

Labour Force Statistics ♦ July 1999

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Seasonally adjusted employment in B.C. decreased in July by 15,200 from June, offsetting the net gain of 7,100 seen in June from May.** The estimated number of unemployed persons in July was unchanged from June.
- **Actual average B.C. employment levels for the first 7 months of 1999 compared to the same period in 1998 rose by 58,700 (up 3.2 per cent).** This has occurred despite a slowing in the growth of the working age population, which grew by only 0.9 per cent over this same period.
- **Actual employment levels in B.C. in July 1999 for students aged 15 to 24 planning to return to school in the Fall, were down by 4,200 from July 1998.** All of this net decline was accounted for by older students aged 20 to 24, but employment for students aged 15 to 19 in July 1999 was up by 3,200 from July 1998.
- **Seasonally adjusted employment for Canada overall rose slightly in July, (39,500 or 0.3 per cent) from June.** Most of the net gain occurred in Quebec, rising by 34,000 (up 1.0 per cent) from June, while New Brunswick saw the strongest employment growth rate from June (up 1.3 per cent).

Selected Statistics (SA)*	Jun. 1999	May 1999	Jun. 1998
B.C. Unemployment Rate	8.6%	8.6%	8.93%
Canada Unemployment Rate	7.7%	7.6%	8.4%
B.C. Help Wanted Index (1996=100)	127.0	125.0	121.0
B.C. Employment - Monthly Change	0.8%	-0.4%	—
B.C. Labour Force - Monthly Change	0.7%	0.5%	—
B.C. Participation Rate	64.7%	65.2%	64.7%

* 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 Research, Evaluation and Accountability Branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology of the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics Canada. For more information, call BC STATS (250) 387-0327 or R,E&A (250) 952-6111.

The British Columbia Summer Student Labour Market—July 1999

Summary... This article focuses on recent labour force activity of full-time students aged 15 to 24 in B.C. during the month of July. Overall summer employment conditions did improve somewhat in July 1999 for older students aged 20 to 24 who saw a drop in their unemployment rate from July 1998. Students aged 15 to 19 experienced little change in their unemployment rate this July from a year earlier, though their employment level rose by 3,200 over last July.

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 are available for summer employment (especially full-time work) from May through August, while secondary school students will be more likely 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.

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 45 per cent from 221,000 in July 1977 to 321,500 in July 1999. The number of

returning students rose over this period by 52 per cent, but only increased by 19 per cent for not-returning students (including students who are not sure if they are returning). Most of these increases in numbers of students have taken place in the 1990s. 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 1999.

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.

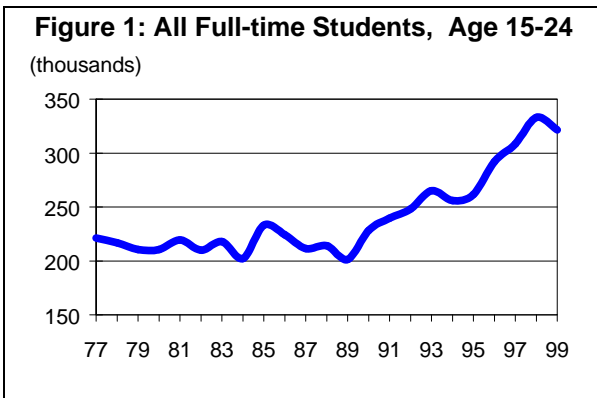
Older students not covered in survey... Full-time students covered in the Statistics Canada supplemental summer survey are limited to students between the ages of 15 to 24. However, persons aged 25 and older are a growing and significant component of overall full-time post-secondary students in B.C. For example, the estimated number of full-time students in B.C. aged 25 to 29 more than doubled from 9,400 in November 1990 to 20,100 in November 1998.

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

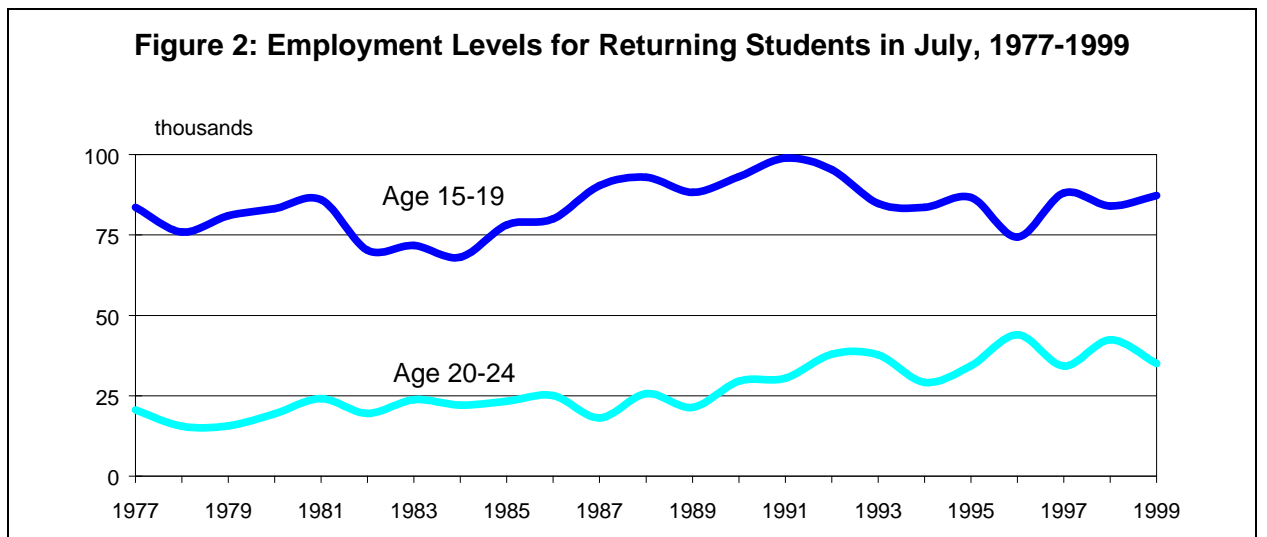
As seen in Figure 1, the estimated number of total full-time students aged 15 to 24 in B.C. (both returning and other), remained relatively unchanged during the 1980s. While the population of this age group fell, student numbers held as participation rates in education rose. The number of full-time students during the 1990s has risen steadily due to both increased population and education participation increases. This large increase in numbers of students in the 1990s has likely increased the competitiveness of the summer student job market relative to the situation in the late 1980s. The estimated decline in the number of all full-time students aged 15 to 24 in July 1999 from July 1998, was all accounted for by those aged 20 to 24.



Employment for Returning... Students As seen in Figure 2, employment levels in the month of July for returning students in B.C. during the 1980s 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 1980s. Employment for returning students aged 20 to 24 has been generally rising since 1987.

More recently, employment levels for returning students aged 15 to 19 increased to 87,000 in July 1999 from 84,000 in July 1998, but remain well below their high of 95,000 in 1991. Employment for returning students aged 20 to 24 was estimated at 35,000 in July 1999, down from 42,000 in July 1998. In part this reflects a decline in the estimated population of full-time returning students aged 20 to 24 by Statistics Canada compared to last July, as well as a drop in their active labour force participation rate.

This drop in estimated numbers of older full-time returning students in itself may reflect the growing trend by persons aged 20 to 24 to combine part-time schooling with part-time work. Such students are not included in this survey of summer labour market activities of full-time students.

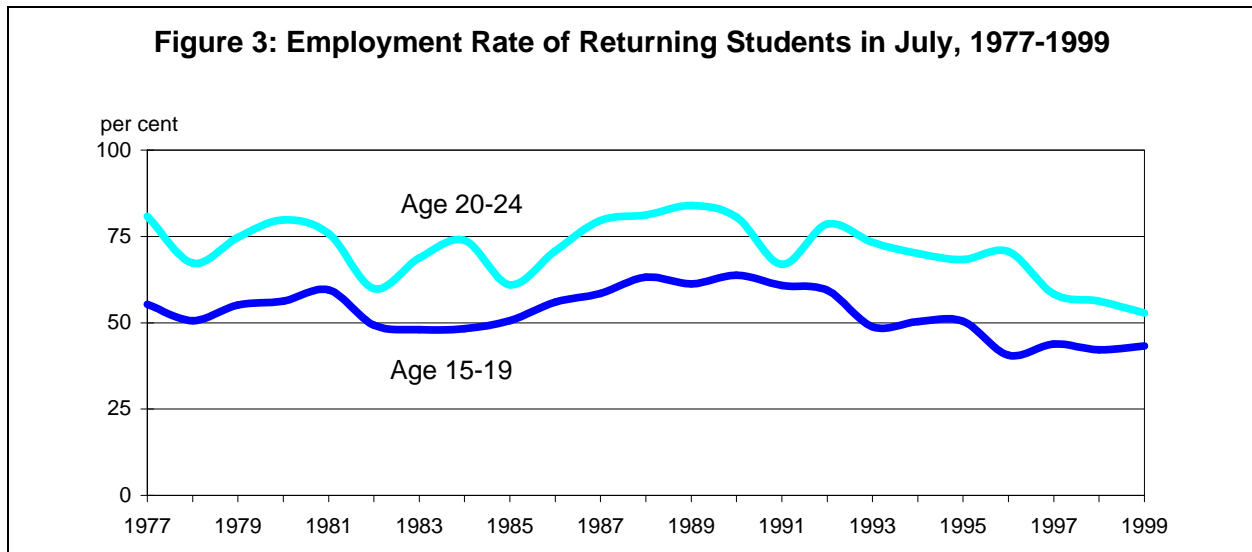


Employment Rates for Returning Students...

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 1980s, this variable has declined for both age groups in the 1990s, particularly for those aged 15 to 19. The employment rate for returning students aged 15 to 19 was up slightly at 43 per

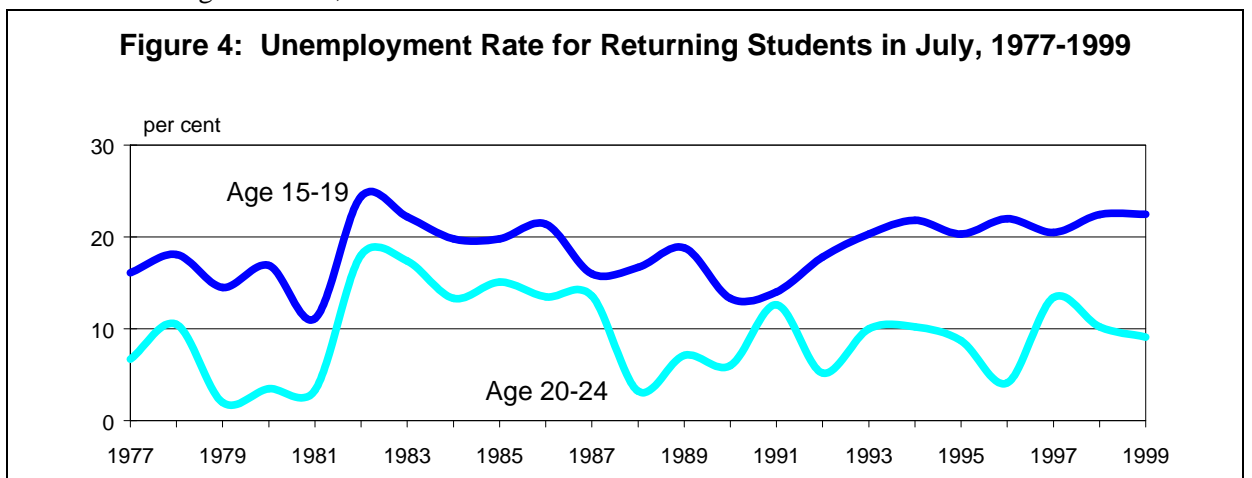
cent in July of 1999 from 42 per cent in July 1998. For those between the ages of 20 to 24 the employment rate was down to 53 percent from 56 percent in July 1998, its lowest level in the 1990s.

Overall, a smaller portion of full-time returning students in July 1999 (46 per cent) were engaged in summer employment compared to 1990 when 67 per cent were employed.



Unemployment Rates for Returning Students
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 1990s, but has remained fairly level since 1994. For older students, unemployment rates have fluctuated during the 1990s, but remain half that

of those full-time students aged 15 to 19. Most recently, the unemployment rate for students aged 15 to 19 in July 1999 at 22.5 per cent was little changed from July 1998. For students aged 20 to 24, their unemployment rate dropped to 9.1 per cent in July 1999 from 10.2 per cent a year earlier.



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