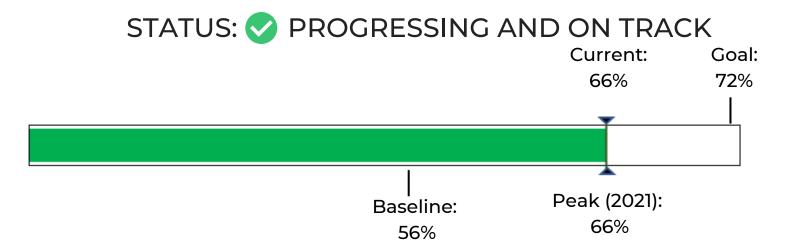


# POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

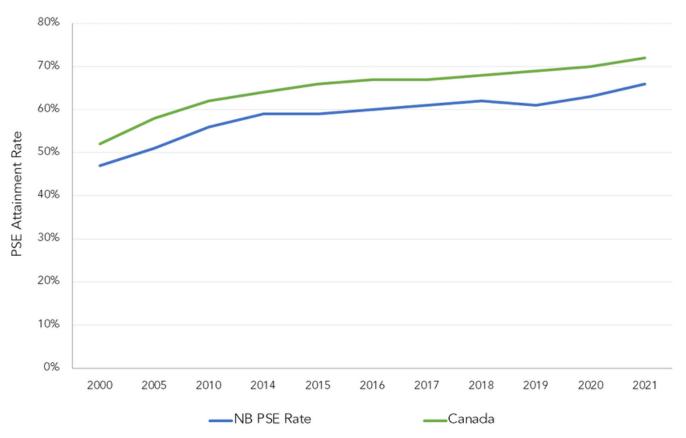


New Brunswick will close the gap between its own postsecondary education attainment rate and the national average rate.



Updated: June, 2022

Figure 1: Comparing PSE\* Attainment Rates (College and University ages 25-64) in New Brunswick and Canada



(See full data in Appendix A)

\*PSE = Post Secondary Education

# **HIGHLIGHTS**

- The PSE attainment rates in both Nova Scotia and Canada have always been higher than the attainment rate in New Brunswick.
- The number of people graduating from colleges has been decreasing in New Brunswick and Canada, however, there have been more university graduates both provincially and federally.
- The number of females graduating from colleges has declined over time, but the number of female university graduates has increased.
- The younger the population (for adults) the higher the attainment rate in general.

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Importance**

Post-secondary education (PSE) and training outlines the rate at which New Brunswickers are attending and graduating from institutions to receive higher education. New Brunswick's PSE attainment rate represents the percentage of the population with post-secondary education. The province has the third-lowest PSE attainment of all the provinces, only surpassing Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Being closer to or reaching the national average would put New Brunswick in much better standing compared to other provinces. As well, higher PSE attainment rates have the potential to translate to economic growth, and they may be necessary to avoid economic decline.

#### Problem

The PSE attainment rate for New Brunswick has been increasing since 2010, from 56% up to 66% in 2021. However, it is not increasing in a way that translates to economic growth.

#### Cause

This increase is not due to an actual increase in post-secondary attendees. It is due to a decrease in the total population of New Brunswick since 2010 (a 2.5% decrease in the total population aged 25-64 and a 9% decrease in the population aged 18-24).

## IN THE NUMBERS

#### **PSE Attainment Rate**

As shown in Figure 2, the PSE attainment rate in New Brunswick steadily increased from 2000 to 2010, at which point it started to stabilize. During that decade, the total population of New Brunswick was increasing, which suggests that people who were coming to New Brunswick were already highly educated. From 2010 onwards, there is still an increase, but it is more gradual. This is due to the decreasing population size in New Brunswick during that period, especially amongst younger people. It can also be noticed that the PSE attainment rates for both the province of Nova Scotia and Canada were always higher than that of New Brunswick. However, there was a higher growth in PSE attainment rate of New Brunswick than that of Canada in the year of 2021 which could indicate some progress.

Figure 2: PSE Attainment Rates (College and University ages 25-64) in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Canada

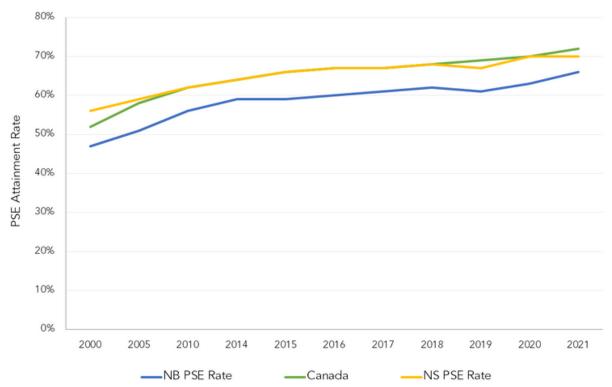
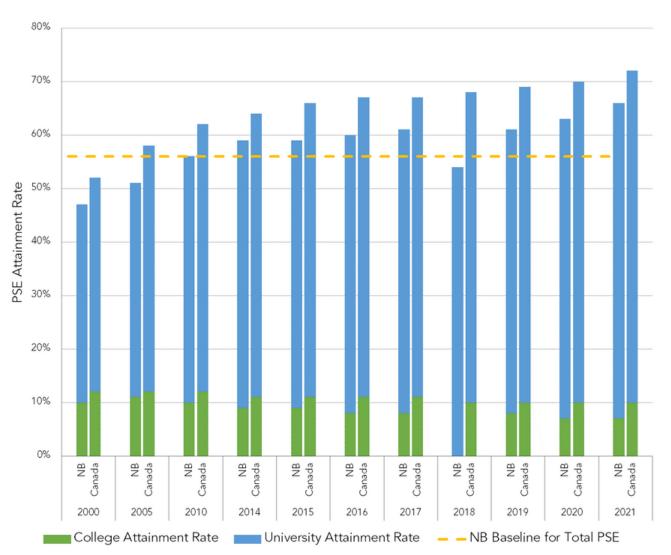


Figure 3 shows the spread of PSE graduates from university or college since 2000, compared to a baseline. The baseline used in the figure is a number based on the average PSE rates of New Brunswick from 2000 to 2016. The number of people graduating from college has been decreasing, while the number of people graduating from university has been increasing, with a net increase overall. This trend exists at both the provincial and federal level as shown in figure 3.

Figure 3: Comparing University/College PSE Attainment Rates



(See full data in Appendix B)

## A CLOSER LOOK

## PSE Attainment Rate by Gender

As can be seen in Figure 4, while the PSE attainment rate has been increasing, the college-level attainment rate has actually been decreasing overall. Specifically, the number of females with a college diploma has declined This number has dropped from a high of 17,038 in 2005 to 10,372 in 2021.

A contributing factor to this could be the types of labour demand in New Brunswick. Many jobs in the construction or manufacturing industries require college level applicants. However, these industries have historically been, and continue to be, dominated by men.

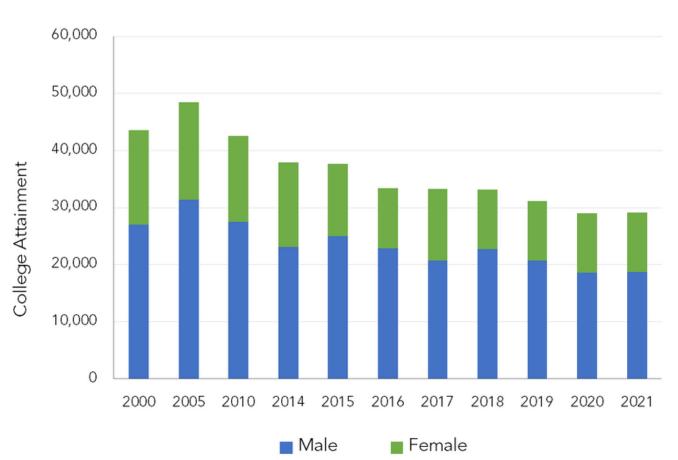


Figure 4: College Attainment By Gender

(See full data in Appendix C)

Meanwhile, as can be seen in Figure 5, the exact opposite is true for university attainment rates in New Brunswick. The university attainment rate has been steadily increasing, and although it has somewhat stagnated in the past few years, there is still an overall upwards trend. The number of female university graduates has been increasing while the number of males attending university has been neither markedly increasing nor decreasing. In recent years, there has been a push to encourage females to attend university, though females currently outnumber males in almost every program.

300,000 250,000 200,000 University Attainment 150,000 100,000 50,000 0 2000 2005 2010 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 Male Female

Figure 5: University Attainment By Gender

(See full data in Appendix D)

## PSE Attainment Rate by Age

Figure 5 shows how the PSE attainment rates for different age groups have been increasing over time. The older population (aged 55-64) has the lowest attainment rate, while the youngest age group (aged 25-44) has the highest attainment rate. This indicates that the younger generation is obtaining more formal education than their parents' and grandparents' generations.

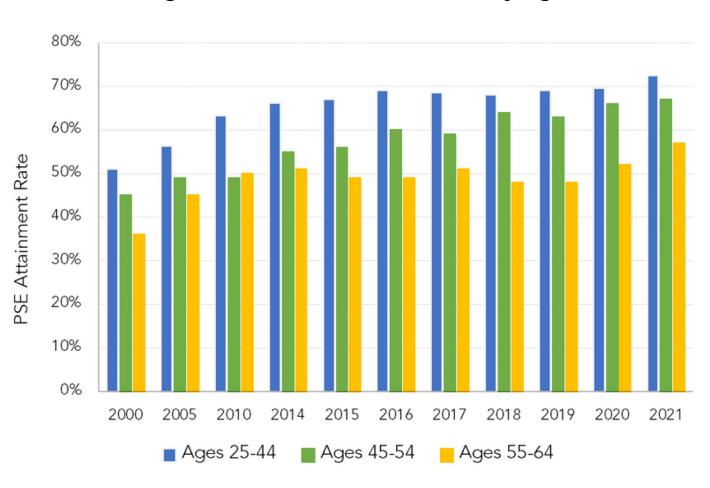


Figure 6: PSE Attainment Rates by Age

(See full data in Appendix E)

# **SUMMARY**

- The PSE attainment rate for New Brunswick has been increasing significantly since 2000, but for various reasons, it has seen very minimal growth in more recent years.
- The attainment rate in New Brunswick in recent years has had more growth than the attainment rate in Canada indicating progress towards the goal.
- One of the main reasons that the attainment rate in New Brunswick is growing at a better rate is the decrease in the overall population of the province.
- Having higher post-secondary education rates has the potential to create economic growth; therefore, New Brunswick would benefit from increasing its attainment rates through experiential learning opportunities and better alignment between program offerings and the job market.

# **APPENDIX A**

### Comparing Post-Secondary Education Attainment Rates

|      |             | NB       |        | NS       |         | NS PSE |
|------|-------------|----------|--------|----------|---------|--------|
| Year | NB PSE Rate | Baseline | Canada | Baseline | NS Goal | Rate   |
| 2000 | 47%         | 56%      | 52%    | 65%      | 75%     | 56%    |
| 2005 | 51%         | 56%      | 58%    | 65%      | 75%     | 59%    |
| 2010 | 56%         | 56%      | 62%    | 65%      | 75%     | 62%    |
| 2014 | 59%         | 56%      | 64%    | 65%      | 75%     | 64%    |
| 2015 | 59%         | 56%      | 66%    | 65%      | 75%     | 66%    |
| 2016 | 60%         | 56%      | 67%    | 65%      | 75%     | 67%    |
| 2017 | 61%         | 56%      | 67%    | 65%      | 75%     | 67%    |
| 2018 | 62%         | 56%      | 68%    | 65%      | 75%     | 68%    |
| 2019 | 61%         | 56%      | 69%    | 65%      | 75%     | 67%    |
| 2020 | 63%         | 56%      | 70%    | 65%      | 75%     | 70%    |
| 2021 | 66%         | 56%      | 72%    | 65%      | 75%     | 70%    |

# **APPENDIX B**

### Comparing University/College PSE Attainment Rates

| Year | University | College         | NB Baseline for | University    | College       |
|------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
|      | Attainment | Attainment Rate | Total PSE       | Attainment    | Attainment    |
|      | Rate (NB)  | (NB)            |                 | Rate (Canada) | Rate (Canada) |
| 2000 | 37%        | 10%             | 56%             | 40%           | 12%           |
| 2005 | 40%        | 11%             | 56%             | 46%           | 12%           |
| 2010 | 46%        | 10%             | 56%             | 50%           | 12%           |
| 2014 | 50%        | 9%              | 56%             | 53%           | 11%           |
| 2015 | 50%        | 9%              | 56%             | 55%           | 11%           |
| 2016 | 52%        | 8%              | 56%             | 56%           | 11%           |
| 2017 | 53%        | 8%              | 56%             | 56%           | 11%           |
| 2018 | 54%        | 8%              | 56%             | 58%           | 10%           |
| 2019 | 53%        | 8%              | 56%             | 59%           | 10%           |
| 2020 | 56%        | 7%              | 56%             | 60%           | 10%           |
| 2021 | 59%        | 7%              | 56%             | 62%           | 10%           |

# **APPENDIX C**

College Attainment by Gender

Male Female Year 2000 27,010 16,581 2005 31,458 17,038 2010 27,512 15,005 2014 23,088 14,810 2015 25,023 12,628 2016 22,919 10,498 2017 12,538 20,787 2018 22,809 10,411 2019 20,740 10,406 2020 18,611 10,357 2021 18,719 10,372

# **APPENDIX D**

University Attainment By Gender

| Year | Male    | Female  |
|------|---------|---------|
| 2000 | 68,563  | 82,905  |
| 2005 | 73,402  | 97,967  |
| 2010 | 84,651  | 109,322 |
| 2014 | 90,251  | 118,483 |
| 2015 | 91,749  | 115,752 |
| 2016 | 95,841  | 121,774 |
| 2017 | 97,700  | 123,294 |
| 2018 | 97,456  | 127,015 |
| 2019 | 97,476  | 122,794 |
| 2020 | 103,392 | 128,429 |
| 2021 | 106,072 | 136,907 |

# **APPENDIX E**

PSE Attainment Rates by Age

| Year | Total PSE Ages | Total PSE Ages | Total PSE Ages |
|------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|      | 25-44          | 45-54          | 55-64          |
| 2000 | 51%            | 45%            | 36%            |
| 2005 | 56%            | 49%            | 45%            |
| 2010 | 63%            | 49%            | 50%            |
| 2014 | 66%            | 55%            | 51%            |
| 2015 | 67%            | 56%            | 49%            |
| 2016 | 69%            | 60%            | 49%            |
| 2017 | 69%            | 59%            | 51%            |
| 2018 | 68%            | 64%            | 48%            |
| 2019 | 69%            | 63%            | 48%            |
| 2020 | 70%            | 66%            | 52%            |
| 2021 | 73%            | 67%            | 57%            |