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REPORT ON SURVEY OF
SASKATCHEWAN POST-SECONDARY EARLY LEAVERS

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Prepared for:

Ministry of Advanced Education

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education (the Ministry), with Saskatchewan post-secondary institutions and organizational partners, undertook a research project of individuals who left a post-secondary institution in Saskatchewan prior to completing their program (be it a certificate, diploma, degree, or apprenticeship program). This was the first province-wide survey of Saskatchewan non-completers, whom are referred to as "early leavers" in this report. PRA surveyed 1,513 early leavers from a sample of 7,323.

Demographic profile

Compared to the Ministry's 2014 Saskatchewan Graduate Outcomes study, early leavers are more likely to be Indigenous (19% versus 10%) and a visible minority (17% versus 13%).

Prior educational experiences

The vast majority of those surveyed received their high school diploma (89%) prior to entering their program, while 30% had previously completed some type of post-secondary education.

Information about institution/program

The results show that *choosing an institution that is local/where the student lived* was the most important reason for selecting an institution, with 26% indicating it as their most important reason. This seems to be followed by two other aspects: the *institution offered the program they wanted to take* (18% most important) and *job opportunities* (15% most important).

The vast majority (78%) said they knew the area of study or trade they wanted to pursue before enrolling. Among them, 85% said they were able to enroll in this area of study. For the 13% who said they could not enroll in their area, the most common reasons were *they did not have the pre-requisites* (21%), *the program was not offered by their institution* (21%), or they *did not have the grades* (10%). When selecting their program, the most important reason was *because they were interested in the subject area* (33% rated as most important). This was double the proportion that selected the next most common reason – *future job opportunities* (16%).

When attending their program, respondents report the following:

- Nearly half (49%) of respondents were pursuing a *bachelor's degree*;
- Nearly one-quarter (23%) took at least some of their program at a regional college;
- Among non-apprentices, 60% were studying full-time;
- Around 39% attended their orientation, which is about two-thirds of those aware of orientation at their institution (64%). Generally, those who attend orientation were satisfied with it; and,
- When asked for additional supports to help them transition to their program, very few respondents could identify additional supports required, as just one – *more information about classes, programs, and expectations* (6%) – was mentioned by more than 5%.

Overall, 56% of respondents were employed during their last term, working approximately 31 hours per week. When asked why they decided to work, most reasons related to needing money to support their studies, family, or day-to-day expenses, although wanting to avoid debt (or further debt) was also commonly mentioned.

Satisfaction with institution

Generally, respondents appear to be satisfied with their experiences at their institution or program, with three-quarters saying they were satisfied. This appears to lead to many being promoters (31%) of their institution program, although an almost equal number are detractors (33%). When assessing what would make respondents promote their institution/program, the quality of the program and positive experience with professors rate at the top. For detractors who would be more likely to speak negatively about their program, it is the opposite – poor quality of the program and poor teaching quality.

Factors related to leaving

When asked in their own words to explain why they discontinued their studies before graduating, no single reason dominated with many reasons mentioned. The most common reason was *the costs of school or they could not afford it* (12%).

Respondents were asked to rate challenges they experienced across three areas: financial, institution/program, and personal. Overall, five areas were rated by at least 20% of respondents as contributing significantly or to a great extent to their decision to leave. These included the following:

- *Cost of tuition, fees, textbooks, and materials* (30%)
- *Dealing with family responsibilities* (28%)
- *Loss of funding* (24%)
- *Wanting to transfer to another program or institution* (22%)
- *Job opportunities* (21%)

Supports

Overall, 44% of early leavers say they were aware of supports available to them to help with any challenges they were facing. However, just 18% of early leavers used any of these supports. Among the 18% who used supports, the most common supports used were *counselling/mental health* (23%), *academic advising* (18%), *tutoring* (17%), and *accessibility services* (10%). Also among those who used supports, satisfaction is quite high, as 71% say they are satisfied with the supports received.

When asked what other supports are needed, the most common responses were *mental health/counselling* (6%), *financial supports* (5%), and *tutoring* (5%).

Disability

Overall, 12% of early leavers indicate that they have a disability, and half of those respondents (5% overall) said their disability required accommodations from their institution. Just 1% of all respondents said their institution was not able to meet their requests for accommodations.

Financing

The most common sources of respondents' funding while in their programs were *personal savings* (46%) and *family* (40%). On average, early leavers report owing $8,687 when leaving their program; however, 33% of early leavers report not owing anything and another 33% do not report what they owe. Among those reporting debt, the average debt is $17,178.

Outcomes

After leaving their program, over three-quarters of respondents report that they are either *working for pay* (54%) or *attending post-secondary education* (22%).

Among those working, 77% are working one job, 85% are working full-time in their main job, 53% say their job is at least slightly related to their previous program, and 47% say their program helped them get their current job.

Among the 36% who took additional post-secondary education, 28% have graduated from a program since 2015-16; the most common credential taken was a bachelor's degree (40%); and 23% took a program that was the same as their last program.

Overall satisfaction with decision to leave

Overall, 6 in 10 early leavers say they are satisfied or very satisfied with their decision to leave their program when they did, which includes 30% who are very satisfied. Results indicate that those in a certificate program, those who had completed more of their program, and those who have not taken any prior post-secondary education are least satisfied with their decision to leave when they did.

Key findings

In general, there does not appear to be a single major factor that influences respondents to leave their program. In addition, there do not appear to be one or two key areas that programs could change or improve that might address a large number of early leavers. However, compared to graduates, early leavers tend to be more likely to be Indigenous, visible minority, and over 30, suggesting that these groups may be more at risk of not completing their program than other demographic groups.

1.0   Introduction

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education (the Ministry), with Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions and organizational partners, undertook a research project of individuals who left a post-secondary institution in Saskatchewan prior to completing their program (be it a certificate, diploma, degree, or apprenticeship program). This was the first province-wide survey of Saskatchewan non-completers, whom are referred to as "early leavers" in this report.

The supporting partners in this project included the University of Saskatchewan (U of S), the University of Regina (U of R), Saskatchewan Polytechnic (Sask Polytech), Saskatchewan Apprenticeship & Trade Certification Commission (SATCC), Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT), private vocational schools, and the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training.

Other institutions that offer post-secondary education and training opportunities in the province include seven regional colleges (Carlton Trail College, Cumberland College, Great Plains College, Northlands College, North West College, Parkland College, and Southeast College) and Gabriel Dumont Institute/Dumont Technical Institute.[1] In addition to other programming, these institutions offer credentialed courses and programs which are primarily brokered (i.e., the credential is granted by the partnering institution) from Sask Polytech, SATCC, the U of R, and the U of S, or from institutions outside of Saskatchewan. Students who attended these institutions and were registered in a credentialed program from a Saskatchewan institution were identified by the partnering institution and included in this research. In the case of apprenticeship, technical training is brokered through a number of training providers.[2]

The U of S offers undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as a range of programs through what are typically referred to as the "professional colleges," which include dentistry, law, pharmacy, medicine, and veterinary medicine. Those who were registered in credentialed programs from St. Thomas More College and St. Peter's College are considered U of S students in this study.

The U of R primarily offers undergraduate and graduate programs. A typical undergraduate degree at both the U of R and the U of S generally requires four years of full-time study. Graduate programs at the master's level typically require an additional two years of study after an undergraduate degree. Doctoral studies typically require undergraduate and master's degrees, as well as additional years of study. Those who were registered in credentialed programs from Luther College, Campion College, and the First Nations University of Canada are considered U of R students in this study.

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[1]   Lakeland College is an inter-provincial college for Alberta and Saskatchewan that provides credentialed education and training opportunities leading to certificates or diplomas. Lakeland College graduates were not included in this research.

[2]   A list of the training providers can be found online at http://saskapprenticeship.ca/resources/training-partners/.

Sask Polytech provides certificate, diploma, and degree. The length of certificate programs varies but generally require one year of full-time study, while diploma programs require two to three years. Degree programs require two to four years of study, depending on admission prerequisites.

SIIT is an Indigenous institution offering a range of educational programs that lead to certificates or diplomas. Certificate programs usually require 24 weeks to one year of full-time study, while diploma programs typically require two to three years of study.

SATCC administers apprenticeship training and trade certification for Saskatchewan's designated skilled trades. The timeframe for apprenticeship training varies, but it is typically delivered over four years, which includes paid workplace training facilitated by an employer and eight weeks of technical training each year delivered by an institution contracted by SATCC. Once apprentices have met all the requirements to be certified in their trade, they are issued a journeyperson designation by SATCC.

Private vocational schools, combined, offer over 160 vocational training programs to prepare individuals for employment in specific occupations. Programs take an average of 40 weeks in length to complete and typically result in a certificate or diploma conferred by the private vocational school.

This project focused on developing consistent and comparable data to provide a clear picture of post-secondary early leavers' experiences. The overarching objectives of the survey were to:

- inform policies, programs, and services that contribute to student success;
- improve Ministry and institutional efficiency and effectiveness;
- provide consistent provincial data that can be used for accountability purposes, marketing, development of consumer information, and research and policy development; and
- provide information on non-completers' post-exit education and employment outcomes.

The survey of early leavers from the 2015-16 year (that is, they did not return in 2016-17 after their 2015-16 year and did not complete their program) focused on outcomes for early leavers related to the labour market and additional post-secondary education (i.e., post-exit outcomes), which are essential for the Ministry to understand. In addition, the survey also gathered information related to the challenges students faced during their program, including financing, reasons for leaving, and overall satisfaction.

The survey was administered by PRA Inc., a national research firm with a strong history of conducting surveys related to post-secondary education. PRA has previously conducted surveys of early leavers in Manitoba and New Brunswick.

1.1 Response rate

Overall, PRA completed surveys with 1,513 early leavers, yielding a 20.7% completion rate with a theoretical error rate of ± 2.2%.[3] The completion rate ranged by institution, from 8.2% among private vocational school respondents to 24.0% among University of Saskatchewan respondents. For detailed methodology, please see Appendix A.

Table 1: Completion rate by institution						
Institution	**Sample size**	**Completes (n)**			**Completion rate (%)**	**Theoretical error rate***
		Telephone	**Online**	**Total**		
University of Regina	2,124	103	376	479	22.6%	± 3.9%
University of Saskatchewan	1,998	127	352	479	24.0%	± 3.9%
SATCC	1,581	126	140	266	16.8%	± 5.5%
Saskatchewan Polytechnic	1,346	79	184	263	19.5%	± 5.4%
Private vocational schools	194	7	9	16	8.2%	± 23.5%
SIIT	80	4	6	10	12.5%	± 29.0%
Overall	**7,323**	**446**	**1,067**	**1,513**	20.7%	± 2.2%
*The theoretical error rate is based on a 95% confidence interval.						

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[3] A theoretical error rate is appropriate when conducting surveys where a random group has been selected from the population. Because a census of all early leavers was attempted, the theoretical error may not be appropriate for this type of survey, but is shown to demonstrate the reliability of data presented in this report.

2.0   Demographic profile

The table below shows the demographic profile of respondents. Although there is no way to tell if this profile is representative of all 2015-16 early leavers, when compared to the most recent Saskatchewan Graduate Outcomes Study in 2014,[4] results show the following:

-    Early leavers are more likely to be Indigenous (19% versus 10%) and a visible minority (17% versus 13%).

-    Early leavers tend to be slightly older, as the average age of early leavers was 30 compared to 28 for 2014 graduates. This is mostly due to the fact that 37% of early leavers were 30 and older compared to 29% of 2014 graduates.

Table 2: Demographic profile	
	%
Gender	
Female	54%
Male	43%
Other/undeclared	1%
Prefer not to say	3%
Age*	
22 or younger	23%
23 to 24	16%
25 to 29	23%
30 to 39	21%
40 and older	16%
Prefer not to say	2%
Average age	30 years
Citizenship	
Canadian citizen	91%
Non-citizen	8%
- Landed immigrant	5%
- International student	3%
- Other	<1%
Prefer not to say	1%
Other sub-groups**	
Indigenous	19%
Visible minority	17%
First-generation student[5]	26%
Age was calculated as of December 31, 2018. ***Non-response categories are not shown, but included in base for calculations.**	

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[4]   Retrieved from http://publications.gov.sk.ca/documents/139/104068-Saskatchewan%20Advanced%20Education%20Graduate%20Outcomes%20of%202014%20Class.pdf.

[5]   First-generation refers to a student whose parents/guardians did not take any post-secondary education.

3.0   Prior experiences

This section summarizes early leavers' educational experiences prior to enrolling at the institution from which they discontinued their studies.

3.1   High school education

The vast majority of those surveyed received their high school diploma (89%), with a small proportion completing high school via a GED certificate (4%) or Adult Basic Education (3%).

High school education

High school diploma	89%
GED Certificate	4%
Adult Basic Education	3%
Did not receive high school diploma/equivalent	2%
Not sure/prefer not to say	3%

Key differences. Assessing high school education, there are several statistically significant differences:

- The older the respondent, the less likely they were to have finished their high school diploma, as 98% of those 22 and under had completed their diploma compared to 83% of those 26 or older. Those who were 26 and older were more likely to have completed a GED certificate or Adult Basic Education than those 25 and younger.

- Those who self-identify as Indigenous (74%) were less likely than non-Indigenous (94%) early leavers to have completed their high school diploma, and more likely to have completed it through Adult Basic Education (11% versus 1%) or getting their GED certificate (7% versus 3%).

- First-generation students (83%) were less likely to have completed their high school diploma than non-first-generation students (94%).

3.2 Previous post-secondary education

About 30% of respondents completed some type of post-secondary education before their 2015-16 program, most often a certificate (13%) or degree (11%). Another 18% appear to be early leavers of other programs, indicating that they had attended other programs, but had not completed those either.

Among those who had taken some post-secondary education (n = 750), results show that the vast majority took their program(s) in Saskatchewan (70%), followed by Alberta (11%), Ontario (5%), and British Columbia (5%).

Previous post-secondary education
(Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer; therefore, percentages will sum to more than 100%)

Completed a degree(s)	11%
Completed a diploma(s)	8%
Completed a certificate(s)	13%
Completed a journeyperson certificate(s)	2%
Attended, but did not complete	18%
Did not take any other post-secondary	50%
Don't know/prefer not to say	2%

Key differences. Results show that the older the respondent, the more likely they are to have taken and/or completed post-secondary education. Just 12% of those 22 and younger had taken any previous post-secondary education compared to 76% of those 40 and older.

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4.0   Information about institution/program

This section summarizes early leavers' experiences with their institution prior to and during the 2015-16 academic year.

4.1   Most important reasons for enrolling

The graph below shows the most important reasons that respondents gave for choosing to enroll in their program.[6] The graph seems to indicate that *choosing an institution that is local/where they live* was the most important reason, with 26% selecting it as their most important reason and 45% placing it in their top three. This seems to be followed by two other aspects: *institution offered the program they wanted to take* (18% most important) and *job opportunities* (15% most important). *Being accepted into the program* did not necessarily resonate as the most important reason, but 30% selected it in their top three, indicating that just getting in caused them to go.

Top reasons for enrolling
(Note: Respondents could select up to three reasons; therefore, percentages for top three reasons will sum to more than 100%)

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6   Only those reasons selected by 5% or more respondents in their top three are shown.

Key differences. Examining the most important reason for enrolling shows several differences among demographic groups.

- Female respondents were more likely than male respondents to select *local/where I live* (30% versus 22%) and less likely to select *job opportunities* (11% versus 18%).

- As respondents get older, they are less likely to say that *local/where they live* was the most important reason, and more likely to say *job opportunities* and *the institution being the only place that offered the program they wanted to take*.

4.2   Area of study

Among early leavers, the vast majority (78%) said they knew the area of study or trade they wanted to pursue before enrolling. Among them, 85% said they were able to enroll in this area of study, while 13% said they were not (accounting for 10% of all respondents).

For the 13% of those who knew the program that they wanted to go into, but could not enroll, the most common reasons were *they did not have the pre-requisites* (21%), *the program was not offered by their institution* (21%), or they *did not have the grades* (10%). Of interest, 11% said they *changed their mind*, indicating that it may not necessarily have been an issue with not getting into the program, but not attempting to get into the program.

Knew area of study/trade to pursue

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

2%
21%
78%

Able to enroll in study/trade
(BASE: New area of study before enrolling, n = 1,176)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

2%
13%
85%

Key differences. As respondents get older, they are more likely to know the area of study or trade they want to pursue before enrolling, increasing from 70% of those 22 and younger to 86% of those 40 and older. However, there are no statistically significant differences among groups in terms of their ability to enroll in their study or trade.

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4.3   Most important reasons for choosing program

The graph below shows the most important reasons that respondents gave for choosing their program.[7] The most common reason for selecting the program was *because they were interested in the subject area*, as 33% indicated it was their most important reason and 61% selected it in their top three. This was followed by three employment related aspects: *future job opportunities* (16% most important), *to work in the specific career they wanted* (19% most important), and *already working in the subject area* (13% most important).

Top reasons for selecting program
(BASE: Those who were able to enroll in their area of study, n = 1,003)

Reason	Mentioned in top 3	Most important reason
Interested in the subject area	61%	33%
Future job opportunities	53%	16%
To work in the specific career I wanted	44%	19%
Already working in the subject area	26%	13%
To make money	24%	4%
Family influence	15%	5%
Pathway to another program	11%	3%
Peer/friends influence	6%	1%
Because that was the program offered	6%	1%
Career counselling advice	5%	1%

■ Mentioned in top 3   ■ Most important reason

Key differences. Examining the most important reason for selecting their program among demographic groups shows a few differences:

-   Male respondents were more likely than female respondents to select *to make money* (7% versus 2%) and less likely to select *to work in a specific career they wanted* (14% versus 24%).

-   As respondents get older, they are less likely to say they selected their program because they *were interested in the subject area*, and more likely to say *they were already working in the subject area* and *for future job opportunities*.

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7   Only those reasons selected by 5% or more respondents in their top three are shown.

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4.4   Planned credential

Most early leavers were planning on completing a *bachelor's degree* (49%), which is likely due to the fact that the University of Regina and University of Saskatchewan account for the majority of respondents.

Credential planned on completing
(Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer; therefore, percentages will sum to more than 100%)

Bachelor's degree	49%
Certificate	17%
Journeyperson certificate	16%
Diploma	12%
Graduate degree	1%
Red seal	1%
Other	<1%
Was not planning on completing credential	5%
Don't know/prefer not to say	4%

Key differences. When examining the highest credential that respondents planned to obtain, results show several differences among demographic groups:

- Men were much more likely than women to be enrolled in a *journeyperson certificate* (33% versus 4%), while women were more likely to be enrolled in all other types of programs.

- As respondents got older, they were more likely to be enrolled in a *certificate* program or *journeyperson certificate* and less likely in a *bachelor's degree*.

- Likely linked to age, first-generation post-secondary respondents were more likely to be enrolled in a *certificate program* or *journeyperson certificate* and less likely in a *bachelor's degree*.

4.5   Saskatchewan regional colleges

Around 23% of early leavers were taking at least some of their program at a regional college, including 9% who were taking all of their program at a regional college.

Key differences. There were no statistically significant differences among groups in terms of the proportion of their program taken at a regional college.

Proportion of program taken at regional college

- All of it
- More than half
- About half
- Less than half
- None
- Don't know/prefer not to say

9%
3%
3%
8%
71%
7%

4.6   Attendance

Among all non-apprentices, most respondents were attending full-time in their last semester (60%), although a large minority were attending part-time (33%).

Key differences. The older a respondent, the more likely they were to be attending part-time in their last semester. Just 19% of those 22 and younger were attending part-time compared to 59% of those 40 and older.

Enrollment during last semester/term
(BASE: Non-apprenticeship, n = 1,247)

- Full-time
- Part-time
- Don't know/prefer not to say

8%
33%
60%

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4.7   Orientation

Overall, 39% of early leavers attended welcome events or orientation at their institution, which is just over half of those who were aware of such activities (64% aware overall).

Awareness and attendance at orientation

- ■ Aware and attended
- ■ Aware and did not attend
- ■ Aware, unsure if attended
- ■ Unaware
- ■ Don't know/prefer not to say

Key differences. In terms of awareness of orientation and welcome events, there appears to be a difference by age, as those who are older are less likely to be aware – dropping from 73% of those 22 and younger to 56% of those 40 and older; however, this difference falls just outside the criteria for statistical significance. Among those who were aware, there is a significant difference in participation by age, declining from 72% of those 22 and younger to 45% of those 40 and older.

4.7.1   Satisfaction with orientation

Generally, for those who attended orientation, satisfaction is quite high, with 80% or more saying they were at least satisfied with each of the four aspects tested. Of the four, early leavers appear to be most satisfied with orientation *making them feel welcome*, with over 90% at least satisfied, including 28% who were very satisfied.

Satisfaction with orientation
(BASE: Those who attended orientation, n = 593)

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not sure
Feeling welcome	28%	64%	4%		3%
Helping you understand academic expectations	22%	58%	13%	3%	5%
Providing information about campus life	21%	60%	9%	2%	9%
Providing information about student services	19%	62%	12%	2%	4%

Key differences. Although none of them meet the criteria for statistical significance, it is worth noting that as respondents get older, they are more likely to be very satisfied with each of the aspects of orientation. Similarly, Indigenous respondents are more likely than non-Indigenous respondents to be very satisfied with each aspect.

4.8   Assistance with transition

When asked what additional assistance could have helped them transition into their program, only 32% of early leavers could identify some type of assistance. In fact, only one was mentioned by more than 5% of respondents – *more information about classes, programs, or expectations* (6%). Otherwise, just three others were mentioned by more than 2% of respondents – *academic supports, advising, or tutoring* (3%); *more financial support* (3%); or *how to access services for students* (3%).

4.9   Employment during last term

Overall, 56% of respondents were employed during their last term.

Key differences. Several differences by demographic group exist in the employment status of respondents in their last term, although not all are statistically significant.

Employed during last term

Legend:
- Employed
- Not employed
- Don't know/prefer not to say

Chart values: 2%, 43%, 56%

- Female respondents were more likely than male respondents to be employed (64% versus 46%).

- As respondents get older, they were more likely to be employed, increasing from 47% of those 22 and younger to 65% of those 40 and older; however, this difference is not statistically significant.

- Non-Indigenous respondents were more likely than Indigenous respondents to be employed (59% versus 43%); however, the difference is not statistically significant.

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4.9.1 Hours worked

Those who were employed worked an average of 31 hours per week, which is consistent with the findings, given that 48% were working full-time hours (30 hours or more per week).

Key differences. Not only were older respondents more likely to be working during their last term, they also worked more hours on average. Early leavers 22 years and younger worked about 23 hours per week on average. This increased with age, up to 38 hours per week for those 40 and older.

Hours worked per week during last term
(BASE: Those employed in last term, n = 839)

4%	Less than 10
13%	10 to 19
18%	20 to 29
48%	30 or more
17%	Don't know/prefer not to say

Hours worked per week during term by age
(BASE: Those who were employed in last term, n = 839)

Age	Hours
22 and younger	23.4
23 to 24	24.7
25 to 29	31.0
30 to 39	34.7
40 and older	37.8

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4.9.2   Main reason for employment

For those who were employed, there were many reasons why they maintained employment during the 2015-16 academic year. The figure below shows the main reasons mentioned by at least 5% of those who were employed during their last term, and seems to indicate three themes.

- The main theme was the need for money while studying, either *needing funds to support their studies* (42%), *needing money to support their family* (28%), *to pay for a significant unexpected expense* (12%), or *needing money for personal/day-to-day expenses* (7%).

- Another theme seems to be related to debt, as 24% said they *wanted to reduce the amount of debt they accumulated* and 18% said *they didn't want to take out a loan*.

- For others, it appears to be related to choice, either indicating that they did not have a choice and *needed to maintain an ongoing position* (35%), or that it was their own choice because *they wanted to work* (31%), *wanted to build their CV/résumé* (10%), or *had extra time* (7%).

Main reason for being employed
(BASE: Those employed in last term, n = 839)
(Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer)

Reason	Percent
Needed funds to support studies	42%
Needed to maintain an ongoing position in a job	35%
Wanted to work	31%
To support my family	28%
Wanted to reduce the amount of debt accumulated	24%
Didn't want to take out a loan	18%
To pay for a significant unexpected expense	12%
Wanted to build my CV/resumé	10%
Needed money to pay for personal/day-to-day expenses	7%
Had extra time	7%

5.0   Satisfaction with institution

This section summarizes early leavers' satisfaction with various aspects of their education while attending their institution.

5.1   Satisfaction with aspects at their institution

Early leavers appear to be satisfied with most aspects of their institution, with the majority indicating that they are at least satisfied with each of the eight aspects included in the survey. They appear to be most satisfied with the *location of thei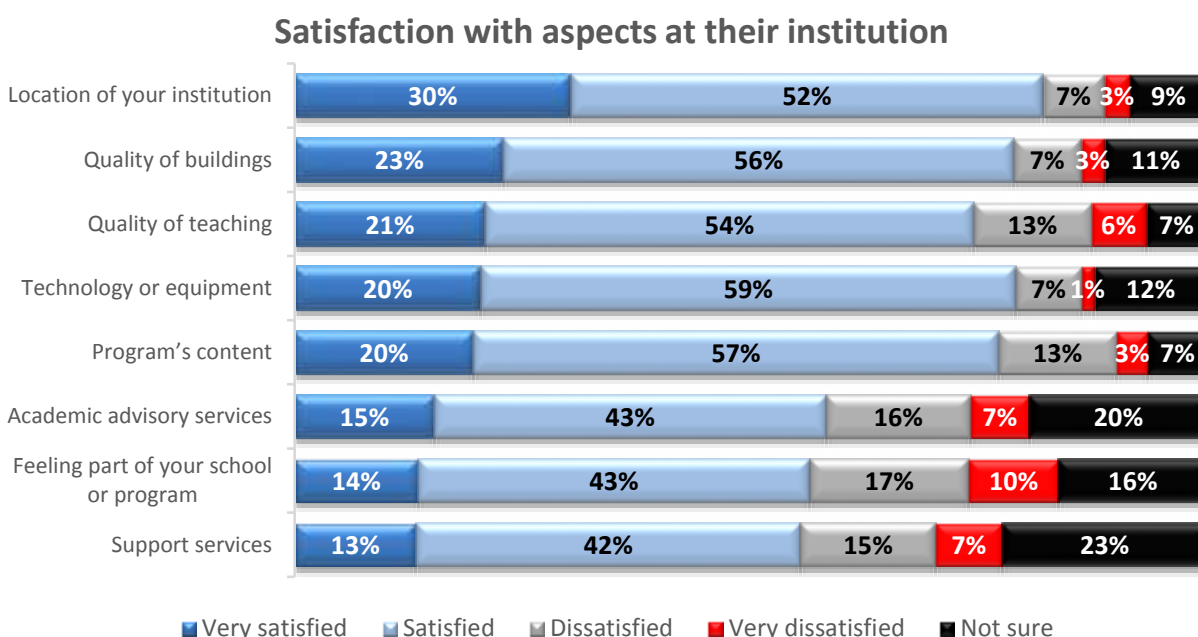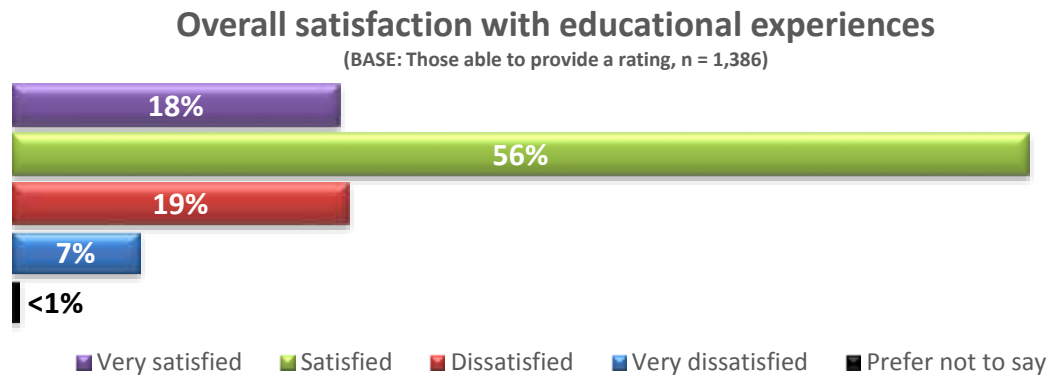r institution* (30% very satisfied) and least satisfied with *support services* (13% very satisfied), *feeling part of their school or program* (14% very satisfied), and *academic advisory services* (15% very satisfied). However, for the latter three, it should be noted that 16% to 23% could not provide a response, which may indicate that they did not use the service or have experience with this aspect of their program.

Satisfaction with aspects at their institution

Aspect	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not sure
Location of your institution	30%	52%	7%	3%	9%
Quality of buildings	23%	56%	7%	3%	11%
Quality of teaching	21%	54%	13%	6%	7%
Technology or equipment	20%	59%	7%	1%	12%
Program's content	20%	57%	13%	3%	7%
Academic advisory services	15%	43%	16%	7%	20%
Feeling part of your school or program	14%	43%	17%	10%	16%
Support services	13%	42%	15%	7%	23%

■ Very satisfied   ■ Satisfied   ■ Dissatisfied   ■ Very dissatisfied   ■ Not sure

Key differences. There were several differences in satisfaction among age groups, but they primarily appear to be because younger students seem to be more likely to have on-campus experiences. For example, there are statistical differences for satisfaction with *location of building, quality of buildings*, *teaching or equipment*, and *feeling part of their school or program*, primarily because the older the respondent, the less likely they are to provide a rating. The one area that does not appear to be driven by having been on-campus is satisfaction with program content, where the proportion who are dissatisfied decreases as respondents get older (from 20% of those 22 and younger to 9% of those 40 and older).

PRA

5.2 Overall satisfaction with educational experiences

When asked about their overall satisfaction with their educational experiences, about three-quarters of early leavers are at least somewhat satisfied with their educational experiences, with 18% reporting they are very satisfied. Conversely, about one quarter say they are dissatisfied.

Overall satisfaction with educational experiences
(BASE: Those able to provide a rating, n = 1,386)

- 18%
- 56%
- 19%
- 7%
- <1%

■ Very satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied ■ Prefer not to say

Key differences. The proportion who are satisfied increases with age, from 65% of those 22 and younger up to 80% of those 40 and older. There are no other differences among demographic groups.

5.2.1 Overall satisfaction by credential

As seen in the figure below, examining overall satisfaction by respondents' highest expected credential at their institution shows similar results, with about 3 in 4 reporting that they are satisfied. The only exceptions are those respondents who did not plan on completing a degree, where almost 9 in 10 are satisfied.

However, when examining those who are very satisfied shows a difference among credentials, with those in a journeyperson program most likely to be very satisfied at 30%, while those in a Bachelor's degree program were least likely to be very satisfied at 13%.

Overall satisfaction by credential

Credential	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Certificate	25%	55%	15%	6%
Diploma	19%	58%	15%	8%
Bachelor's degree	13%	57%	23%	8%
Journeyperson certificate	30%	50%	11%	8% 2%
Not planning on completing credential	23%	64%	13%	

■ Very satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied ■ Prefer not to say

PRA

5.3   Recommend institution to others

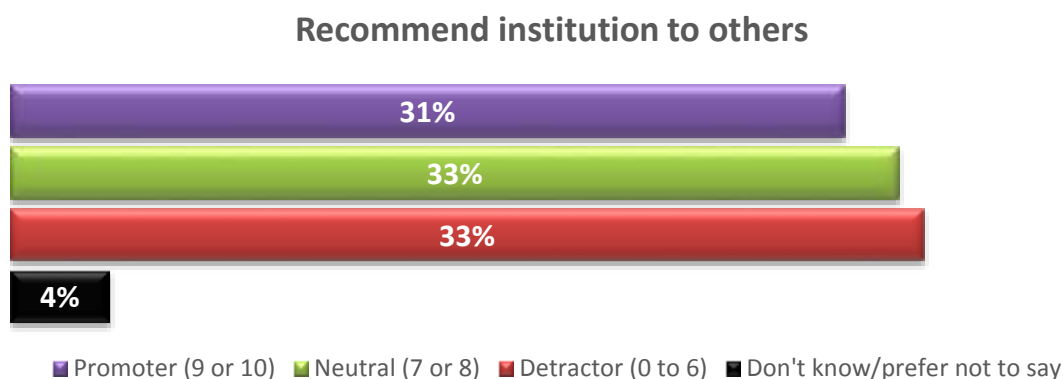Early leavers were asked to rate whether they would recommend their institution to others on an eleven-point scale from 0 to 10. This question is known as the Net Promoter Score (NPS), which is a common measure used to assess customer experiences and loyalty. The NPS is calculated by dividing respondents into three groups:[8]

- **Promoters** (score of 9 or 10) are defined as loyal enthusiasts who would likely return and refer others, resulting in growth of the institution.
- **Passives** (score of 7 or 8) are satisfied, but unenthusiastic, and may be likely to select other institutions/competitors.
- **Detractors** (score of 0 to 6) are dissatisfied students who can damage the institutions' brand and impede growth through negative word-of-mouth.

The NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from promoters. A good NPS is defined as any score above zero, indicating more positive brand associations than negative, while a score above 50 is considered excellent.

Overall, 31% of respondents are classified as promoters (rating of 9 or 10), while 33% are classified as detractors (rating of 0 to 6), yielding an NPS of -2%.

Recommend institution to others

31%

33%

33%

4%

■ Promoter (9 or 10)   ■ Neutral (7 or 8)   ■ Detractor (0 to 6)   ■ Don't know/prefer not to say

Key differences. There is a statistically significant difference in recommendation among age groups, specifically differences between those under and over 30. All groups under 30 have a negative NPS, with those 22 and younger (-23%) have the lowest among all age groups. Those 30 and older have positive NPS with those 40 and older have the most positive at 22%.

Although not statistically significant, there is a noticeable difference in the NPS between Indigenous (15%) and non-Indigenous (-7%) early leavers.

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[8]   Retrieved from https://www.netpromoter.com/know/ on March 28, 2019.

5.3.1 Reason for ratings - Promoters

The figure below shows the main reasons promoters (rating of 9 or 10 out of 10) gave for their rating (mentioned by at least 5%). The main reasons they would recommend their institution are because they felt *their overall experience at the institution was good* (28%), *the program/course content was high quality* (27%), and *they had positive experiences with professors/instructors* (15%).

Reason for recommendation rating - Promoters
(BASE: Those rating 9 or 10 out of 10, n = 461)
(Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer)

Reason	Percentage
Overall experience was good	28%
High quality program/course content	27%
Positive experiences with professors/instructors	15%
School supportive/welcoming	9%
Positive learning environment	6%

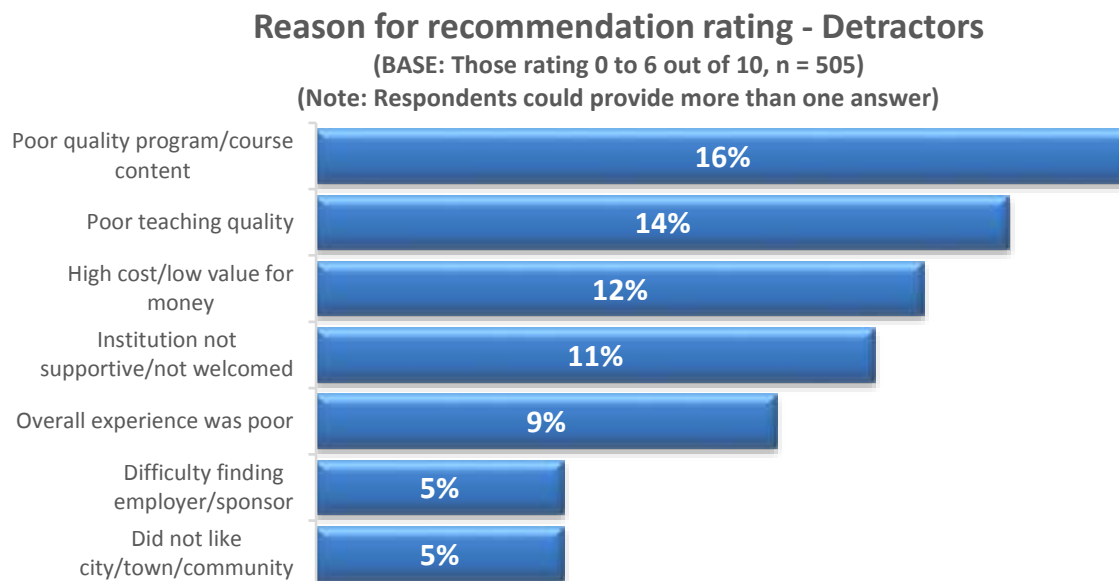### 5.3.2 Reason for ratings - Passives

The figure below shows the main reasons passives (rating of 7 or 8 out of 10) gave for their rating (mentioned by at least 5%). The main reasons include a mix of positive and negative reasons, unlike promoters whose main reasons were all positive. For positive reasons, passives mention *overall good experience* (16%) and *the program/course content was high quality* (12%), while for negative reasons they mention *poor program/course content* (7%), *poor teaching quality* (5%), and *high costs* (5%).

Reason for recommendation rating - Passives
(BASE: Those rating 7 or 8 out of 10, n = 492)
(Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer)

Reason	Percentage
Overall experience was good	16%
High quality program/course content	12%
Poor quality program/course content	7%
Poor teaching quality	5%
High cost/low value for money	5%
Positive experiences with professors	5%
Positive learning environment	5%

5.3.3   Reason for ratings - Detractors

The figure below shows the main reasons detractors (rating of 0 to 6 out of 10) gave for their rating (mentioned by at least 5%). The two most mentioned reasons were related to the quality of education, either *poor quality program/course content* (16%) or *poor teaching quality* (14%). *High cost/low value* (12%) was also commonly mentioned, as well as *the institution not being supportive or welcoming* (11%).

One reason appears to be specific to apprentices, as 5% mentioned they had *difficulty finding an employer/sponsor* for the work component of their program.

Reason for recommendation rating - Detractors
(BASE: Those rating 0 to 6 out of 10, n = 505)
(Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer)

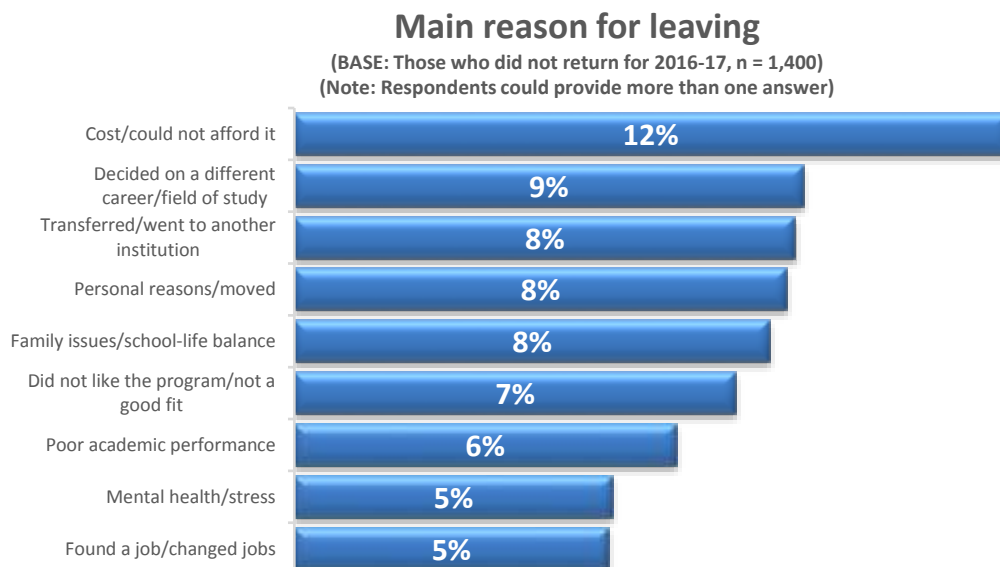| Reason	Percentage
Poor quality program/course content	16%
Poor teaching quality	14%
High cost/low value for money	12%
Institution not supportive/not welcomed	11%
Overall experience was poor	9%
Difficulty finding employer/sponsor	5%
Did not like city/town/community	5%

PRA

6.0   Factors related to leaving

This section summarizes the key questions related to challenges students faced that may have caused them to discontinue studies. All questions in this section were only asked of those who had indicated they had not returned for the 2016-17 academic year (n = 1,400).
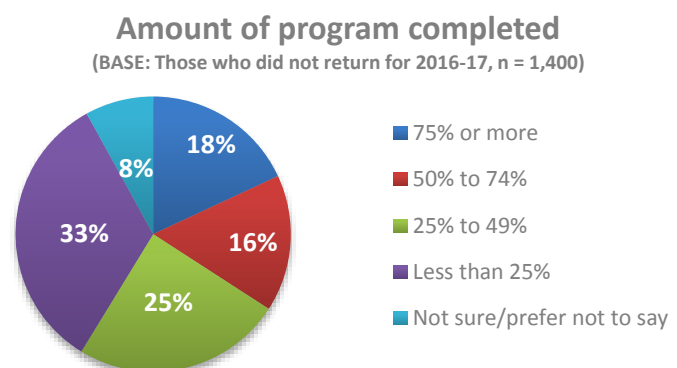
6.1   Main reason for leaving

Respondents were asked to explain, in their own words, the main reason for leaving their program; approximately 10% of respondents gave more than one reason as their main reason. Results seem to indicate that there was no single over-riding factor, as the most common reason was because of *the costs of school or they could not afford it* (12%). Otherwise, several issues are mentioned by 7% to 9% of respondents, most of which seem to be factors beyond institutions' control, such as *deciding on a different career/field of study* (9%), *transferring to another institution* (8%), *personal reasons* (8%), and *family issues/school-life balance* (8%). The graph below shows those reasons mentioned by at least 5% of respondents.

Main reason for leaving
(BASE: Those who did not return for 2016-17, n = 1,400)
(Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer)

Reason	Percentage
Cost/could not afford it	12%
Decided on a different career/field of study	9%
Transferred/went to another institution	8%
Personal reasons/moved	8%
Family issues/school-life balance	8%
Did not like the program/not a good fit	7%
Poor academic performance	6%
Mental health/stress	5%
Found a job/changed jobs	5%

6.2   Amount of program completed before leaving

For the most part, early leavers completed less than half of their program, with the largest group being those who completed less than 25% of their program (33%).

Key differences. Respondents 25 and older were more likely to say they had completed at least half their program than those 24 and younger. Approximately 43% of those 25 and older had completed at least half their program compared to 21% of those 24 and younger.

Amount of program completed
(BASE: Those who did not return for 2016-17, n = 1,400)

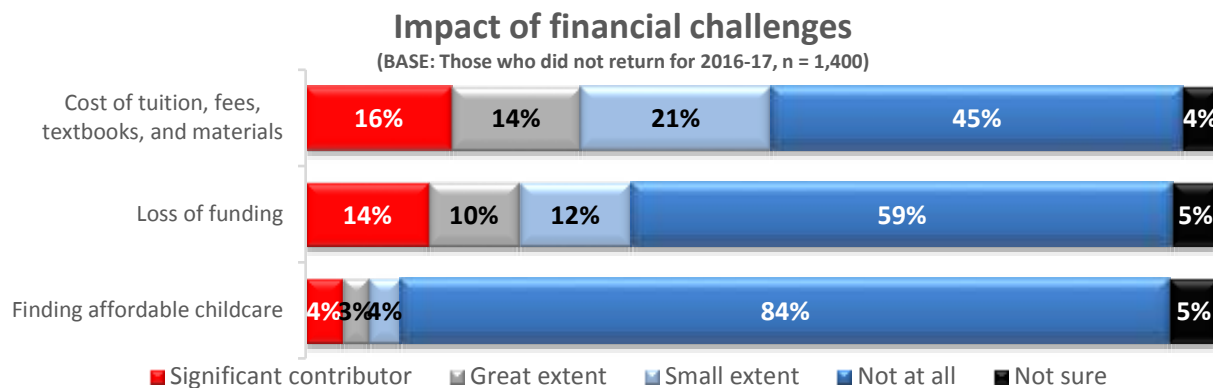| Segment	Percentage
75% or more	18%
50% to 74%	16%
25% to 49%	25%
Less than 25%	33%
Not sure/prefer not to say	8%

PRA

6.3   Impact of challenges

This section summarizes early leavers' assessment of the extent to which several pre-identified challenges impacted them during their program. These were broken down into three types: financial, institutional, and personal.

6.3.1   Financial challenges

Among three financial challenges, the greatest challenge was *the cost of tuition, fees, textbooks, and materials*, with 51% identifying these issues as impacting their decision to leave to at least a small extent.

Impact of financial challenges
(BASE: Those who did not return for 2016-17, n = 1,400)

Challenge	Significant contributor	Great extent	Small extent	Not at all	Not sure
Cost of tuition, fees, textbooks, and materials	16%	14%	21%	45%	4%
Loss of funding	14%	10%	12%	59%	5%
Finding affordable childcare	4%	3%	4%	84%	5%

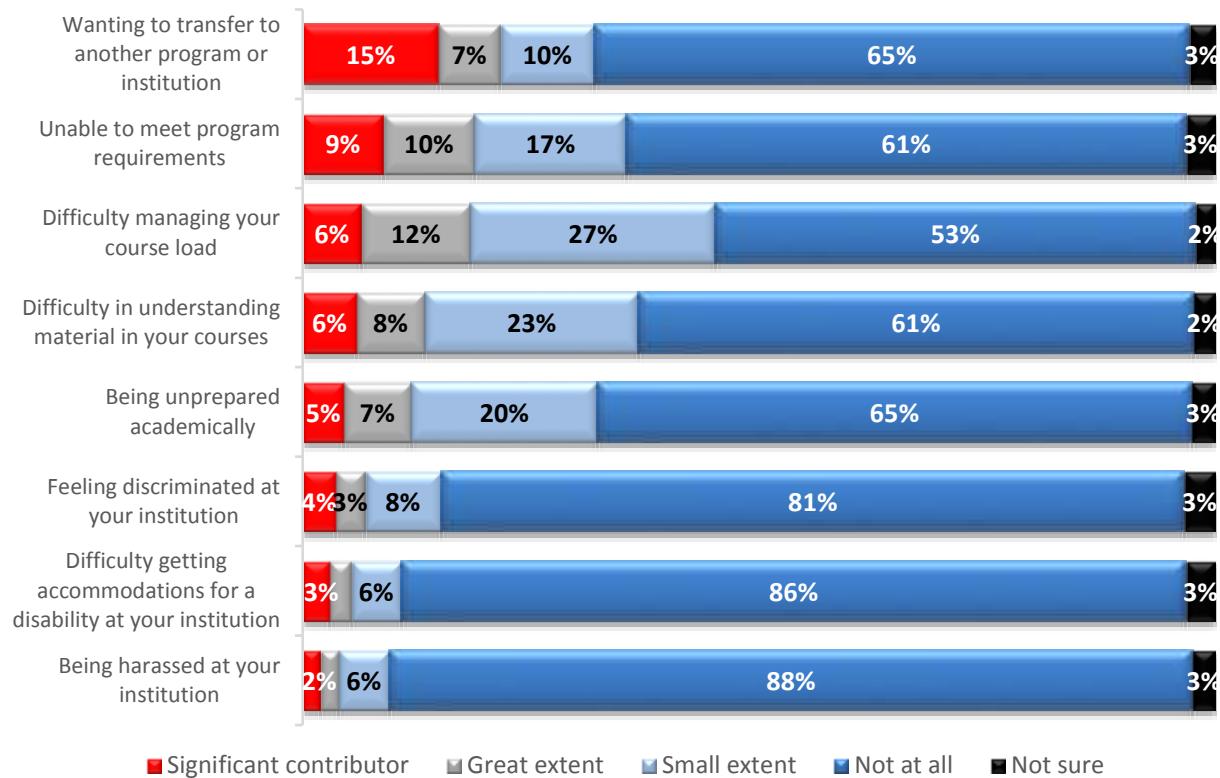**Key differences**. Some of these challenges differed by demographic groups.

- Respondents 25 and older (15%) were more likely than those under 25 (4%) to indicate that *finding affordable childcare was an issue*.

- Indigenous early leavers were more likely than non-Indigenous early leavers to say that *finding affordable childcare* was an issue (20% versus 9%).

- Those who self-identify as a visible minority were more likely to say that each of the financial-related challenges impacted them compared to non-visible minority early leavers, including *cost of tuition, fees, textbooks, and materials* (71% versus 49%), *loss of funding* (55% versus 30%), and *finding affordable childcare* (17% versus 7%).

6.3.2   Challenges related to their institution/program

Among eight challenges related to their institution or program, *wanting to transfer to another program or institution* had the highest proportion who said this was a significant contributor at 15%. The challenge that had the largest impact was *difficulty managing their course load* (45%). It had the highest proportion of respondents who said it impacted them.

Impact of challenges related to their institution/program
(BASE: Those who did not return for 2016-17, n = 1,400)

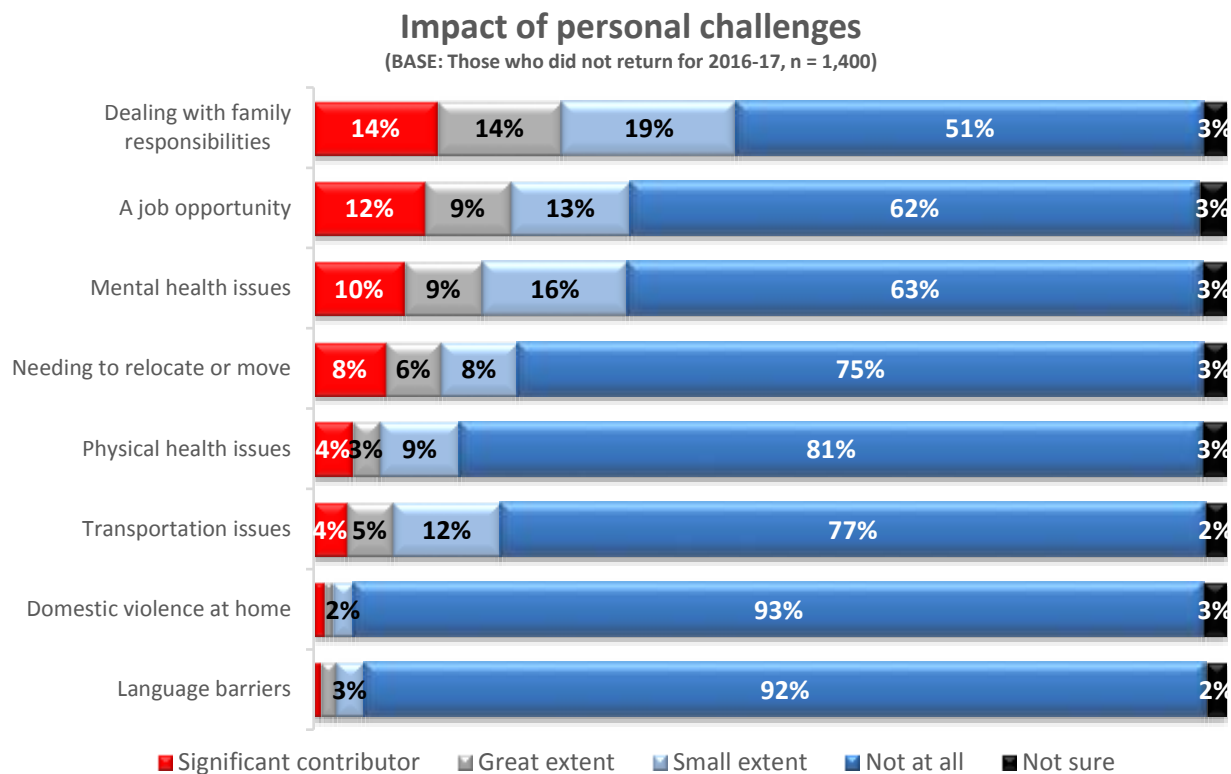| Challenge	Significant contributor	Great extent	Small extent	Not at all	Not sure
Wanting to transfer to another program or institution	15%	7%	10%	65%	3%
Unable to meet program requirements	9%	10%	17%	61%	3%
Difficulty managing your course load	6%	12%	27%	53%	2%
Difficulty in understanding material in your courses	6%	8%	23%	61%	2%
Being unprepared academically	5%	7%	20%	65%	3%
Feeling discriminated at your institution	4%	3%	8%	81%	3%
Difficulty getting accommodations for a disability at your institution	3%		6%	86%	3%
Being harassed at your institution	2%		6%	88%	3%

Key differences. A few of the institution/program-related challenges differ by demographic group.

- The older a respondent is the less likely they were to say that *wanting to transfer to another program or institution* (52% of those 22 and younger to 10% of those 40 and older), *difficulty understanding material in courses* (48% of those 22 and younger to 27% of those 40 and older), and *being unprepared academically* (42% of those 22 and younger to 24% of those 40 and older) were challenges.

- Early leavers who self-identify as visible minority were more likely to say that *feeling discriminated* (25% versus 11%) was a challenge.

- Non-first generation early leavers were more likely than first-generation early leavers to say *wanting to transfer to another program or institution* (37% versus 21%) was a challenge.

6.3.3 Personal challenges

Among eight personal challenges, a few stand out as impacting a large proportion of early leavers, including *dealing with family responsibilities* (46% at least a small extent), *job opportunity* (35% at least a small extent), and *mental health issues* (34% at least a small extent). Very few (5% or fewer) indicated that *domestic violence at home* or *language barriers* contributed at all to their decision to leave.

Impact of personal challenges
(BASE: Those who did not return for 2016-17, n = 1,400)

Challenge	Significant contributor	Great extent	Small extent	Not at all	Not sure
Dealing with family responsibilities	14%	14%	19%	51%	3%
A job opportunity	12%	9%	13%	62%	3%
Mental health issues	10%	9%	16%	63%	3%
Needing to relocate or move	8%	6%	8%	75%	3%
Physical health issues	4%	3%	9%	81%	3%
Transportation issues	4%	5%	12%	77%	2%
Domestic violence at home		2%		93%	3%
Language barriers		3%		92%	2%

■ Significant contributor   ■ Great extent   ■ Small extent   ■ Not at all   ■ Not sure

Key differences. Assessing challenges by demographic groups shows that several challenges impacted groups to a greater extent.

- In terms of age, respondents were more likely to say that *job opportunities* (24% of those 22 and younger compared to 43% of those 30 to 39) and *family responsibilities* (35% of those 22 and younger compared to 59% of those 40 and older) impacted them as they got older. Conversely, older respondents were less likely to say that *mental health issues* were a challenge, as 41% of those 22 and younger identified it as a challenge compared to 20% of those 40 and older.

- Visible minority early leavers were more likely than non-visible minority early leavers to identify *family responsibilities* (58% versus 41%) and *language* (12% versus 4%) as challenges.

- Non-citizens were more likely than Canadian citizens to identify *transportation issues* (34% versus 19%) and *language* (24% versus 4%) as challenges, although the difference for *transportation* falls just outside the criteria for statistical significance.

6.3.4   Challenges by percent of program completed

All 19 challenges were assessed by percent of program completed to determine if the challenges respondents faced differed by how far they were into their program. Analyses did not reveal any statistical differences by amount of program completed, and only one analysis showed any practical (albeit not statistical) difference. This was for *wanting to transfer to another program or institution*, as the proportion who identified it as a challenge decreased the more of their program they said they had completed, from 37% of those who completed less than 25% of their program to 20% of those who completed 75% or more of their program.

6.4   Suggestions to help complete program

Respondents were asked to provide suggestions about what their institution could have done to help them complete their program. Overall, just 41% were able to give a suggestion; however, there were a multitude of suggestions, with no single suggestion raised by more than 4% of respondents. In fact, just four were mentioned by 3% or more, and included the following:

- *Better instruction/improve courses* (4%)
- *More academic supports/assistance* (4%)
- *Lower costs/tuition* (3%)
- *More/better access to funding* (3%)

The first suggestion seems to imply that early leavers put the blame on quality of education, and not their own ability, whereas the second suggestion implies the opposite, that respondents identified that they needed assistance with their academics but did not have access to the right supports. The other two suggestions are financial, which makes sense, given that the main reason for leaving was financial.
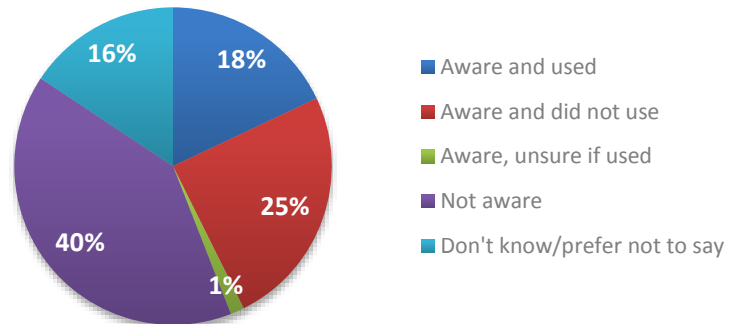
PRA

7.0   Supports

This section summarizes early leavers' awareness and use of supports from their institution, as well as suggestions for additional supports.

7.1   Awareness and use of supports

Overall, 44% of early leavers say they were aware of supports available to them to help with any challenges they were facing. However, just 18% of early leavers used any of these supports. Another 40% of early leavers say they were not aware of supports available to them to help with any challenges they were facing.

Awareness and use of supports

- Aware and used
- Aware and did not use
- Aware, unsure if used
- Not aware
- Don't know/prefer not to say

Key differences. There are no statistically significant differences among groups in terms of their awareness or use of institutional supports.

7.1.1   Supports used

Among the 18% who used supports, the most common supports used were *counselling/mental health* (23%), *academic advising* (18%), *tutoring* (17%), and *accessibility services* (10%). When taken out of all respondents, each of these accounts for 4% or fewer respondents, indicating generally small proportions of early leavers using any single support.

7.1.2   Satisfaction with supports used

Also among those who used supports, satisfaction is quite high, as 71% say they are satisfied with the supports received.[9]

Satisfaction with supports
(BASE: Those who used supports, n = 272)

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Not sure/prefer not to say

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9   Sample sizes for these questions are too small to assess statistical differences between groups.
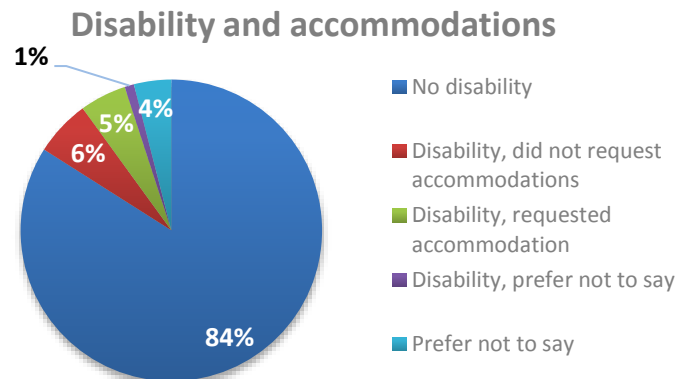
7.2   Other supports needed

When asked what other supports are needed, only 33% of respondents were able to identify supports that would have been valuable to help them with the challenges they were facing. Overall, no single service was mentioned by a very large number, as the most common responses were *mental health/counselling* (6%), *financial supports* (5%), *tutoring* (5%), and *academic advising/course planning* (4%). No other support was mentioned by more than 2% of respondents.

8.0   Disability

Overall, 12% of early leavers indicate that they have a disability.

Key differences. Although not statistically significant, Canadian citizens (13%) are more likely than non-citizens (3%) to report having a disability.

Disability and accommodations

Legend:
- No disability
- Disability, did not request accommodations
- Disability, requested accommodation
- Disability, prefer not to say
- Prefer not to say

Questions related to those who self-identified as having a disability show the following.[10]

- Overall, 43% had a disability that required them to request accommodations from their institution or program (5% of all respondents).

- Among those who requested accommodations, just 25% (1% of all respondents) said their institution was not able to meet their request. Conversely, 68% said the institution could meet their request for accommodation.

- Among those who were asked about their accommodations (4% of all respondents), 64% said that the accommodations were at least mostly able to meet their needs. Just 5% of those who received accommodations said they did not meet their needs at all (0.2% of all respondents).
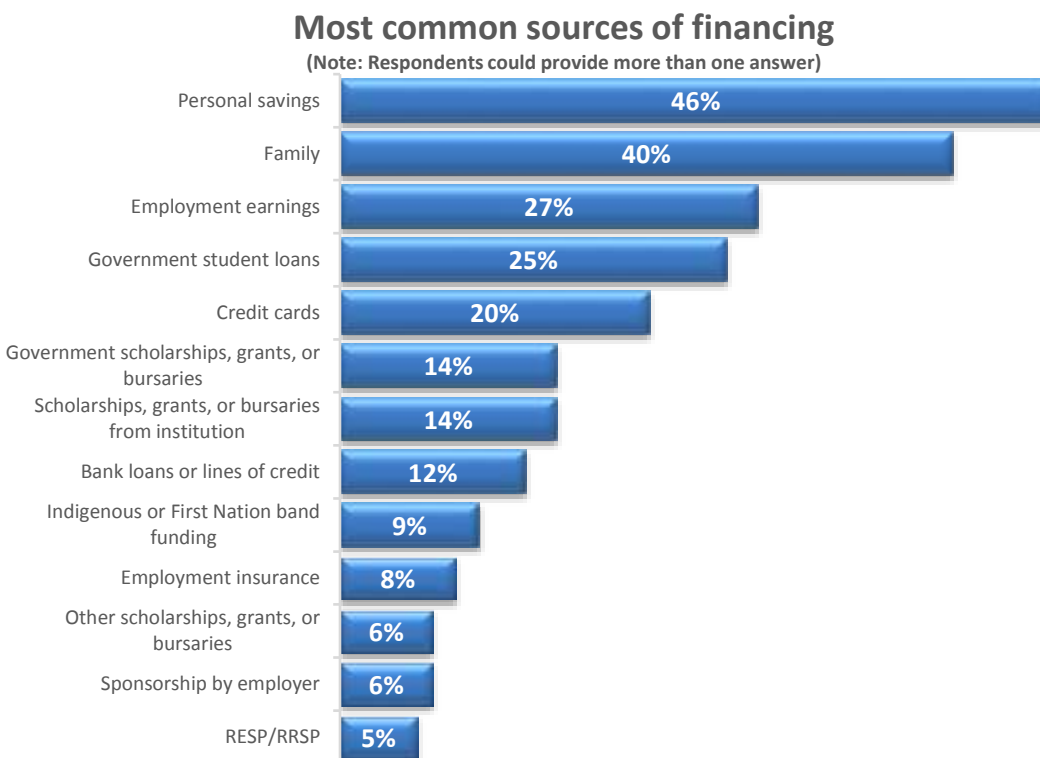
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[10]   Sample sizes for these questions are too small to assess statistical differences between groups.

PRA

9.0   Financing

This section summarizes how early leavers funded their education.

9.1   Most common sources of funding

The most common sources of respondents' funding while in their programs were *personal savings* (46%) and *family* (40%). The graph below shows those sources used by at least 5% of respondents.

Most common sources of financing
(Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer)

Source	Percentage
Personal savings	46%
Family	40%
Employment earnings	27%
Government student loans	25%
Credit cards	20%
Government scholarships, grants, or bursaries	14%
Scholarships, grants, or bursaries from institution	14%
Bank loans or lines of credit	12%
Indigenous or First Nation band funding	9%
Employment insurance	8%
Other scholarships, grants, or bursaries	6%
Sponsorship by employer	6%
RESP/RRSP	5%

9.2   Impact of not receiving government student loan

Overall, 4% of early leavers say they applied for a Canadian or Saskatchewan government student loan and were not approved. Among them, 55% (2% of all respondents) said that not being approved for the loan prevented them from continuing their studies.

Key differences. There are no differences among demographic groups in terms of those who applied for a student loan and were not approved.
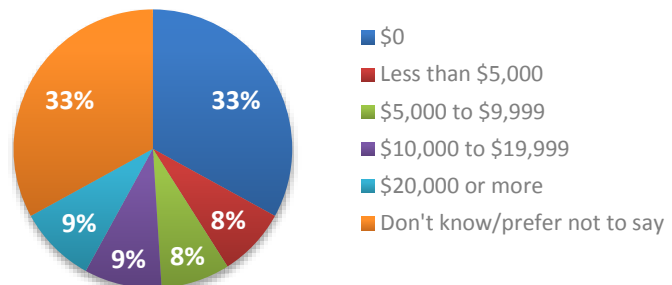
PRA

9.3 Amount owed

On average, early leavers report owing $8,687 when leaving their program; however, 33% of early leavers report not owing anything. Among those reporting debt, the average debt is $17,178.

Amount owed when left program
(BASE: Those who did not return in 2016-17, n = 1,400)

- $0
- Less than $5,000
- $5,000 to $9,999
- $10,000 to $19,999
- $20,000 or more
- Don't know/prefer not to say

33% 33% 8% 8% 9% 9%

Key differences. The average amount of debt owed varied by demographic group, but it was not linear. The average debt tended to increase as respondents got older, up to those 30 to 39 years of age, and then decreased for those 40 and older. The average debt for those 22 and younger was $5,484, increasing to $14,043 for those 30 to 39, before dropping to $4,197 for those 40 and older.

9.4 Satisfaction with government financial programs

When asked how satisfied they are with *government financial programs and services available to post-secondary students*, 31% were unable to provide a rating. Among those who could provide a rating, the proportion of early leavers who are very satisfied or satisfied with *government financial programs and services available to post-secondary students* is about double those who are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with government financial programs
(BASE: Those who did not return for 2016-17 and provided a response, n = 963)

14% 46% 20% 11% 8%

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
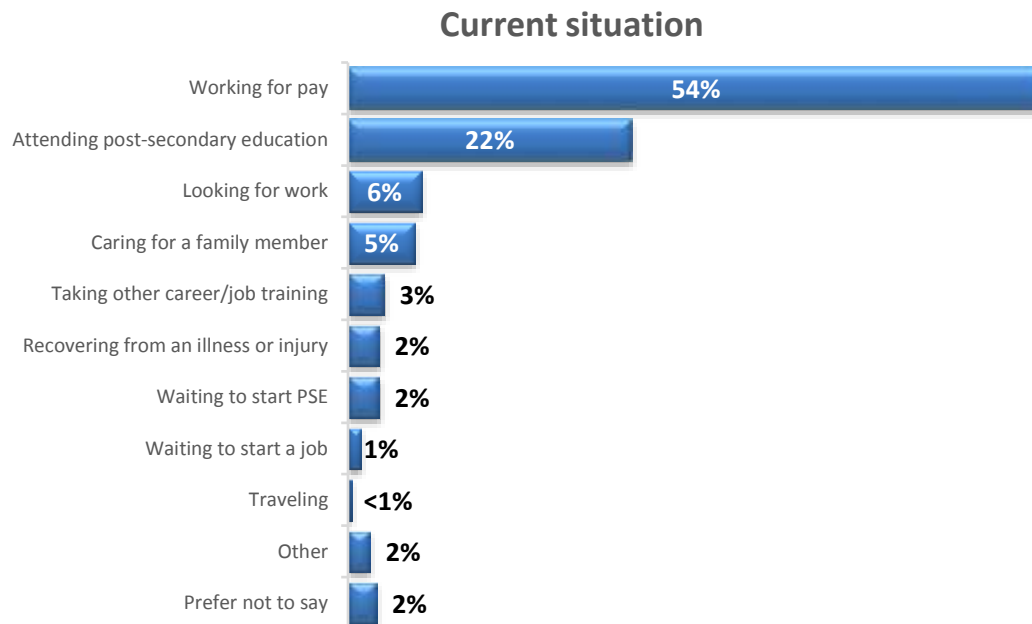- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Prefer not to say

Key differences. Results show a significant difference by age, but that is primarily because older respondents are less likely to be able to rate their satisfaction with financial programs, as non-response increases from 32% of those 22 and younger to 59% of those 40 and older.

PRA

10.0   Outcomes

This section summarizes some of the outcomes early leavers have experienced since the 2015-16 academic year.

10.1   Current situation

Assessing respondents' current situation, the vast majority fall into one of two categories: *working for pay* (54%) or *attending post-secondary education* (22%), which account for over three-quarters of early leavers.

Current situation

Working for pay	54%
Attending post-secondary education	22%
Looking for work	6%
Caring for a family member	5%
Taking other career/job training	3%
Recovering from an illness or injury	2%
Waiting to start PSE	2%
Waiting to start a job	1%
Traveling	<1%
Other	2%
Prefer not to say	2%

Key differences. The older a respondent is, the more likely they are to say they are currently working for pay, increasing from 42% of those 22 and younger to 69% of those 40 and older, and less likely they are to be attending post-secondary education, declining from 43% of those 22 and younger to 3% of those 40 and older.

10.2 Current employment

This section focuses on employment outcomes for those who indicated they were currently working for pay (54%, n = 817).

10.2.1 Job profile

Amongst those employed, 77% are working one job, while 19% are working two or more jobs. In addition, 85% are working full-time in their main job (that is, 30 hours or more per week).
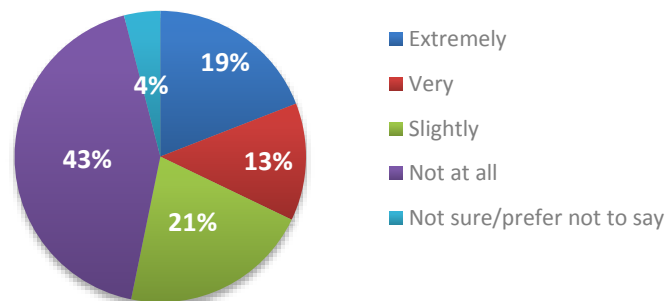
Key differences. There are no differences among demographic groups in the number of jobs they are currently working or the proportion working full-time.

10.2.1 How related job is to program

Among those who are employed and left their program in 2015-16, 53% say their job is at least slightly related to this program. This includes 19% who say it is extremely related.

Key differences. As respondents get older, they are less likely to say their job is not at all related to their program, as 65% of those 22 and younger say their current job is not at all related compared to 30% of those 40 and older.

How related job is to previous program
(BASE: Working for pay and left program in 2015-16, n = 756)

- Extremely
- Very
- Slightly
- Not at all
- Not sure/prefer not to say

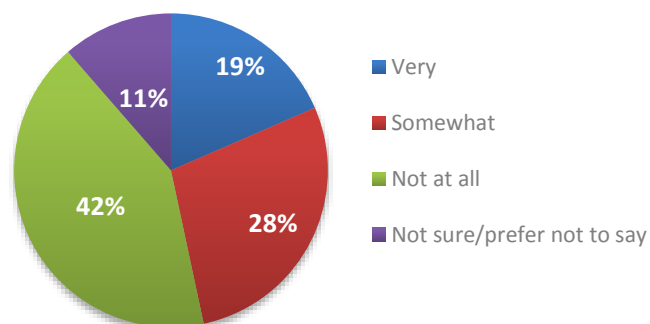19% | 4% | 43% | 13% | 21%

10.2.2 How helpful program was in obtaining job

Respondents are split as to the helpfulness of their program in getting their job, with 47% saying it was at least somewhat helpful and 42% saying it was not at all helpful.

Key differences. As respondents get older, they are less likely to say their program was not at all helpful getting their job, as 63% of those 22 and younger say their current job is not at all related compared to 30% of those 30 to 39, and 38% of those 40 and older. In addition, Indigenous respondents were about twice as likely as non-Indigenous respondents to say their program was very helpful (32% versus 16%).

How helpful program was in getting job
(BASE: Working for pay, n = 817)

- Very
- Somewhat
- Not at all
- Not sure/prefer not to say
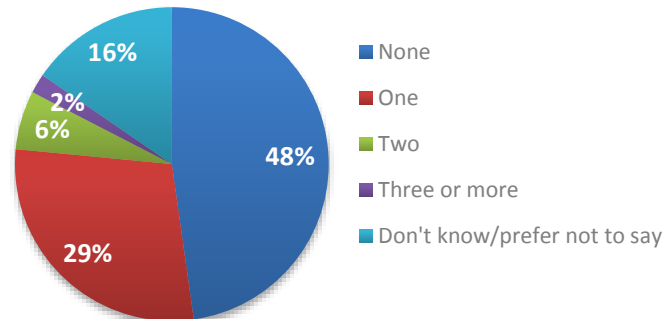
19% | 11% | 42% | 28%

10.3   Additional post-secondary education

Since the 2015-16 academic year, 36% of respondents have taken at least one other post-secondary program since leaving. This includes 8% who have taken two or more programs since leaving.

Number of post-secondary programs enrolled in since 2015-16

- None
- One
- Two
- Three or more
- Don't know/prefer not to say

16%
2%
6%
48%
29%

Key differences. As respondents get older, they are less likely to have taken at least one program since 2015-16, decreasing from 56% of those 22 and younger to 14% of those 40 and older. In addition, first-generation respondents are less likely to have taken any other post-secondary education than those whose parents have some post-secondary education (25% versus 43%).

10.3.1   Post-secondary profile

Among those who are taking post-secondary education (n = 550), results show the following:
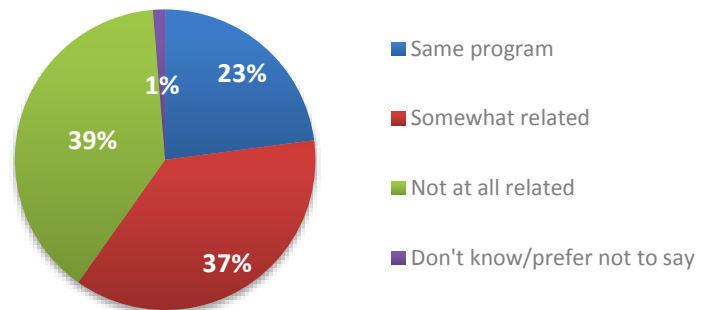
-   28% graduated from a program since 2015-16.

-   The most common educational institutions participants attended were Saskatchewan Polytechnic (25%), the University of Saskatchewan (18%), and the University of Regina (15%), while another 14% attended an institution in Alberta.

-   The most common credential taken was a bachelor's degree (40%), followed by a diploma (27%) and a certificate (24%).

-   When asked about the main reason they took their additional schooling, participants said it was *for general interest* (30%), *for career advancement* (26%), or *wanting to change fields* (16%).

PRA

10.3.2   How related education is to previous program

Among those who took additional post-secondary education after their 2015-16 program, 23% took at least one program that was the same, while 37% took a program that was somewhat related. Among those who took the same program, 45% took it from the same institution they left in 2015-16, which indicates that approximately 4% of all early leavers came back to the program they left at their institution at some point in the two years since they left.

How related program is to previous program
(BASE: Took any post-secondary education after 2015-16, n = 550)

- 23% Same program
- 37% Somewhat related
- 39% Not at all related
- 1% Don't know/prefer not to say

Key differences. There are no differences among demographic groups in terms of those who have taken related programs since their 2015-16 program.
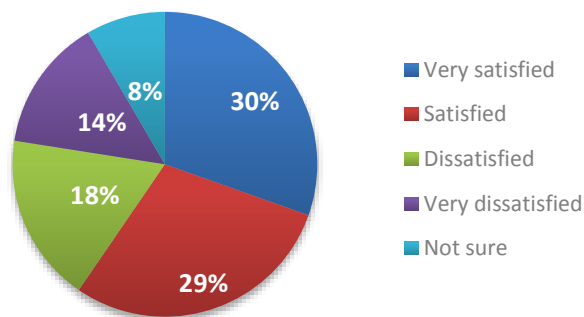
11.0   Overall summary

This section summarizes early leavers' overall assessment of their experiences.

11.1   Overall satisfaction with decision

Overall, 6 in 10 early leavers say they are satisfied or very satisfied with their decision to leave their program when they did, which includes 30% who are very satisfied.

Conversely, 32% said they are dissatisfied with their decision to leave their program, including 14% who are very dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with decision to leave program

- 30% Very satisfied
- 29% Satisfied
- 18% Dissatisfied
- 14% Very dissatisfied
- 8% Not sure

Key differences. When looking at which groups are most likely to be dissatisfied with their decision, results show several groups appear to be less satisfied with their decision to leave.

- As respondents get older, they are much more likely to indicate they are dissatisfied with their decision, as just 13% of those 22 and younger report being dissatisfied compared to 49% of those 40 and older.

PRA

- Those who self-identify as Indigenous (52%) are more likely to be dissatisfied with their decision to leave than those who are non-Indigenous (28%).

- Although it just misses the threshold for statistical significance, it is important to note that 39% of visible minority respondents say they are dissatisfied compared to 25% of non-visible minority students.
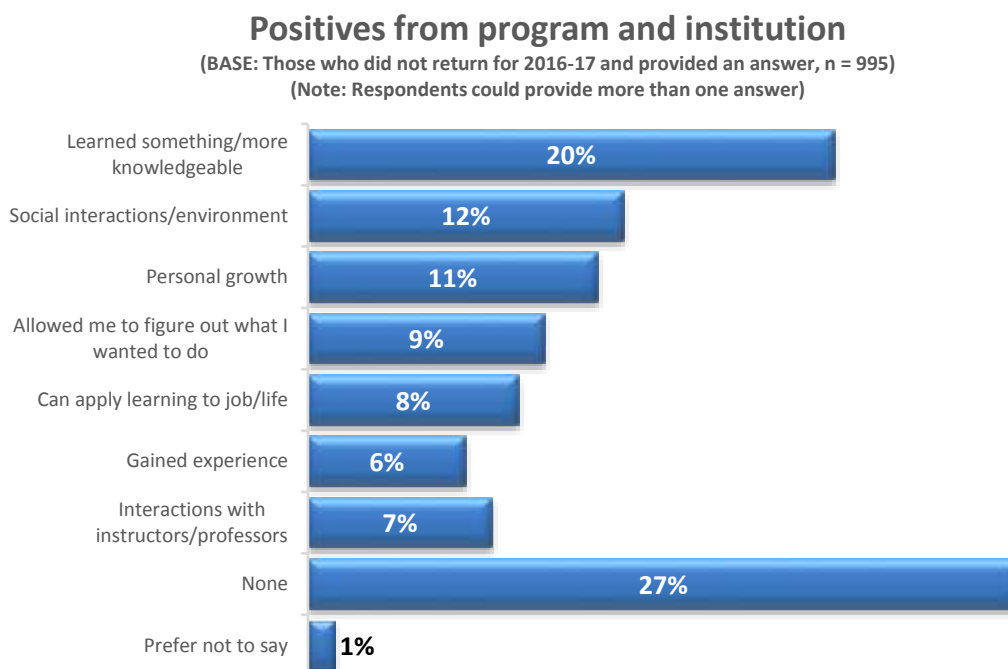
In addition to demographic analyses, satisfaction with the decision to leave the program was also analyzed by several other factors, including the following: the credential respondents were seeking, whether respondents were employed during 2015-16, the proportion of their program they had completed, whether they took additional post-secondary studies after 2015-16, and whether their main activity is that they are currently employed.

- **Credential.** Those who were planning on completing a bachelor's degree were most likely to be very satisfied with their decision to leave at 35%, followed by diploma (29%) and journeyperson (22%). Those in a certificate program (17%) were least likely to be very satisfied.

- **Amount of program completed.** The more of their program they had completed, the less satisfied they are with their decision to leave when they did, as 22% of those who had completed three-quarters or more of their program are very dissatisfied with their decision compared to just 10% of those who completed less than a quarter of their program.

- **Attending post-secondary education**. Those who are attending post-secondary education as their main activity are more likely to be very satisfied with their decision to leave than those who are not attending as their main activity (49% versus 25%). In addition, those who have taken any post-secondary since leaving are more likely to be very satisfied with their decision than those who have not taken any (48% versus 19%).

- **Current employment.** There was no significant difference by whether respondents were currently employed as their main activity.

11.2   Positives from program and institution

When asked what positives they took away from their program, 29% said they did not know. These respondents are removed from the graph below, which shows those aspects mentioned by at least 5% of respondents.
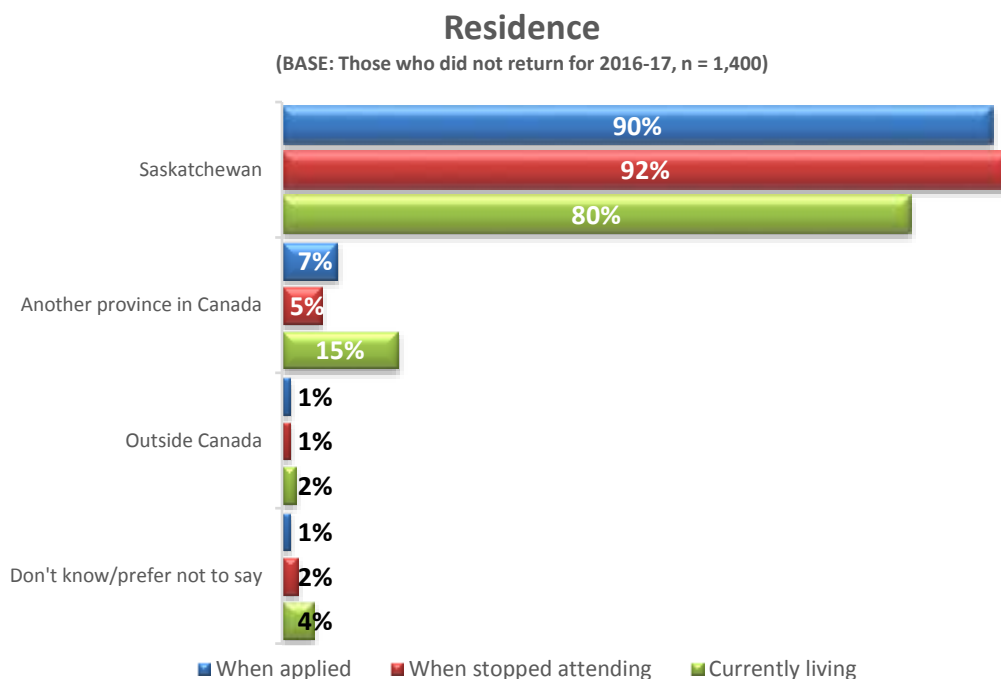
Most commonly, positives from the program and institution included *learning something new or gaining knowledge* (20%), this was followed by *social interactions or environment at the institution* (12%) and *personal growth* (11%). Another 9% said *it allowed them to figure out what they wanted to do*, which for a number of early leavers in this category meant that it helped them figure out what they did not want to be doing or studying.

Positives from program and institution

(BASE: Those who did not return for 2016-17 and provided an answer, n = 995)
(Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer)

Category	Percentage
Learned something/more knowledgeable	20%
Social interactions/environment	12%
Personal growth	11%
Allowed me to figure out what I wanted to do	9%
Can apply learning to job/life	8%
Gained experience	6%
Interactions with instructors/professors	7%
None	27%
Prefer not to say	1%

12.0   Migration

Examining early leavers' residence at three times (when they applied, when they left, and where they are currently living) shows the following:

- **Residence when they applied.** When they applied, 8% were living outside of Saskatchewan. The most common locations outside of the province were Alberta (3%), Manitoba (2%), and British Columbia (1%).

- **Residence at time they left their institution.** Of most interest is that 8% said they were living outside Saskatchewan when they discontinued their studies. Among them, 48% were living outside Saskatchewan when they applied, which either indicates they did not leave their residence or returned home when the discontinued. For others, the fact that they were living in Saskatchewan when they applied, and then living out of the province when they discontinued, may imply that their relocation may have impacted their decision to discontinue.

- **Currently living.** Currently, 16% are living out of province, which is about double the proportion who were living outside the province when they applied. The big jump from when they applied to now seems to be in migration to Alberta (3% to 6%), British Columbia (1% to 4%), and Ontario (<1% to 2%).

Residence
(BASE: Those who did not return for 2016-17, n = 1,400)

Saskatchewan	90% (When applied)
	92% (When stopped attending)
	80% (Currently living)
Another province in Canada	7%
	5%
	15%
Outside Canada	1%
	1%
	2%
Don't know/prefer not to say	1%
	2%
	4%

■ When applied   ■ When stopped attending   ■ Currently living

Examining migration within Saskatchewan from application to their current residence shows that almost all major cities and towns in Saskatchewan saw a small shift down in the proportion living there, with the exception of Saskatoon, which was virtually unchanged between application and current residence (27% versus 28%).

PRA

Key differences. One of the key aspects of migration is to determine those who moved out of the province after leaving their program and those who were living in Saskatchewan when they applied for their program. The most likely group are non-Canadian citizens, as 20% who had been living in Saskatchewan moved out of the province, compared to 11% of Canadian citizens who had been living in the province.

Although not statistically significant, there is also some evidence that younger people who had been living in Saskatchewan were more likely to leave, but it is mainly a difference between those under 30 and over 30. About 15% of those under 30 who had been living in Saskatchewan moved out of the province, while 8% of those 30 and older moved out of the province.

13.0   Key findings

Research shows that people taking post-secondary education and training believe it is valuable to their growth and development. Therefore, those who begin a program and do not complete it may be at risk of not fulfilling their needs.

This research intended to determine the factors that may lead to students leaving their program prior to completion, as well as potential supports that could be improved to assist students while in their program. Results from this survey identified the following key findings:

- In general, there does not appear to be a single major factor that influences respondents to leave their program. Indeed, many factors seem to be an influence, including costs, interest in their program, and personal issues. Of interest, 51% identified the cost of post-secondary education as a contributor to their decision to leave, yet only 12% identified it as the main reason for leaving.

- In addition, there do not appear to be one or two key areas that programs could change or improve that might address a large number of early leavers, as respondents had few consistent suggestions about how institutions or their programs could have helped them continue.

- When compared to the Saskatchewan graduates survey,[11] early leavers tend to be more likely to be Indigenous, a visible minority, and over 30. This may suggest that these groups may be more at risk of not completing their program than other demographic groups.

- Other research[12] has shown that job-related reasons tend to be the biggest drivers of enrolment; however, for early leavers, this tends to be a secondary driver behind aspects such as where the program is located and their interest in the program. This may suggest that early leavers are not as focused on long-term objectives when entering their program.

- One area that does seem to need improvement is awareness of available supports. In general, early leavers were not aware of supports that were available and even fewer used them. When used, satisfaction seems to be high, so it appears the barrier may be awareness of these supports.

    When examining early leavers as a whole, in general, the majority of early leavers appear to be satisfied with their decision to leave, and about one-third are dissatisfied. This seems to indicate that for most early leavers, the decision to discontinue is positive. For those that are dissatisfied, older respondents, Indigenous people, and visible minorities are most likely to be dissatisfied, which fits exactly with those groups that seem to be over-represented among early leavers relative to graduates in the province, and seems to provide further indication that supports and resources should be focused on these groups.

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[11]   Retrieved from http://publications.gov.sk.ca/documents/139/104068-Saskatchewan%20Advanced%20Education%20Graduate%20Outcomes%20of%202014%20Class.pdf.

[12]   CUSC-CCREU 2016 First-Year Student Survey retrieved from http://cusc-ccreu.ca/?page_id=32&lang=en.

APPENDIX A - METHODOLOGY

Sample construction

PRA coordinated with the institutions to have student contact data transferred securely. All files were transferred via PRA's secure FTP site. PRA merged the files from the institutions into one master data file; reviewed the mailing addresses to ensure they met Canada Post guidelines for address labels and made any necessary changes; reviewed email addresses to make sure they were in a standard format (i.e., name@domain.topleveldomain); and, finally, formatted phone numbers to remove any parentheses, hyphens, or long distance prefixes (i.e., 1 in front of a 10-digit number) so that they loaded into PRA's computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) software seamlessly.

The total number of early leavers provided by Saskatchewan institutions was 7,323. The number of early leavers by institution is shown in Table 1.

Table 3: Sample size by institution		
	Sample size	**% of total sample**
University of Regina	2,124	29.0%
University of Saskatchewan	1,998	27.3%
SATCC	1,581	21.6%
Saskatchewan Polytechnic	1,346	18.4%
Private vocational schools	194	2.6%
SIIT	80	1.1%
Overall	7,323	100.0%

Questionnaire design and pretest

Beginning in the fall of 2018, PRA and the Ministry reviewed the questionnaire and made changes to enhance the flow of the survey and improve the face validity of questions. A draft version of the survey was shared with members of the participating institutions and revised based on their feedback.

PRA pretested the survey by telephone with six respondents on December 5, 2018. Senior interviewers conducted the pretest while the Field Manager and Project Manager listened. Based on the pretest results, PRA made recommendations to the Ministry for changes to the survey to improve respondents' understanding of questions and survey flow. Once approved, PRA made the changes to the telephone and online surveys. The final version of the survey can be found in Appendix B.

Letters to early leavers

PRA prepared letters to early leavers to inform them of the survey and give them information to complete the survey online. In total, PRA mailed letters to 7,238 respondents with a valid mailing address, accounting for 98.8% of the sample. Letters were mailed between December 12 and December 14, 2018. In total, PRA has received 787 return-to-sender letters, accounting for approximately 10.9% of letters mailed. The final version of the letter can be found in Appendix C.

Table 4: Sample size and letters by institution				
	Sample size	Letter sent	Return to sender	% of return to sender
University of Regina	2,124	2,080	260	12.5%
University of Saskatchewan	1,998	1,962	186	9.5%
SATCC	1,581	1,581	163	10.3%
Saskatchewan Polytechnic	1,346	1,342	131	9.8%
Private vocational schools	194	193	38	19.7%
SIIT	80	80	9	11.3%
Overall	7,323	7,238	787	10.9%

Surveying

In addition to the letter, the process for surveying early leavers involved several steps:

► **Initial emails to early leavers**. PRA sent an invitation email to all respondents (excluding Saskatchewan Polytechnic) on December 13, 2018. The initial invitation to Saskatchewan Polytechnic respondents was sent on December 20, 2018.

► **Reminder emails**. Throughout the course of the project, PRA sent reminder emails to early leavers, excluding those who had completed the survey or who had refused to participate in the study. In total, PRA sent a maximum of seven emails to respondents.

► **Social media**. Using its social media accounts, PRA posted information about the survey to Twitter and Facebook, which was shared by many of the participating institutions. Over the course of the survey, PRA posted seven times to Twitter and Facebook.

► **Phone surveys**. PRA began phoning early leavers on December 14, 2018. Many early leavers whom PRA phoned requested to complete the survey online. When requested, PRA either collected a new email address from the respondent, verified that the email address on file was correct, or updated the email address if the email address on file was incorrect (or no longer being used by the respondent). PRA then emailed these respondents a link to the online survey and included them in follow-up reminder emails if they had not yet completed the survey.

► **Survey closure**. The survey was completed on March 13, 2019.

Email outcomes

Overall, 90% of the 7,323 early leavers had at least one email address in the sample files provided, with many having a second email address. Among the 6,591 respondents who were emailed a link to complete the survey online, 498 did not receive it because the emails bounced back. This indicates that approximately 6,093 of the original 7,323 (83.2%) received at least one email regarding this study. For a breakdown by institution, please see Appendix D.

Table 5: Email outcomes		
Outcome	**N**	**%**
Total early leavers	7,323	
Total early leavers emailed	6,591	90.0%
- At least one bounce back	2,219	33.7%
- All email addresses bounced back	498	7.6%

Response rate

Overall, the survey achieved a 35.2% response rate based on eligible phone numbers. For a breakdown by institution, please see Appendix E.

Table 6: Call record		
Outcome	**N**	**%**
Total sample	7,323	
A Total sample	7,323	
1. Not in service/no number	2,128	
2. Fax	20	
3. Business	24	
4. Wrong number	601	
B Total eligible numbers	4,550	
5. Busy	28	
6. Answering machines	1,394	
7. No answer	176	
8. Respondent not available/scheduled call back	391	
9. Health/other	154	
C Total asked	2,407	
10. Household refusal	49	
11. Respondent refusal	735	
12. Terminate mid-interview	22	
D Co-operative contacts	1,601	
13. Disqualified	88	
14. Completed phone	446	
14. Completed online (no call)	497	
14. Completed online (with phone)	570	
Refusal rate = (10+11+12)/C	**806/2,407**	**33.5%**
Response rate (D/B)	**1,601/4,550**	**35.2%**

Quality management processes

The bullets below outline the primary quality management processes that PRA followed to ensure that the goals for this research were met and that quality data was collected.

► PRA tested the telephone and online surveys to ensure that all skip patterns were working and all questions were included. PRA sent test links to the Ministry to ensure that the survey met its standards.

► In order to ensure that letters had reached participants, PRA monitored the online survey until the number of online surveys being completed had started to dwindle.

► The Project Manager (Nicholas Borodenko) responded to all questions and issues from respondents. All questions were answered within four hours when sent during normal business hours and 24 hours when sent outside of normal business hours.

► All phone calls received during business hours were answered by the Project Manager. Phone calls received between 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. CT were taken by PRA's Field Manager.

► Respondents who called PRA to complete the survey by phone were given the option of completing the survey at that moment or scheduling a time that was convenient for them.

► Any individual who asked, via phone or email, to be removed from the survey was deactivated so as not to receive any additional emails or phone calls from PRA.

► When calling respondents, PRA collected information to track respondents when they were no longer at the number given, including a new phone number or email address. In cases where the individual who answered the phone was apprehensive about giving out the intended respondent's contact information, PRA left its phone number for the individual to pass on to the respondent. When unable to speak directly to the respondent, interviewers did not share any information about the respondent's outcome at the institution (i.e., that they were an early leaver).

► PRA called telephone numbers at various times of the day and on various days of the week to increase the chance of reaching respondents.

Qualitative analysis with open-ended responses

To interpret questions where respondents provided written comments, PRA reviewed responses and categorized them into general themes (or codes) which were assigned numerical values. PRA then reviewed each response and assigned it a value or values. In many cases, a response was given a single numerical code, while in others, participants would touch on many themes in one answer and would thus be assigned multiple codes.

PRA created sufficient codes (or themes) to ensure that a single code accounted for at least 1% of the total responses for that question. PRA would continue to review responses left as "Other" (that is, the response, or part of the response, did not fit in any created code) until no theme or code could be created that would account for at least 1% of the total responses to that question. Any response or part of a response that did not fit a code was left as "Other." This meant that, for some responses, the entire response was given a single code of "Other," while in other cases, the response would receive codes in addition to "Other" if part of the response fit into another code. This means that the proportion left in "Other" in a table reflects the total number of respondents who remained with a code of "Other" as part of their response, but does not mean that all of these participants did not have other aspects of their response coded into other categories.

Criteria for statistical significance

Large sample sizes may inflate measures of statistical significance and may lead to false conclusions about the strength of association. The chi-square measure of association, in particular, is susceptible to this possibility.[13] Therefore, the standards for designating whether a relationship is statistically significant were increased. The benchmarks shown in Table 6 must be met for us to term an association statistically significant; the Pearson's chi-square must have probability of a type 1 error of less than .001 and either the Phi coefficient or Cramer's V must have a value of .150 or greater.[14]

In this report, ANOVA[15] is used to determine differences on questions with a ratio scale, that is, questions where a score of 0 has real meaning. One example is questions for which respondents identify the hours they worked per week. Though ANOVA is not as susceptible to inflated measures of statistical significance with large sample sizes, the larger sample size still warrants a more robust measure of significance. For an ANOVA to be deemed statistically significant, the alpha level of the associated F-test must be below .001.

Throughout this document, any differences reported meet these criteria, unless otherwise stated. Because of the stringent criteria used, some variances that seem large will not be statistically significant.

Table 7: Criteria for statistical significance	
Test	**Level for significance**
Alpha level (α)	<.001
Phi coefficient or Cramer's V	.150 or higher

Verification of early leavers and response set

At the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked to confirm that they had attended their program in 2015-16 and not returned the following academic year. Approximately 113 of the 1,513 who completed the survey indicated that they believe they returned the following academic year. These respondents were allowed to complete the survey, but questions specific to leaving their program were skipped. Where applicable, these questions are noted in the report.

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[13] Pearson's chi-square tests whether the observed frequency distribution differs from a theoretical distribution.

[14] The Phi coefficient and Cramer's V measure the strength of association between two categorical variables (or sets of scores).

[15] Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to measure the degree to which the average rating between two or more groups differs from one another.

APPENDIX B - QUESTIONNAIRE

Survey of Non-Completers

I1. Hello, my name is **[INTERVIEWER NAME]** and I am calling from PRA, a national research firm, on behalf of **[INSTITUTION NAME]** and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education. May I please speak to **[NAME]**?

[PROMPT: To confirm validity of the survey, please contact Carla Groeger at 306-787-0996 or Carla.groeger@gov.sk.ca]

On phone **[I6]**
Not home **[SET CALLBACK]**
Does not live here anymore
Wrong number **[END CALL]**

I2. We are trying to reach **[NAME]** to conduct a survey on behalf of **[INSTITUTION NAME]** about their experiences at the school and we were hoping we could speak with them to do the survey. Do you have a new telephone number or an email address where we could reach them?

Yes **[RECORD PHONE OR EMAIL]**
No **[I4]**

I3. Thank you. We will try contacting them about the study to see if they would like to participate. **[END SURVEY]**

I4. Would you be able to pass on information to them so they could contact us about the survey?

Yes
No **[END SURVEY]**

I5. If they would like to participate in the study, they can call us toll free at 1-888-877-6744 or by email at admin@pra.ca and reference the Saskatchewan post-secondary survey. Thank you for your time today.

I6. We are conducting a survey with students who discontinued their studies in 2015-16 before graduating from **[INSTITUTION]**. We understand that your leaving may have been planned or unplanned, and that you may be returning at some point to this or another institution. The purpose of this survey is to gather information about your experiences, and to see if there are things that the school could change to improve the educational experiences of current and future students.

The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete. Would you have time to complete the survey by phone or can we email you a link to complete the survey online?

Phone **[V1]**
Email
Refusal **[END SURVEY]**

I7. May I please have an email address you check regularly?

RECORD EMAIL: _____

I8. Thank you. You should receive the email in a few minutes and we ask that you complete the survey in the next few days. If you are unable to complete the survey in the next few days, we may call you back to try to complete the survey by phone. If you have any questions about the survey, our contact information is included in the email.

ONLINE INTRODUCTION

OI. Thank you for your participation in the survey of individuals who left their institution in the 2015-16 academic year (September 2015 to August 2016) without completing their program or returning the following year. Your answers are important and will be kept strictly confidential and used for research purposes only.

We understand that your leaving may have been planned or unplanned, and that you may be returning at some point to this or another institution. The purpose of this survey is to gather information about your experiences, and to see if there are things that the school could change to improve the educational experiences of current and future students.

The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete. Please use the buttons below to navigate through the survey. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact PRA Inc. at admin@pra.ca or 1-888-877-6744.

VERIFICATION

V1. To begin, I would like to confirm a few background details. Were you registered at **[INSTITUTION NAME]** at any time between September 2015 and August 2016?

Yes
No **[END]**
Don't know

V2. The school's records indicate that you left your program before graduating, either because you stopped attending classes during the 2015-16 school year or did not return to the school in the 2016-17 school year. Is this correct?

[IF APPRENTICE] Records indicate that you left your apprenticeship or stopped your training before completing the program in 2015-16. Is this correct?

Yes
No
Don't know

PRIOR EDUCATION

To start, we would like to ask some questions about your experiences prior to enrolling at **[INSTITUTION**].

PE1. Thinking back to your high school experience, did you receive your…

High school diploma
Adult Basic Education
GED Certificate
Did not receive high school diploma or equivalent
Not sure
Prefer not to say

PE2. What post-secondary did you complete prior to starting your studies at **[INSTITUTION]**? Select all that apply.

Did not take any other post-secondary **[EXCLUSIVE]**
Attended, but did not complete any certificates, degrees, or diplomas **[EXCLUSIVE]**
Completed a journeyperson certificate(s)
Completed a certificate(s)
Completed a diploma(s)
Completed a degree(s)
Don't know
Prefer not to say

[SKIP TO PE4 IF PE2 = DID NOT ATTEND]

PE3. In which province(s) or countries did you take your previous post-secondary education? Select all that apply.

Saskatchewan
Alberta
British Columbia
Manitoba
Ontario
Quebec
Prince Edward Island
New Brunswick
Nova Scotia
Newfoundland/Labrador
Yukon
Northwest Territories
Nunavut
United States
Other country (specify): _____
Don't know

PE4. Where were you living when you applied to **[INSTITUTION]**?

Estevan
Lloydminster
Moose Jaw
North Battleford
Prince Albert
Regina
Saskatoon
Swift Current
Yorkton
Elsewhere in Saskatchewan (please list city, town, or First Nation): _____
Another province in Canada: [show drop down of provinces/territories for respondent to select from]
Outside Canada (please list country): _____
Prefer not to say

INFORMATION ABOUT INSTITUTION/PROGRAM

IP1. What were the top three most important reasons you chose to enroll at the [**INSTITUTION**]?
[RANDOMIZE ORDER]

	Most important	Second most important	Third most important
It offered the program I wanted to take			
It was the only institution offering the program I wanted to take			
Local/where I live (home community)			
Reputation of institution			
Reputation of program			
Was accepted into the program			
Family members went there			
Family influence			
Friends were going there			
Job opportunities			
Scholarship / financial support offered by institution			
Cost			
Direct entry to program			
Pathway to another program			
Other first reason (specify): _____			
Other second reason (specify): _____			
Other third reason (specify): _____			
Not sure			

IP2. Did you know what area of study you wanted to pursue before enrolling at **[INSTITUTION]**?
[APPRENTICE] Did you know what trade you wanted to pursue before enrolling?
Yes
No
Don't know

IP3. **[ASK IF IP2 = YES]** Were you able to enroll in this area of study?
Yes
No
Don't know

IP4. **[ASK IF IP3 = NO]** Why weren't you able to enroll in this area?
SPECIFY: _____
Don't know

IP5. **[ASK IF IP3 = Yes]** What were the top three most important reasons you chose this program?
[RANDOMIZE ORDER]

	Most important	Second most important	Third most important
Interested in the subject area			
Already working in the subject area			
Career counselling advice			
Family influence			
Peer/friends influence			
Future job opportunities			
Because that was the program offered			
To work in the specific career I wanted			
To make money			
Only program I was accepted into			
Pathway to another program			
Other first reason (specify): _____			
Other second reason (specify): _____			
Other third reason (specify): _____			
Not sure			

IP6. When you registered for your program, what type of credential(s) were you planning on completing at **[INSTITUTION]?** Select all that apply.

Certificate
Diploma
Bachelor's degree
Journeyperson certificate
Other (specify): _____
Was not planning on completing credential **[EXCLUSIVE]**
Don't know **[EXCLUSIVE]**
Prefer not to say **[EXCLUSIVE]**

IP7. What proportion of your program was taken at a Saskatchewan regional college? Colleges include Northlands College, Cumberland College, North West College, Great Plains College, Carlton Trail College, Parkland, or South East College.

None
Less than half
About half
More than half
All of it
Don't know

IP8. **[SKIP IF APPRENTICE]** During your last semester or term in 2015-16, were you attending **[INSTITUTION]**…

Full-time
Part-time
Don't know
Prefer not to say

IP9. Were you aware of information, services, or programs to assist with your transition to the institution such as pre-arrival information, welcome events, or orientation?

Yes
No **[SKIP TO IP12]**
Don't know **[SKIP TO IP12]**
Prefer not to answer **[SKIP TO IP12]**

IP10. While at your institution, did you attend any welcome events or orientation?

Yes
No **[SKIP TO IP12]**
Don't know **[SKIP TO IP12]**
Prefer not to answer **[SKIP TO IP12]**

IP11. How satisfied were you with each of the following aspects of welcome events or orientation?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not sure
Feeling welcome					
Helping you understand academic expectations					
Providing information about campus life					
Providing information about student services					

IP12. What else could have helped you transition into the program? That is, what assistance could you have been provided, or what would you have liked to know that you learned later in your program.

SPECIFY: _____
Nothing
Don't know

IP13. Excluding apprenticeships, internships, or co-op placements, were you employed while taking classes at [**INSTITUTION**] in the 2015-2016 school year?

Yes
No **[SKIP TO NEXT SECTION]**
Prefer not to say **[SKIP TO NEXT SECTION]**

IP14. During your last term or semester at **[INSTITUTION]** in 2015-16, approximately how many hours a week were you working?

HOURS: _____ **[RANGE 1 TO 100]**
Don't know
Prefer not to say

IP15. What were the main reasons you were employed during the 2015-16 school year? Select all that apply. **[RANDOMIZE ORDER]**

Needed funds to support studies
Wanted to build my CV/resumé
Wanted to reduce the amount of debt accumulated
Couldn't get into the classes I wanted
Needed to maintain an ongoing position in a job
Had extra time
To support my family
To pay for a significant unexpected expense
Wanted to work
Didn't want to take out a loan
Other (please specify): _____
Prefer not to say

SATISFACTION WITH INSTITUTION

SA1. Overall, how satisfied were you with the following at **[INSTITUTION]**?
[APPRENTICE] Overall, how satisfied were you with the following during your technical training?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not sure/ not applicable
Quality of teaching					
Program's content					
Location of your institution					
Quality of buildings					
Technology or equipment					
Academic advisory services					
Support services					
Feeling part of your school or program					

SA2. Overall, how satisfied were you with your educational experiences at **[INSTITUTION]?**
[APPRENTICE] Overall, how satisfied were you with your educational experiences during your technical training?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Not sure

SA3. Using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all likely and 10 is extremely likely, how likely are you to recommend **[INSTITUTION]** to others?

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   Don't know

SA4. Why did you give a rating of <SA3> out of 10?

RECORD RESPONSE: _____
Don't know
Prefer not to answer

CHALLENGES [SKIP SECTION IF V2 = NO]

Now, we would like to understand the reasons why students leave before completing their program. We understand that your leaving may have been planned or unplanned, and you may be returning at some point to this or another institution. But, in any event, we would very much appreciate your being as candid as you want to be, and we want to assure you that your response is confidential.

CH1. Where were you living when you stopped attending **[INSTITUTION]** during the 2015-16 school year?

Estevan
Lloydminster
Moose Jaw
North Battleford
Prince Albert
Regina
Saskatoon
Swift Current
Yorkton
Elsewhere in Saskatchewan (please list city, town, or First Nation): _____
Another province in Canada: [show drop down of provinces/territories for respondent to select from]
Outside Canada (please list country): _____
Prefer not to say

CH2. What was your main reason for leaving **[INSTITUTION]**?

RECORD RESPONSE: _____
Don't know

CH3. Approximately how much of your program did you complete before you left **[INSTITUTION]** in the 2015-16 school year?

Less than 25%
25-49%
50-74%
75% or more completed
Not sure

CH4-F. I am going to read a list of financial situations that students sometimes face during their program, some of which you may have already mentioned. As I read each one, I'd like you to tell me how much it impacted you during your program. Please tell me if it was a significant contributor to you leaving, applied to a great extent, applied to a small extent, or did not apply at all to your situation.

	Not at all	Small extent	Great extent	Significant contributor to my leaving
Loss of funding				
Cost of tuition, fees, textbooks, and materials				
Finding affordable childcare				

CH4-E. Now I am going to read a list of situations you may have experienced at your institution or as part of your program. Using the same scale, please tell me how much each impacted you during your program.

	Not at all	Small extent	Great extent	Significant contributor to my leaving
Feeling discriminated at your institution				
Being harassed at your institution				
Unable to meet program requirements				
Difficulty in understanding material in your courses				
Difficulty managing your course load				
Difficulty getting accommodations for a disability at your institution				
Being unprepared academically				
Wanting to transfer to another program or institution				

CH4-P. Now I am going to read a list of personal factors that may have been going on in your life. Using the same scale, please tell me how much each impacted your during your program.

	Not at all	Small extent	Great extent	Significant contributor to my leaving
A job opportunity				
Dealing with family responsibilities				
Transportation issues				
Needing to relocate or move				
Language barriers				
Domestic violence at home				
Physical health issues				
Mental health issues				

CH5. What, if anything, could **[INSTITUTION]** have done to help you complete your program?
RECORD ANSWER: _____
Nothing
Don't know

SUPPORTS

SU1. Were you aware of any supports available at **[INSTITUTION]** to help you with any challenges you were facing?

Yes
No **[SKIP TO SU5]**
Don't know **[SKIP TO SU5]**
Prefer not to say **[SKIP TO SU5]**

SU2. Did you use any supports available at **[INSTITUTION]** to help you with your challenges?

Yes
No **[SKIP TO SU5]**
Don't know **[SKIP TO SU5]**
Prefer not to say **[SKIP TO SU5]**

SU3. What supports did you use?
RECORD: _____
Don't know
Prefer not to say

SU4. Overall, how satisfied were you with the supports you received from **[INSTITUTION]** to help you with any challenges you faced?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Not sure

SU5. What supports, if any, would have been valuable to you at **[INSTITUTION]** to help you with any challenges you were facing?

RECORD: _____
None
Don't know

DISABILITES

DI1. Do you consider yourself to be a person with a disability?

Yes
No **[SKIP TO NEXT SECTION]**
Prefer not to say **[SKIP TO NEXT SECTION]**

DI2. Did you request any accommodations from **[INSTITUTION]** because of your disability?

Yes
No **[SKIP TO NEXT SECTION]**
Prefer not to say **[SKIP TO NEXT SECTION]**

DI3. Was the institution able to provide the accommodation(s) you needed?

Yes
No **[SKIP TO NEXT SECTION]**
Don't know

DI4. How well did these accommodations meet your needs?

Fully
Mostly
Somewhat
Not at all
Don't know
Prefer not to answer

FINANCING

The next few questions are about financial assistance that you may have accessed during your education at the **[INSTITUTION]**.

F1. Which of the following sources did you use to support your education at **[INSTITUTION]**? Select all that apply.

Family, extended family, or friends, including money or benefits such as free room and board
Canada or Saskatchewan government student loans
Bank loans or bank lines of credit
Credit cards
Personal savings
Research or teaching assistantships
Sponsorship by a First Nation band or Indigenous funding program
Scholarships, grants, or bursaries from your educational institute
Government scholarships, grants, or bursaries (Canadian source)
Sponsorships, grants, or bursaries by a non-Canadian government
Other scholarships, grants, or bursaries
Employment earnings during your program of study, including summer jobs
Employment Insurance
Workers' Compensation
Sponsorship by an employer
RESP/RRSP's
Apprenticeship Incentive Grant
Apprenticeship Completion Grant
Another financial source (please specify)
Prefer not to answer

[IF NOT USING STUDENT LOANS]
F2. While at **[INSTITUTION]**, did you apply for a Canadian or Saskatchewan government student loan and were not approved?
Yes
No
Don't know

[**SKIP TO O1 IF V2 = NO]**
[ASK F3 IF F2 = YES]
F3. Did not being approved for government financial support prevent you from continuing in your studies at **[INSTITUTION]**?
Yes
No
Don't know

F4. When you left [**INSTITUTION**], how much did you owe to support the costs of your post-secondary education from **all** sources? Please include all post-secondary programs or courses you may have taken.

Numeric field [range $0 to $850,000]
Don't know
Prefer not to say

F5. Overall, how satisfied are you with the government financial programs and services available to post-secondary students, such as student loans, scholarships, grants, or bursaries?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Not sure
Prefer not to say

OUTCOMES

This next section is about your activities since leaving **[INSTITUTION]**.

O1. Which of the following best describes your current situation?

Working for pay
Looking for work
Waiting to start a job
Waiting to start post-secondary education
Attending post-secondary education
Taking other career/job training
Traveling
Caring for a family member that is, your children, parents, or others
Recovering from an illness or injury
Other (specify): _____
Prefer not to say

[ASK O2 TO O5 IF O1 = Working for pay]

O2. How many jobs do you currently have?

RECORD NUMBER: _____
Don't know

[IF MORE THAN 1 JOB] If you have more than one job, please answer the following questions about the job at which you typically work the most hours per week.

O3. How many hours do you typically work at your job per week?
Less than 30 hours
30 hours or more
Don't know

[SKIP O4 IF V2 = NO]
O4. Overall, how related is your current job to the program that you were taking when you left [**INSTITUTION**]? Is it…
Not at all related
Slightly related
Very related
Extremely related
Not sure
Prefer not to say

O5. How helpful was the education and training that you received from **[INSTITUTION]** in getting your current job?

Very helpful
Somewhat helpful
Not at all helpful
Not sure
Prefer not to say

O6. Since leaving **[INSTITUTION]**, how many post-secondary programs for credit have you enrolled in?
[IF V2 =NO] How many post-secondary programs for credit have you enrolled in since 2015-16?
These would include programs leading toward a degree, diploma, or certificate, excluding community programs and general interest courses. Please include any programs you have taken even if they have not been completed.

RECORD NUMBER: _____
Don't know **[SKIP TO NEXT SECTION]**
Prefer not to answer **[SKIP TO NEXT SECTION]**

[ASK O7 TO O12 FOR EACH PROGRAM IN O6]

O7. [Thinking about your (next) most recent program], are you currently enrolled in this program?

Yes
No
Don't know

O8. **[ASK IF O7 = No or Don't know]** Did you graduate from this program?

Yes
No
Don't know

O9. At what post-secondary institution (O7 = yes, are you taking) (O7 = no or don't know, did you take) this program?

University of Regina (including Luther College, Campion College, First Nations University of Canada)
University of Saskatchewan (including St. Thomas More College, St. Peter's College)
Saskatchewan Polytechnic
Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT)
Saskatchewan regional college
Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC)
Gabriel Dumont Institute/Dumont Technical Institute
Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP) or Northern Professional Access College (NORPAC)
Private vocational school/private college (specify name of school): _____
Other Saskatchewan institution (specify name of institution): _____
Non-Saskatchewan institution (specify institution, city, and province/country): _____

O10. What type of credential would someone receive at the end of this program?

Certificate
Diploma
Journeyperson certificate
Bachelor's degree
Post-bachelor professional degree (e.g., Law, Dentistry, Medicine)
Master's degree
PhD
Professional designation (e.g., accounting designation, medical residency)
Other (specify): _____
Can't remember

Q11. What is the main reason you decided to take this program? **[RANDOMIZE ORDER]**

Finish credential
Wanted to change fields
Lack of suitable employment opportunities
Wanted to study at an advanced level
General interest/personal development
For career advancement
To make more money
Other (please specify): _____
Prefer not to say

O12. How related is this program to the program that you left at **[INSTITUTION]**?
[IF V2 = NO] How related is this program to the program that you were in during the 2015-16 school year?
It is the same program
Somewhat related
Not at all related
Don't know

OVERALL SUMMARY [SKIP TO DEMOGRAPHICS IF V2 = NO]

OS1. Overall, how satisfied are you with leaving your program when you did? Would you say that you are...

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Not sure

OS2. What positives did you take away from your time at the institution or from your program?

SPECIFY: _____
None
Don't know

DEMOGRAPHICS

The following questions are asked only to assist in classifying responses, and are not used in any way to identify you. These questions are all voluntary and any information you provide is kept strictly confidential.

D1. Which gender do you most identify with?

Male
Female
Other or undeclared
Prefer not to say

D2. In what year were you born?

RECORD YEAR: _____ **[DROP DOWN LIST ONLINE]**
Prefer not to say

PRA

D3. When you registered for the 2015-16 academic year at your institution, were you a…

Canadian citizen
Landed immigrant/permanent resident
International student
Other (specify): _____
Prefer not to say

D4. Do you consider yourself to be an Indigenous person?

Yes, Status Indian
Yes, non-status Indian
Yes, Metis
Yes, Inuit
Yes, other Indigenous group
No
Prefer not to say

[SKIP TO D6 IF D4 = YES]

D5. Do you consider yourself to be a member of a visible minority?

Yes
No
Don't know
Prefer not to say

The next question asks about your parents' or guardians' level of education. If you had more than two parents or guardians growing up, please consider the two parents or guardians you lived with most recently prior to starting your education at your institution.

D6A. What is the highest level of education attained by any of your parents or guardians?

Did not complete high school
Completed high school or equivalent
Some post-secondary education
Completed college, technical institute, or apprenticeship program
Completed journeyperson certificate
Completed bachelor's degree
Completed post-bachelor professional degree
Completed master's degree
Completed PhD
Other (specify); _____
Prefer not to say
Don't know

D7. Where are you currently living?

Estevan
Lloydminster
Moose Jaw
North Battleford
Prince Albert
Regina
Saskatoon
Swift Current
Yorkton
Elsewhere in Saskatchewan (please list city, town, or First Nation): _____
Another province in Canada: [show drop down of provinces/territories for respondent to select from]
Outside Canada (please list country): _____
Prefer not to say

CLOSING

CL1. Finally, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education, along with **[INSTITUTION]**, may be conducting future research with students about their outcomes and post-secondary experience. Would you be interested in participating in this future research?

Yes **[ASK CL2]**
No
Don't know

CL2. What is the best phone number and email address to reach you at in the future?

PHONE: _____
EMAIL: _____

> ► We've reached the end of the survey. On behalf of [INSTITUTION] and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education, thank you very much for your time.

APPENDIX C – LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear <First name>:

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education, in partnership with Saskatchewan post-secondary institutions, is conducting a survey of people who were registered at a post-secondary institution in 2015-16, but may not have returned to the institution in the 2016-17 academic year. We understand that your leaving may have been planned or unplanned, and we recognize that you may have since returned to post-secondary education. The purpose of this survey is to gather information about your experiences, and to see if there are things that could change to improve the educational experiences of current and future students.

Completing the survey is voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time. We hope you will participate and provide as much information as possible to help create a representative set of opinions. All of your survey responses are confidential and you will never be identified in any of the reports.

To manage the survey process and to ensure confidentiality, the Ministry has contracted Prairie Research Associates (PRA) Inc., an independent, national research firm, to undertake the survey. This survey was developed in accordance with Saskatchewan privacy legislation.

The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete. You may complete the survey online by going to www.pra.ca/en/sasksurvey. Once there, please follow the link to the survey and enter your unique passcode: <CODE>.

If you would like to complete the survey by phone at your convenience, you can call PRA at 1-888-877-6744 and ask to complete the Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Survey. If you have not had a chance to complete the survey by December 14, 2018, you may receive a phone call from PRA providing an option of completing the survey over the phone.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Nicholas Borodenko, Project Manager, of PRA by email at borodenko@pra.ca. If you have questions about the legitimacy of this survey, please contact Carla Groeger, Senior Planning and Evaluation Consultant, at the Ministry of Advanced Education at 306-787-0996 or Carla.groeger@gov.sk.ca.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Borodenko
Partner
PRA Inc.

APPENDIX D – EMAIL OUTCOMES BY INSTITUTION

Email outcomes by institution						
Outcome	**University of Regina**		**University of Saskatchewan**		**SATCC**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Total early leavers	2124	■■■■	1998	■■■■	1581	■■■■
Total early leavers emailed	2123	100.0%	1972	98.7%	1128	71.3%
- At least one bounce back	1911	90.0%	126	6.4%	91	8.1%
- All email addresses bounced back	190	8.9%	126	6.4%	91	8.1%

Email outcomes by institution						
Outcome	**Saskatchewan Polytechnic**		**Private Vocational Schools**		**SIIT**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Total early leavers	1346	■■■■	194	■■■■	80	■■■■
Total early leavers emailed	1152	85.6%	156	80.4%	60	75.0%
- At least one bounce back	67	5.8%	24	15.4%	0	0.0%
- All email addresses bounced back	67	5.8%	24	15.4%	0	0.0%

PRA

APPENDIX E – PHONE OUTCOMES BY INSTITUTION

Call record by institution						
Outcome	**University of Regina**		**University of Saskatchewan**		**SATCC**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Total sample	2124		1998		1581	
A Total sample	2124		1998		354	
1. Not in service/no number	630		538		1	
2. Fax	8		7		6	
3. Business	8		5		149	
4. Wrong number	174		116		1071	
B Total eligible numbers	1304		1332		3	
5. Busy	9		7		324	
6. Answering machines	408		397		38	
7. No answer	53		43		146	
8. Respondent not available/scheduled call back	83		129		42	
9. Health/other	49		31		518	
C Total asked	702		725		9	
10. Household refusal	14		14		205	
11. Respondent refusal	189		202		11	
12. Terminate mid-interview	3		2		293	
D Co-operative contacts	496		507		27	
13. Disqualified	17		28		126	
14. Completed phone	103		127		42	
14. Completed online (no call)	198		169		98	
14. Completed online (with phone)	178		183		354	
Refusal rate = (10+11+12)/C	**206/702**	**29.3%**	**218/725**	**30.1%**	**225/518**	**43.4%**
Response rate (D/B)	**496/1304**	**38.0%**	**507/1332**	**38.1%**	**293/1071**	**27.4%**

Call record by institution						
Outcome	**Saskatchewan Polytechnic**		**Private Vocational Schools**		**SIIT**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Total sample	1346		194		80	
A	Total sample	1346		194		30	
1.	Not in service/no number	501		75			
2.	Fax	4					
3.	Business	5				13	
4.	Wrong number	118		31		37	
B	Total eligible numbers	718		88		1	
5.	Busy	6		2		13	
6.	Answering machines	215		37		4	
7.	No answer	31		7		1	
8.	Respondent not available/scheduled call back	26		6		2	
9.	Health/other	30		0		16	
C	Total asked	410		36		1	
10.	Household refusal	10		1		3	
11.	Respondent refusal	119		17			
12.	Terminate mid-interview	5		1		12	
D	Co-operative contacts	276		17		2	
13.	Disqualified	13		1		4	
14.	Completed phone	79		7		1	
14.	Completed online (no call)	86		1		5	
14.	Completed online (with phone)	98		8		30	
Refusal rate = (10+11+12)/C	**134/410**	**32.7%**	**19/36**	**52.8%**	**4/16**	**25.0%**
Response rate (D/B)	**276/718**	**38.4%**	**17/88**	**19.3%**	**12/37**	**32.4%**