 50 per cent from 221,000 in July 1977 to 333,000 in July 1998. The number of returning students rose over this period by 56 per cent, but only rose 30 per cent for not-returning students (including students who are not sure if returning). Most of these increases in numbers of students have taken place in the 1990's. 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 82 per cent in July 1998.

Age of students surveyed . . . The two age groups of full-time students 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 attending either a public or private post-secondary institution). In terms of relative size, the age 15 to 19 group of full-time students is three times as large as the age 20 to 24 group.

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 between 1984 and 1995, the estimated number of full-time students in B.C. aged 25 to 29 more than doubled from 6,000 to 14,000.

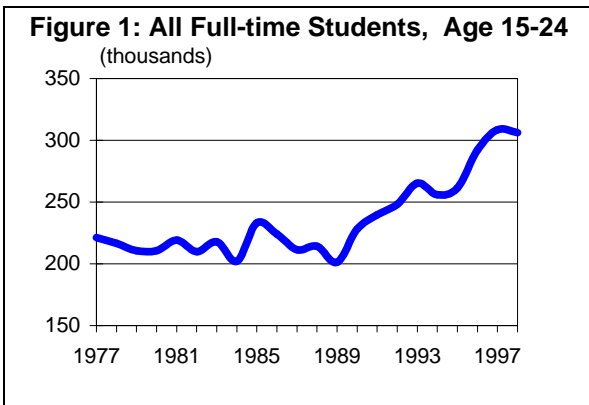
Part-time students not surveyed . . . Students aged 15 to 24 who attend, or recently attended school part-time are not reported in the data published by Statistics Canada. However, it should be noted that there are significant and growing numbers of part-time students of all ages, especially persons aged 25 and older.

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.

3. Developments in Student Summer Employment for the Month of July

As seen in Figure 1, the number of total full-time students aged 15 to 24 in B.C. (both returning and other), remained relatively unchanged during the 1980's. While the population of this age group fell, student

numbers held as participation rates in education rose. The number of full-time students during the 1990's has steadily risen due to both demographic increases and further education participation increases. This large increase in numbers of students in the 1990's has likely increased the competitiveness of the summer student job market relative to the situation in the late 1980's.



As seen in Figure 2, employment levels in the month of July for returning students in B.C. during the 1980's saw slow but steady increases. In part this reflected the extended recovery of the economy from the 1981/82 recession. Beginning in 1991, the number of employed students aged 15 to 19 started declining back to levels seen in the mid 1980's. Employment for returning students aged 20 to 24 has been generally rising since 1987.

More recently, employment levels for students aged 15 to 19 fell to 84,000 in July 1998 from 88,000 in July 1997, remaining well below their high of 95,000 in 1991. For those returning students aged 20 to 24, employment levels in July 1998 rose after a decline in July 1997. Employment for these students was estimated at 42,000 in July 1998, up from 34,000 in July 1997.

Overall employment for all returning students aged 15 to 24 together rose to 126,000 in July 1998 from 122,000 in July 1997.

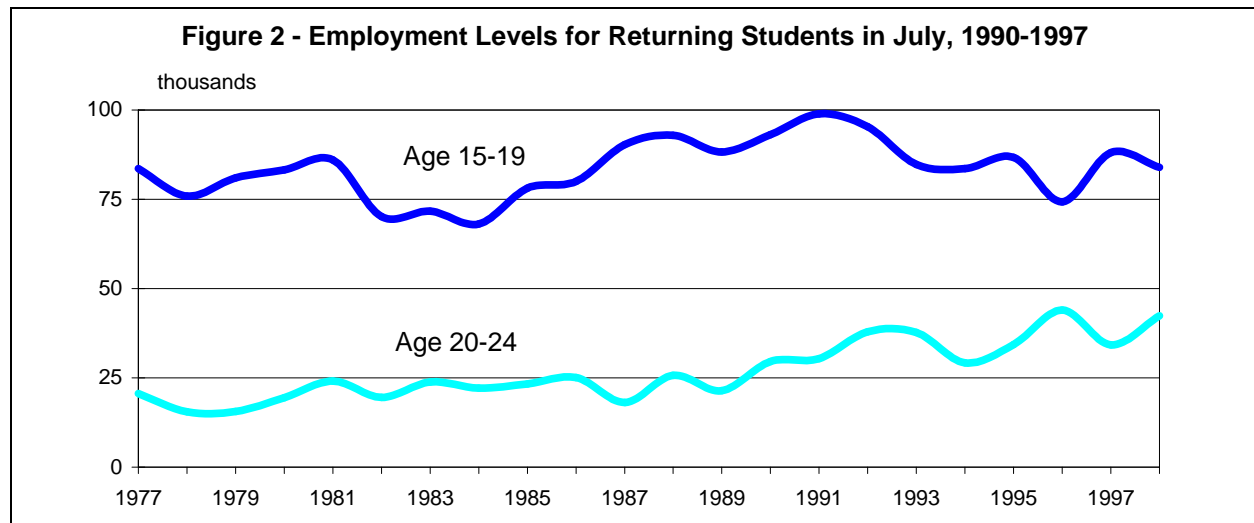


Figure 3 displays the employment rate (employment to population ratio) for returning students in the month of July. After a period of relatively steady employment rates in the late 1980's, this variable has declined for both age groups in the 1990's, particularly for those aged 15 to 19. The employment rate for returning students in July 1998 compared to July 1997 fell by 1.7 percentage points for those aged 15 to 19

to 42.1 per cent. It also fell by over 2 percentage points for those aged 20 to 24 to 56.2 per cent, its lowest level in the 1990's.

Overall, a smaller portion of returning students in July 1998 (48 per cent), were engaged in summer employment compared to 1990 when 67 per cent of students were employed.

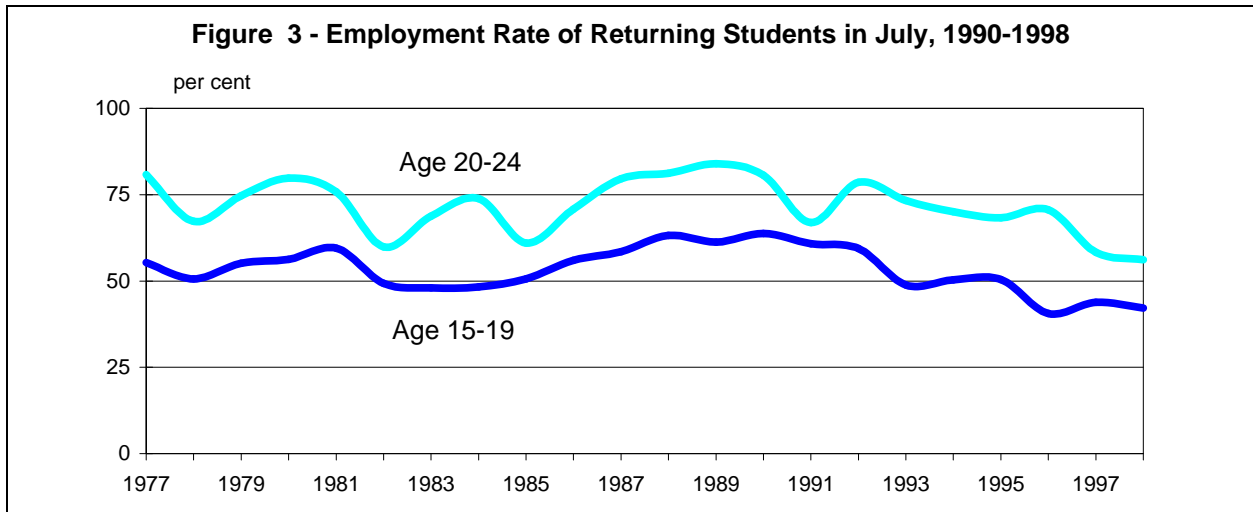
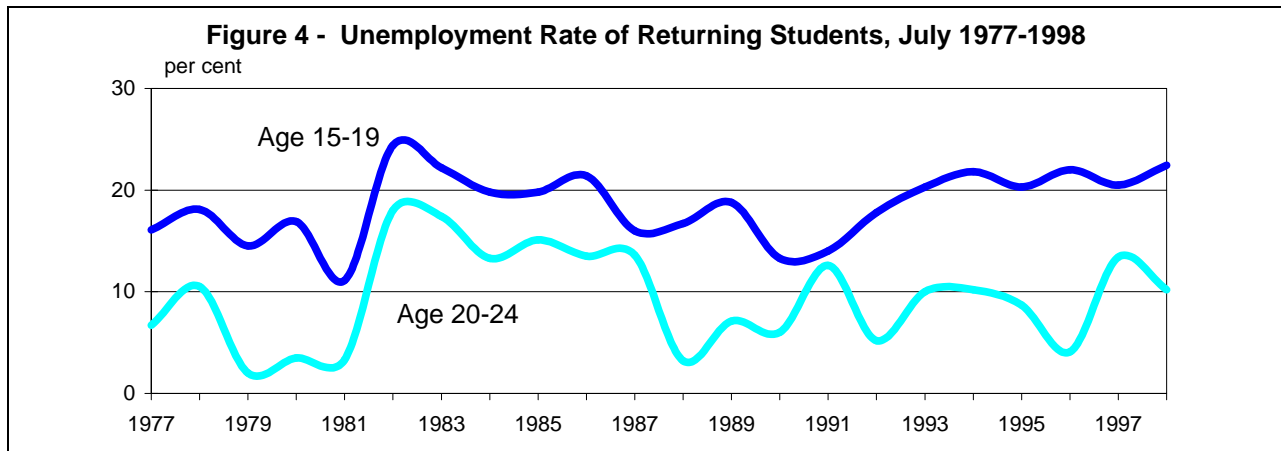


Figure 4 shows unemployment rates for returning students for both age groups in July. The unemployment rate has risen for full-time returning students aged 15-19 since the early 1990's, but has remained fairly level since 1994. For older students, unemployment rates have fluctuated during the 1990's, but remain half that of those aged 15 to 19.

More recently the unemployment rate for students aged 15 to 19 in July 1998 rose to 22.4 per cent from 20.5 per cent in July 1997. For those students aged 20 to 24, their unemployment rate dropped to 10.2 per cent in July 1998 from 13.4 per cent a year earlier.



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