



Creating Positive Outcomes:
Graduation and Employment Rates of Indspire's
Financial Award Recipients
February 2015

“This report reinforces the effectiveness of financial aid in closing Canada’s education gap for Aboriginal students. Along with culturally relevant curriculum, programs, and outreach, financial support is key to improving both access and success for Indigenous students in post-secondary education. AUCC is pleased to partner with Indspire and others who share a commitment to getting results.”

Paul Davidson, President of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada

“Programs like Building Brighter Futures are so important because they create opportunities. I am proud to share in Indspire’s success today and look forward to continuing our work together in creating even more opportunities for Indigenous youth”

Lorraine Mitchelmore, President and Country Chair, Executive Vice President, Heavy Oil, Shell Canada Limited

“Indspire’s success in easing the financial burden that many Indigenous students experience when pursuing post-secondary education gives all Canadians a reason to celebrate. We are all the richer for these students’ accomplishments and their commitment to give back to their communities.”

Rita Bouvier, MEd, author, researcher, and award-winning educator

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As is customary practice for Indigenous peoples, we extend thanks to all recipients of financial awards from Indspire who gave their time to provide us honest insight and recommendations for our program. Each voice provided meaningful insight that we can take forward for future generations of students.

To the Creator and all our relations, we thank you for your inspiration and guidance.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The focus of this study was to determine the graduation and employment rates of Indspire's *Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries and Scholarship Awards* (BBF) program recipients. Methodologically, the study was structured as a qualitative-quantitative survey. A total of 1,248 Indigenous students who received funding through Indspire's BBF program between 2000-2001 and 2012-2013 participated in a survey. The report gathers data from a sample of Indigenous students in all provinces and territories.

The results are as follows:

- 93% of Indspire's BBF recipients graduated;
- 50% of graduates achieved an undergraduate degree;
- 82% of graduates are employed;
- 84% of employed graduates are serving Indigenous populations; and
- 93% of graduates indicated their education prepared them for their occupation.

The results are remarkable; however, Indspire understands that, with Canada's growing Indigenous population, continued engagement is needed between students, parents, educators, communities, government, and the private sector. It should be noted that Indspire acknowledges that we are working with the segment of our population with some of the highest potential: those who have graduated high school and are considering or enrolled in post-secondary education. We recognize that this is only one piece of the larger untapped potential found within our community. Unlocking the vault of skills and leadership inherently found in Indigenous youth is a collaborative effort that involves students, families, communities, band councils, and Indigenous leadership. This is a relationship that Indspire embraces and supports whole-heartedly as we know we are all collectively contributors to germinating the growth of tomorrow's future.

The voices shared in this report reinforce an Indigenous epistemological perspective, one of acknowledgement and reciprocity. Many survey participants were appreciative of Indspire's financial support and over three quarters of them indicated they were "giving back" by serving Indigenous populations through their employment.

This study is a building block for future research, creating questions for further investigation, such as understanding why there is a higher proportion of one gender attending post-secondary studies, and how Indigenous students select the post-secondary disciplines they are studying – is it related to cultural values and the communal/social well-being of one another that leads Indigenous students to select the dominant social sciences, education, and health fields, or/and what is a realistic Indigenous representation in Canada's labour market? How does the availability of post-secondary funding impact Indigenous student post-secondary enrolment?

The results of this report are significant, as Indspire has a unique vantage point enabling it to track national Indigenous post-secondary graduation rates, which are not otherwise readily available.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

The “Land” Scape

Indigenous peoples in Canada understand the connectedness and learning involved in building healthy communities. Despite significant cultural and historical differences, Canada’s First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people share a vision centred in lifelong learning. This holistic epistemology includes respecting all entities of life, listening and caring for one another, and reciprocity or giving back. This worldview remains strong amongst Indigenous peoples today, despite the impact of residential schools that were established to assimilate the Indigenous population.

While residential schools are now closed, they have left behind a plethora of educational, cultural, societal, and health concerns. The melding of Indigenous and Western knowledge has transformed the face of Indigenous communities. Specifically, Indigenous education and traditional teachings have been clouded with Western education worldviews, and Indigenous learners have been immersed and acculturated into an education philosophy that sometimes results in Indigenous ways of knowing becoming lost or under-represented. For instance, Western education will often examine stepping stones for higher learning and typically centres on individual educational attainment. Indigenous knowing can include step learning but will balance this with circular learning focused on community well-being, mutual reciprocity, and universal interdependence, as well as independence.

Many Indigenous communities abided by provincial curriculum standards until recently, when an increasing number of Indigenous organizations and communities started to collaborate and develop relationships that reflected a better understanding and awareness of Indigenous students’ needs, philosophies, and strengths. As a result of the infusion of Indigenous knowledge and support in elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education levels, students are engaging as learners to gain knowledge and skills to be educated and employable, while learning Indigenous culture, language, and traditions. In the past 25 years, despite being marginalized in post-secondary educational institutions, Indigenous peoples’ post-secondary enrolment, graduation, and employment have increased (Statistics Canada 2012; Mendelson, 2006; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996).

Until now, measuring Indigenous post-secondary graduation rates has only been attempted by Canada’s federal government; however, there are limitations to the overall number of Indigenous students and graduates represented in that research.¹ According to Statistics Canada’s 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), 48.4% of 25-64 year old Indigenous people had a post-secondary education (PSE) credential, of which 9.8% are university degrees. The NHS goes on to state that over 300,000 Indigenous people in this age category do not have a PSE credential. In comparison, 64.7% of non-Indigenous Canadians had a PSE credential, with 26.5% having a university degree (TD Economics, 2013).

There are systemic barriers for Indigenous peoples to access and obtain PSE credentials. There have been improvements as a result of key investments, including policy changes (i.e. abolition of residential schools, creation of Indigenous student services, increasing bursaries and scholarships, etc.), and a shift away from subjugated beings to strong advocates who share Indigenous ways of knowing. Although the

¹ Indigenous communities are under-represented and under-enumerated in the National Household Survey (NHS) 2011 data; however, this is the only exhaustive demographic data source available on Indigenous populations. The data provided in the NHS is generally accepted and widely used by many Indigenous organizations, as well, federal, provincial and municipal governments.

number of Indigenous students achieving PSE credentials has increased over the last ten years, Indspire acknowledges that challenges remain for many, and the organization has instituted support for kindergarten to post-secondary levels of learning.

Recently, Indspire instituted kindergarten to post-secondary resources and programs to increase the number of Indigenous post-secondary graduates. Some of these programs include the following: *Soaring: Indigenous Youth Career Conferences*, experiential youth career conferences that engage high school students with hands-on learning in professions such as trades, nursing, and the arts; *Peer Support*, an educator-to-educator mentorship and coaching program supported by Indigenous classroom resources, learning techniques, and best practices for elementary and secondary students; and *Rivers to Success*, a mentorship program that pairs students near the end of their post-secondary education with professionals in a variety of fields. Through *Nurturing Capacity*, Indspire supports communities to improve educational outcomes through the documentation and evaluation of their successful practices. *Realizing Projects* are community-based pilot projects that enhance K-12 educational outcomes through innovative strategies. Indspire provides support to fund, facilitate, and oversee these community-led projects over a five-year period.

With its extensive programs, strategic partnerships, and collaborations with Indigenous communities, post-secondary institutions and corporations, Indspire is championing a transformation of Indigenous education in Canada.

Research Topic

Over 29 years, Indspire has provided almost \$65 million in financial assistance through nearly 20,000 bursaries and scholarships awarded to Indigenous students (Indspire 2014 Annual Report). In 2009, Indspire began surveying its BBF recipients annually (see Monitoring and Tracking Evaluation on page 10) to gauge key indicators of success, such as family, cultural, financial, and educational supports that lead to graduation and employment attainment.

The objective of the research discussed in this report was to gain further information regarding Indspire's BBF recipients and to establish baseline data as follows:

- graduation rates of BBF recipients;
- employment rates of BBF graduates; and
- reciprocity of BBF graduates (i.e. if they are employed, do they serve Indigenous populations through their work).

Benefits of the Research

The baseline data generated from this research will support Indspire's business plan for securing financial support from government and corporations for the BBF program. The responses, analyses, and recommendations provide direction for Indspire in its work to boost post-secondary academic achievement and access to relevant, meaningful employment.

For the community at large, this research may offer insights into supports and programs important to Indigenous post-secondary success. The findings shared in this report not only provide possible affirmation of programs and services, but also contribute to Indigenous epistemological knowledge and the sustainability of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

PART 2: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

Summary

Indspire developed a custom, skip logic online survey including both structured questions, to obtain quantifiable information, and open-ended questions, to capture qualitative responses. The survey began by asking BBF recipients if they had graduated or not. Students who replied “yes” were asked eleven follow-up questions (see Appendix A) regarding their education (year they graduated, field of study), employment (income, employment related to field of education), and service to Indigenous populations. Students who replied that they were still in school or did not graduate were asked a subsequent question about their field of study.

The survey was administered to students who received funding from Indspire between 2000-2001 and 2012-2013 through all BBF categories: Post-Secondary Education (PSE); Health; Oil, Gas, Trades & Technology (OGTT); Fine Arts; Foundation for the Advancement of Aboriginal Youth (FAAY) – PSE and High School; and Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres.

Data Collection

The survey originally targeted all BBF recipients who indicated on their application that they were in their last year of study. Each student who selected “last year of study” on their application was queried, and a unique secure login was developed to enable data capture.

After compiling the initial list, it was discovered that some recipient names appeared more than once through the 13-year span. By manipulating the database, unique records were created for those students who received more than one financial award during their post-secondary academic career. There were 7,684 such unique records; the survey was sent by email to these individuals.

The survey was first tested with a small sample of staff who directly serve Indigenous students. Based on feedback, minor changes were made to the questions and format.

The survey took place between July and September 2014. Indspire sent emails to award recipients to inform them of the research study and to invite them to participate in the online survey. As an incentive to participate, the names of students who completed either the online or telephone survey were entered into a draw for \$1,000. Reminder emails were subsequently sent to students who did not answer the initial email.

Indspire initially had a particular interest in students who studied in the health field; however, it was decided that a comprehensive study of all BBF recipients would be invaluable. Telephone outreach was completed by staff during the final week of data collection to increase the number of respondents with careers in health. The telephone survey netted few responses, as many telephone numbers were out of service or incorrect.

Over the three-month data collection period, 1,268 recipients completed the survey, reflecting a 17% participation rate, which is substantial. The participation rate would have been higher if Indspire had extended the data collection period; however, due to resource constraints, this was not possible.

Confidentiality

In order to maintain participant confidentiality, Indspire queried only BBF student constituent numbers so that the researchers would not be privy to student names. In reports and presentations of this study, excerpts from the research may be discussed, but names will not be attributed to any specific data or quotes. Thus, the results represent students' voices and opinions without compromising confidentiality.

Data collected during this study will be kept for five years and stored within Indspire's database. The specific file within the data is electronically locked and only accessible to the researchers.

Ethical Considerations

Indspire conducted the research adhering to the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2). The TCPS 2 is set out by the Government of Canada and informs ethical research practices. This policy outlines ethical scope and approaches, privacy and confidentiality, research involving Indigenous peoples, qualitative data, and many other important aspects of a research study. Although this research adhered to TCPS 2, it also adhered to the important Indigenous values of respect, trust, and reciprocity.

Indspire respected the students' voices and incorporated appropriate measures to assure the anonymity of participating students and their freedom of speech. With its long-standing, meaningful engagement with students and by following the above-noted ethical research practices, Indspire was able to establish trust with the research participants.

Michael Patton (2002) offers a checklist of general ethical issues to consider when conducting such research, such as reciprocity, assessment of risk, confidentiality, informed consent, and data access and ownership (also see Creswell, 2012, p.229). Indspire incorporated the following when conducting the study:

- to protect anonymity, students were assigned constituent numbers as opposed to being named;
- an introductory email was sent to students informing them of the purpose of the study and requesting their participation in this voluntary survey; and
- data results were locked within the database and only accessible by two staff members.

Also, all students provided consent to future contact and research in the BBF application.

Other Sources of Data

Prior to this survey, Indspire conducted a preliminary survey acquiring similar data (e.g. graduate and employment information) for the purpose of engaging with former funding recipients through development activities. Through this effort, Indspire collected 145 responses to a survey that asked two questions: i) Did you finish your program; if so, in what year? and ii) Are you employed in your selected field? A summary of this data is included in the report as supporting information only and is included in Appendix B. Results from the preliminary survey provide valuable information as a precursor to the larger graduation and employment study, and provide validity to the current report. The preliminary survey was administered by telephone, and the script is provided in Appendix C.

Data from Indspire's annual Monitoring and Tracking Evaluation (M&T) was included in the study. This is an online survey emailed to all BBF recipients within the year they receive funding from Indspire. The

M&T is a 75-question survey designed to determine student demographics, including field of study, academic location, academic strengths, barriers to completing post-secondary education, and employment, and to obtain feedback on Indspire's administration and communications. The annual average response rate to the M&T was between 15-20% for many years, when an incentive was provided in the form of a draw amongst respondents for a laptop. In 2014, Indspire reviewed the previous M&T feedback and found "funding" was cited as the most significant barrier for a majority of survey respondents. With this new knowledge, the incentive was changed to the chance to win a \$1,000 cash prize, and the response rate grew to 44%.

Another complementary source of data included in the study was Indspire's annual statistics on the BBF program. The data ranged from a student's education program (program name, grade point average, year of study, level of study, final year of study), community affiliation, Indigenous affiliation, financial need, and demographics. The data provided an annual comparative picture and were useful to this study to illustrate the impact Indspire has had in encouraging Indigenous students to apply to the BBF program. For instance, in 2013-2014, 60% of applicants to the BBF program were new and 40% were past recipients.

Analysis

The study generated both quantitative data and qualitative responses. Both methodological responses were coded for themes and documented in their themes. The quantitative data was organized by question. J. W. Creswell (2012) describes that in conducting quantitative descriptive analysis, in particular categorical variables, the researcher must find the mode or category represented more than any other category (p.182). When we have categorical information, the mode reports meaningful information (Creswell, p.182). This format helped organize the vast amount of data into manageable segments and gather the trends in the data to a single variable or question.

The qualitative responses were included within the quantitative sections to provide a meaningful and complementary picture. Student comments were italicized and highlighted in each section. Concluding the analysis of results are the limitations of the research. The limitations or weaknesses of this study may have affected the results. Creswell (2012, p.197) states limitations are present in all research, and useful to other potential researchers, who may choose to conduct a similar or replication study. The limitations of this research provide recommendations for future studies and indicate to what extent the findings can or cannot be generalized to other people and situations.

Sample Size

Sample size is an important component of any empirical study in which the goal is to make inferences about a population from a sample (Creswell, 2005). The sample size used in a study is determined based on the expense of data collection and the need to have sufficient statistical power (Creswell (2005); Kotrlík, J. W. and Higgins, C. (2001)).

The sample size in this study included a particular group of individuals: students in their final year of study. Qualitative purposeful sampling was employed. Creswell (2005, p.205) writes that in purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon. The students involved in this study were selected on the basis that they had indicated on their BBF application that they were in their "final year of study". Although Indspire employed

purposeful sampling and anticipated that each individual would select “final year of study”, the results netted three outcomes: graduated, still in school, and did not complete school.

The first question sorted those students who had graduated and those who had not. Since Indspire is an awards-granting charity, there is a chance bias could be introduced. Bias could include any of the following: a) recipients may have felt obliged to answer the survey; or b) they may not have participated in the survey because they did not graduate. The graduation rates finding along with Indspire’s secondary data enhance the reliability of the research.

Limitations

With any research there are limitations. This study presented four limitations: historical student data, interpretation of the questions, survey participation, and examination of responses of all sampled populations.

A methodological limitation was the historical student data that was determined to be unusable (e.g. older records were not as up-to-date and did not contain email addresses or current phone numbers); therefore, most survey respondents were from the most recent five years.

Another limitation may be the framing of the questions. Although the survey was pre-tested, the representative sample for the study was comprised of Indigenous students from across Canada; therefore, due to the geographic, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the sample, the questions could have been open to multiple interpretations.

A third possible limitation was that students who did not graduate may not have wanted to participate in the survey, fearing possible repercussions from Indspire despite assurances that survey responses would remain confidential.

A further limitation to the research was that Indspire did not examine the responses of students who did not graduate nor those of students who indicated they were still in school. Indspire can cross-reference and track constituent numbers to determine if students in either of these two groups eventually graduate.

Indspire is fully aware that Indigenous peoples across Canada face multi-faceted and complex challenges. It would be interesting to explore whether Indigenous students take more time to complete post-secondary studies than non-Indigenous students and if so, why. This may offer insight into why there were such high numbers of students indicating they were still in school.

The four limitations emerging from the research provide sound and probable opportunities for future research. Again, the goal of this particular study was to develop baseline data that explore the graduation and employment rates of BBF recipients.

PART 3: RESULTS OF THE STUDY: BBF RECIPIENT STUDENT VOICES

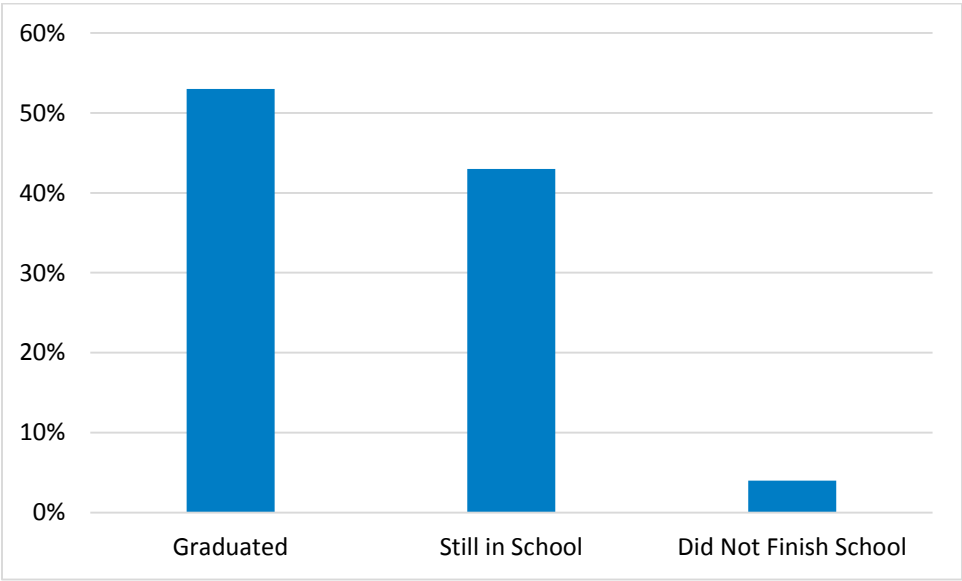
The quantitative and qualitative responses of the 1,268 survey participants are summarized below, including overall responses, graduation rates per province, highest level of education, employment rates, income, and serving Indigenous populations. Chart 1 includes all respondents; all subsequent data include only those who indicated they graduated or did not graduate, i.e. those still in school were not included.

Overall Data Responses

Chart 1 details the outcomes of survey respondents. There were three possible answers from which to choose: a) graduated, b) still in school, and c) did not graduate. The number of respondents who indicated they graduated was 53%, with 43% of students still in school, and 4% who did not graduate. The graduation statistic is lower than the national average; in 2012, almost two-thirds (65%) of Canadians aged 25-64 had completed post-secondary education (Statistics Canada, 2014). Canada has a high level of post-secondary attainment compared to most other OECD countries.

Although the number of graduates is somewhat lower than the national average, the fact that 43% of students remain in school should not go unnoticed. Further research is needed to determine whether or not Indigenous students need additional time to complete their schooling, or if they have changed programs or proceeded to a higher level of education.

Chart 1: Overall Graduation Rates



While First Nation and Inuit students receive federal funding to attend post-secondary school, this funding does not meet the needs of many students. The fact that Indigenous students are applying to Indspire and for other financial awards illustrates that the current funding structure does not meet the needs of some students.

Examining the high number of recipients who indicated that they are still in school along with the statistic that 60% of students reapply to Indspire each year for funding (from 2013-2014BBF results), indicates that Indigenous students are aspiring to finish post-secondary studies.

Graduation Rates by Province

Table 1 illustrates the provincial and territorial breakdown of survey respondents who graduated and those who did not graduate. Impressively, the average graduation rate of students across Canada who received BBF support was 93%. Interestingly, the averages are quite similar across provinces.

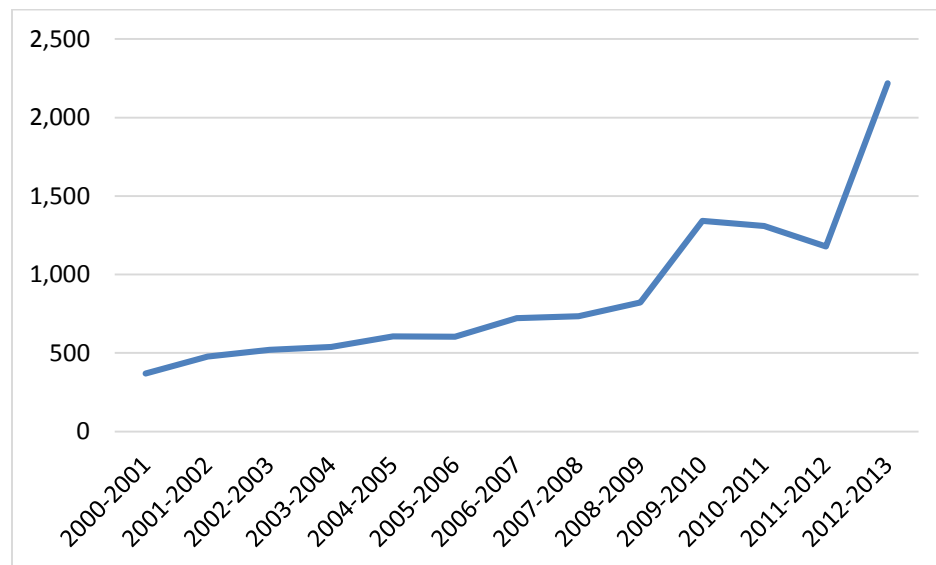
PEI and the Yukon Territory had the highest percentage of graduating students at 100% and Nunavut had the lowest at 80%. It is important to note that there are not many post-secondary institutions in Prince Edward Island nor the Yukon. Students in those regions must either select from the limited programming offered at home or move to other regions, thus leaving their home community, family, and culture. Not only do those students who choose to move face the culture shock of post-secondary education, but for some students it may be the first time they have left their home or community.

Table 1: Provincial and Territorial Graduation Rates By Number & Percentage

Province/ Territory	Graduated (Number)	Graduated (Percent)	Did Not Graduate (Number)	Did Not Graduate (Percent)	Total (Number)
Alberta	129	94%	8	6%	137
British Columbia	105	95%	6	5%	111
Manitoba	62	93%	5	7%	67
New Brunswick	14	93%	1	7%	15
Newfoundland	23	92%	2	8%	25
Nova Scotia	17	89%	2	11%	19
Northwest Territory	6	86%	1	14%	7
Nunavut	4	80%	1	20%	5
Ontario	222	94%	13	6%	235
Prince Edward Island	1	100%	0	0%	1
Quebec	22	85%	4	15%	26
Saskatchewan	64	91%	6	9%	70
Yukon Territory	5	100%	0	0%	5
Total across Canada	674	93%	49	7%	723

Indspire's national graduation average of 93% is evidence that Indigenous students who receive financial support to attend post-secondary institutions are graduating. Indspire has seen growth in the number of students applying to the BBF program, and Chart 2 illustrates the number of bursaries and scholarships distributed to students between 2000-2001 and 2012-2013 in various programs, including health, science, technology, business, and trades, as well as some high school awards.

Chart 2: *Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries and Scholarship Awards* – Number of Awards Distributed 2000-2001 to 2012-2013



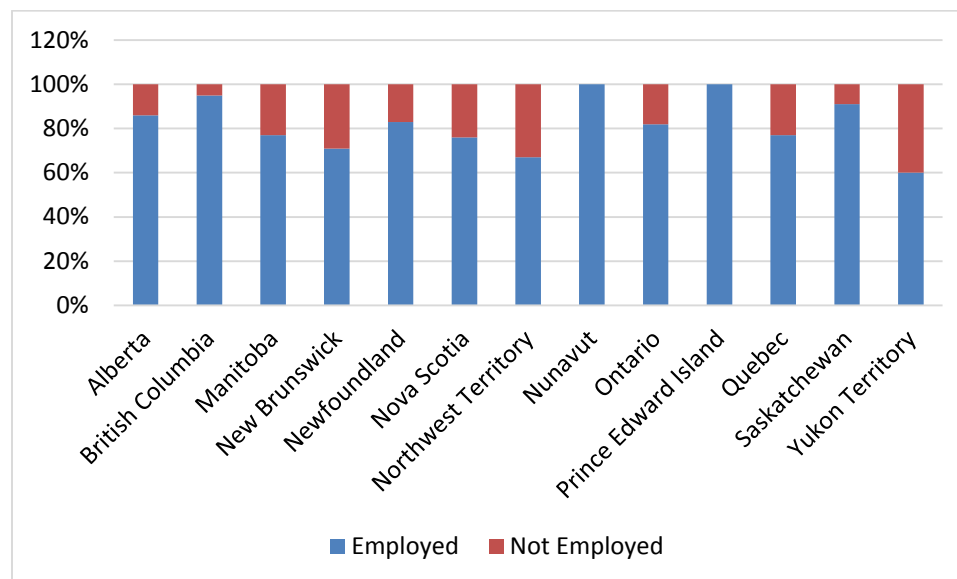
Employment Rates

The survey data indicates that students are finding employment once they graduate. Students who indicated they graduated were asked if they found employment, and if they found employment was it in their field of study. The results indicate there is a high co-relation between employment and field of study.

Although the survey did not ask students what was their field of study, Indspire's 2013-2014 Annual Report shows that many Indigenous students pursue social sciences, including sociology and psychology, and education. This observation directly supports Indigenous epistemology and the reciprocating norm. In addition, many people who have witnessed, experienced, or are impacted by assimilative approaches find healing in understanding the underpinnings of such approaches and want to extend outreach to others who may be struggling. Likewise, the high number of students enrolled in the education field of study want to bring forward and share the realities and truths of Indigenous peoples.

Chart 3 outlines the percentages of students employed in their field of study by province and territory. Appendix E provides a list of their occupations.

Chart 3: Employment Rates in Field of Study by Province and Territory



Some students indicated that the practicum or residency requirements of their program assisted with acquiring employment. The Newfoundland and New Brunswick employment rates were slightly below the average. This may indicate that the job vacancies in the fields in which Indigenous students are studying may be low in those two provinces. Further research is required in order to accurately determine why these students were unable to secure employment in their field of study.

According to the 2011 National Household Survey, 48.4% of 25-64 year old Indigenous people had a PSE credential, of which 9.8% were university degrees. Over 300,000 Indigenous people in this age category did not have a PSE credential. In comparison, 64.7% of Canadians had a PSE credential, with 26.5% having a university degree. PSE credentials are a good indicator of employment rates: those who have a degree are twice as likely to be fully employed (TD Economics, 2013). While Canada lacks labour market information to predict with certainty where future job demands lie, by sector and region, we do know that the Canadian labour force is aging, and the growing knowledge-based economy will need workers.

Canada's Indigenous population is growing faster than the general population, increasing by 20.1% from 2006 to 2011. Of the three Indigenous groups (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis), First Nations had the largest population growth, with an increase of 22.9% between 2006 and 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2011). The spring 2013 Aboriginal Labour Market Bulletin called for "further investments in education and skills development". There are structural barriers to the predominantly young Indigenous population accessing and completing PSE with credentials. There have been improvements, which have resulted from key investments, including policy changes (the federal government's Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training Strategy, abolition of residential schools, etc.).

Highest Level of Education Completed

The level of education that most of the respondents indicated they had completed was an undergraduate degree at 50%, followed by a graduate degree (22%), college diploma (15%), professional designation such as chartered accountants or doctors (8%), high school diploma (3%)², and institutional certificate, such as millwrights or welders (2%).

In comparison, according to Statistics Canada, the proportion of Canadians who had a university degree (Bachelors to PhD) was 28%. Those attaining a post-secondary education credential at the college, trade, vocational, or university certificate below Bachelor's level accounted for 37% of Canadians aged 25-64.

Table 2 illustrates the highest level of education achieved by respondents by province and territory. For survey respondents in all provinces and territories except for Prince Edward Island, undergraduate degree was the highest level of education completed.

Table 2: Highest Level of Education Completed by Province and Territory

Province/ Territory	High School	Institutional Certificate	College Diploma	Undergraduate Degree	Graduate Degree	Professional Designation
Alberta	2%	4%	19%	47%	19%	10%
British Columbia	0%	2%	10%	54%	23%	11%
Manitoba	5%	3%	18%	52%	13%	10%
New Brunswick	29%	14%	0%	36%	21%	0%
Newfoundland	4%	0%	17%	52%	17%	9%
Nova Scotia	0%	0%	6%	59%	6%	29%
Northwest Territory	0%	0%	17%	66%	17%	0%
Nunavut	0%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%
Ontario	1%	1%	24%	43%	18%	12%
Prince Edward Island	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Quebec	0%	0%	18%	55%	14%	14%
Saskatchewan	3%	3%	23%	53%	14%	3%
Yukon Territory	0%	0%	40%	60%	0%	0%
Total	3%	2%	15%	50%	22%	8%

Based on survey results, 50% of Indspire's BBF recipients are pursuing undergraduate degrees, which indicates that students are not only keen on pursuing higher education and higher paying jobs, but they are making long-term plans to attain professions that warrant higher education. With this finding alone, Canada may see a shift not only in the educational landscape but also in the labour market. Aligning this

² The 3% of respondents who answered that high school was their highest level of education may be explained by the fact that they may have been recipients of Indspire's high school completion incentive, i.e. they were in their final year of high school.

statistic with Indspire's 2013-2014 Annual Report, 50% of Indspire's financial awards went to students studying undergraduate degrees.

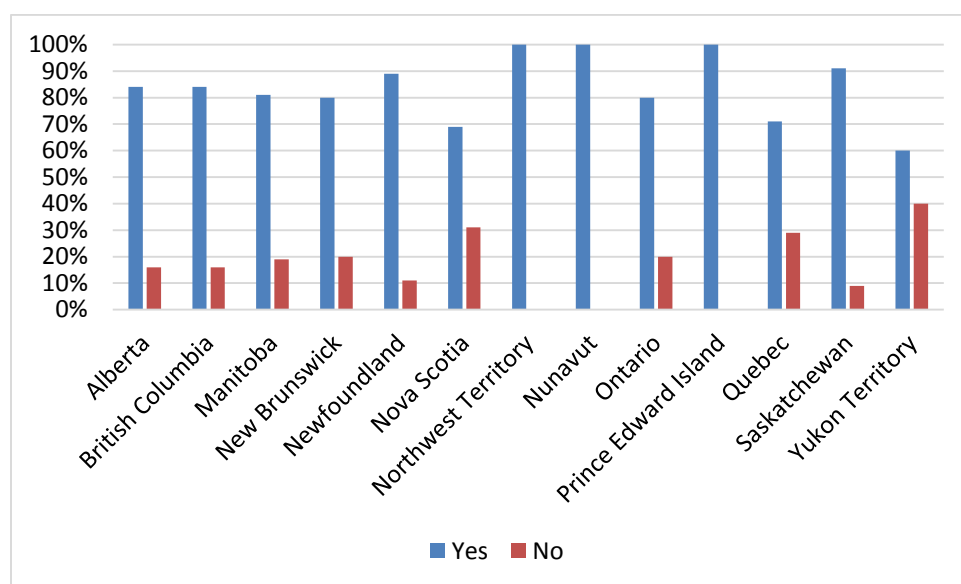
Serving Indigenous Populations

Survey participants were asked if they engage with the Indigenous population in their post-graduation employment. Over three quarters of participants (84%) indicated that they serve the Indigenous population. Chart 4 illustrates the percentage of graduates by province and territory who serve Indigenous populations through their work. Of the students surveyed via phone, many shared that they volunteer or provide fly-in community outreach on their days off. The reciprocity of these Indigenous students to their communities is not surprising, as many of them enrolled in programs that focus on national Indigenous issues, such as diabetes (healthcare), Indigenous curriculum (education), and societal issues (social sciences).

Students indicated that they had a variety of motives for engaging with the Indigenous community. Some were driven to assist their fellow Indigenous people by addressing systemic barriers, such as racism and discrimination, in mainstream institutions. Others seem to have elected to pursue careers to which they are exposed the most, for example education.

Chart 4 indicates that many respondents were employed in service organizations or agencies that support Indigenous populations. Students who did not serve Indigenous populations (i.e. "no" in the chart) either selected "did not directly work with Indigenous people" or it is possible that they may not be in front-line roles.

Chart 4: Serving Indigenous Populations



Qualitative Data

Throughout the online survey there were opportunities to comment and elaborate on why graduates selected certain answers. The majority of students who answered "how has this bursary assisted you"

explained how the bursary assisted them through school and, inspiring, most of them extended extra appreciation and gratitude in their comments.

Many survey participants indicated through qualitative responses that “financial stress” was alleviated through the funding they received from Indspire. Students commented that the financial award assisted with costs associated with tuition, other educational expenses, living expenses, helping family, and childcare. The following are some of their responses:

“I was awarded a \$3,000 bursary in 2010 from Indspire. This award assisted in me achieving my education goal by securing my housing for two months. I used these funds to pay my rent for my two children and myself. This allowed me to confidently focus on my schooling.”

“Being a single mother of two children in such a demanding, time-consuming program, it was extremely difficult to keep up financially. All of the study and class hours required for the nursing program is tremendous; had I gotten a job to help fund my schooling, it would have been useless, as I wouldn't actually take home any extra income, as whatever made would go into paying a babysitter for the extra non-day-care work hours and I would literally never see my children, which is unacceptable to me. Going to school in the city is very expensive, you can have all the motivation in the world to go to school, but if you cannot handle all of the expenses it hardly seems worth it. The support I received from NAAF [rebranded Indspire] allowed me achieve my academic goals of becoming an RN [Registered Nurse] while allowing me to spend as much time with my children as possible. I hope to continue and further my education in the future and am forever grateful for NAAF for helping me achieve a great stepping stone into my career.”

“The bursary I received helped with the financial burden of being a mature student [in] my 3 years at Dawson College with quite a bit student debt collected over the six and a half years of previous university. Relieving some of the stress of student debt allowed me to focus on my studies and clinical. That attentiveness aided in the successful completion of both my diploma as a Medical Imaging Technologist and certification exam. I am very grateful.”

“Indspire awarded me a bursary that assisted in daily living and transportation so that I may continue my studies. Without this bursary it is very possible that I would not have been able to complete my training as we were barely scraping by with the funds that we had.”

“It helped relieve financial stress; I travelled an hour to school five days a week.”

“Helped pay for tuition, rent, groceries, etc. so I did not need to work part-time during the school year and allowed me to focus on my education.”

“The funding I received from Indspire was enough to cover the cost of my books each year. Thanks so much for your support.”

“My program prohibited working while in it due to its intense nature. Without the NAAF I wouldn't have been able to focus or even attend at all. It was greatly needed.”

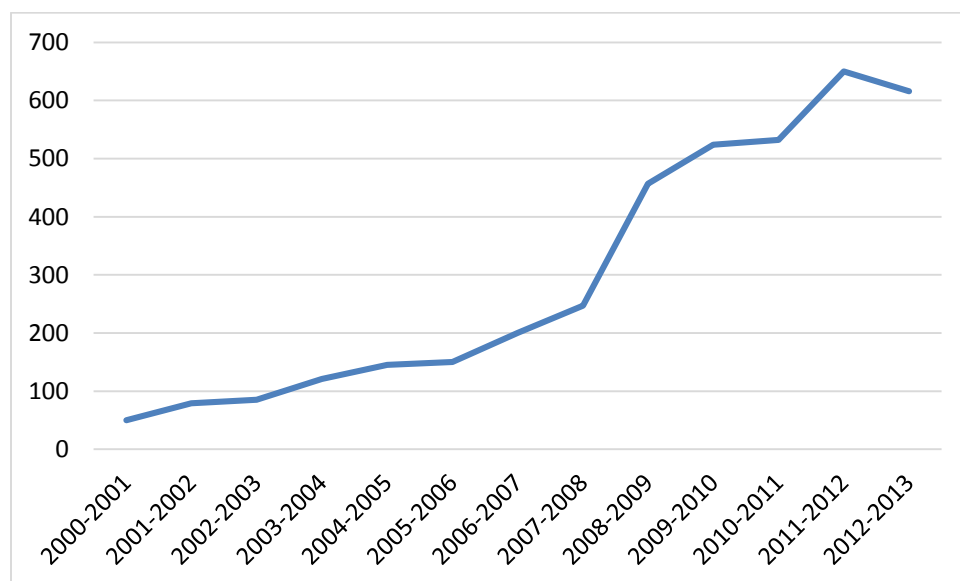
One graduate articulated beautifully the importance of Indspire's Building Brighter Futures program:

"Indspire gave me the resources that I did not have coming from a single parent family. They sponsored me on two different educational years throughout my studies, allowing some of the financial stress to ease and focus myself on my studies. In today's economy financial issues are the common barrier from allowing a student to reach their full potential, as we all know post-secondary education is not cheap. Indspire is such a wonderful organization for all Aboriginal students, allowing them to overcome some financial barriers. I am continuing my education this coming fall and will be receiving my certified advanced diploma in Business Administration - Marketing. After I have successfully completed my college level of education I do not wish to stop there. One of my life goals is to obtain my Masters degree in Business Administration, specifically in Marketing. From here I will work hard to score my goal career job as a Marketing Manager, hopefully in the sporting and entertainment industry. Having said that, and after I am earning my comfortable salary that I wish to earn, I would love to make donations back into Indspire as a sign of appreciation and gratitude towards this amazing organization so that my fellow Aboriginal students, and future generations can also overcome some of the financial barriers that post-secondary education puts in our way. Overall Indspire has giving me ample resources to reach my full potential and I continue to show them just that, and will not let the organization or my community down. I will not settle for mediocre."

Health Careers

The number of students applying to Indspire who are studying in the health fields has increased over the years, as illustrated in Chart 5. Since 2000-2001, Indspire has had dedicated funding for bursaries for students pursuing health careers.

Chart 5: Health Careers Funding Recipients between 2000-2001 and 2012-2013



Highest Level of Education Completed

Of the 249 students who graduated from a health-related field, the majority (49%) indicated that the highest level of education achieved was an undergraduate degree, followed by college diploma (17%), professional designation (16%), graduate degrees (14%), and institutional certificates (1%).

Table 3: Highest Level of Education Completed (Health Careers)

	Number of graduates	Percentage of graduates
Institutional certificate	7	3%
College diploma	42	17%
Undergraduate degree	121	49%
Graduate degree	36	14%
Professional designation programs	43	17%
Totals	249	100%

Employment Rates of Graduated Students

Of the 249 students who graduated from a health-related field, 220 (88%) were employed and 29 (12%) were unemployed.

Employment Similar to Educational Training

A majority of graduates in a health-related field indicated their education was beneficial and relevant for their employment.

Table 4: Educational Training Relevant to Current Employment (Health Careers)

	Number of graduates	Percentage of graduates
Education was relevant for current employment	204	93%
Education was not relevant for current employment	16	7%
Total	220	100%

Education Prepared Student for Current Employment

93% of the graduates in a health-related field indicated their education prepared them for their current employment.

Table 5: Educational Training Prepared Students for Current Employment (Health Careers)

	Number of graduates	Percentage of graduates
Education prepared student for current employment	205	93%
Education did not prepare student for current employment	15	7%
Total	220	100%

Serving Indigenous Populations

Of the graduates who studied in a health-related field, the majority (80%) indicated they serve Indigenous populations in their current employment.

Table 6: Serving Indigenous Populations (Health Careers)

	Number of graduates	Percentage of graduates
Serving Indigenous populations	175	80%
Not serving Indigenous populations	45	20%
Total	220	100%

PART 4: FUTURE RESEARCH

As part of any research study, future research objectives emerge. The following are proposed topics emerging from this study that could be examined in the future.

To gain further knowledge on graduation rates, it would be worthwhile to take a random sample from the previously surveyed still-in-school population and ascertain if they subsequently graduated. This would help to develop a comprehensive picture of Indigenous post-secondary graduation rates.

It would be prudent to undertake a study to determine why students surveyed in the current report did not graduate. Using Indspire's secondary data (Indspire annual reports), a comparative analysis could be completed to determine if the reasons students do not graduate are similar to the reasons they withdraw their BBF application.

Examining the stories of the students who did not graduate would serve as valuable input into Indspire's strategic priorities. Such data could enhance Indspire's *Rivers to Success: Mentoring Indigenous Youth* program, which matches students with professionals to assist with career placement, employment skills, and easing the transition into the workforce. Indspire may want to expand this to include student-to-student mentors for post-secondary students who are not graduating.

It would be useful to examine the number of years Indigenous students need to complete post-secondary programs and, of those students who indicated they were still in school, if they were pursuing further learning (e.g. graduate studies). Also, what role does funding play; what percentage of students who drop out of school do not receive full funding?

The study provided an overview of full-time Indigenous students enrolled in post-secondary education programs; however, it is equally important to determine how many Indigenous students are studying part-time (N.B. Indspire does not fund part-time studies currently but is in the midst of revising this policy for 2015-2016).

PART 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the first report published by Indspire that provides a comprehensive picture of the graduation and employment rates of its BBF recipients. Indspire is pleased to report that the vast majority of Indigenous students it supports are graduating from various post-secondary institutional programs and securing employment, in particular employment serving Indigenous populations.

This study has set the stage for future research on Indigenous graduation rates. Indspire hopes to examine in more detail why some students did not graduate, what Indspire can do to increase graduation to 100% of BBF recipients, and how Indspire can provide additional supports to post-secondary students. A longitudinal research study could examine a sample of Indigenous elementary students and their families across Canada in order to gather and highlight the full context of Indigenous education among diverse Indigenous learners.

The common message threaded throughout this research and others is that financial support is critical to Indigenous educational success. Government, corporate, and Indigenous stakeholders understand that Canada's future economic prosperity depends on the participation of Indigenous peoples. The fact that the Indigenous population is the youngest and fastest growing population in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011) means that this population has the greatest opportunity to contribute to the GDP.

Indspire has and will continue to establish solid partnerships with academic affiliates, such as the Association of Universities and Colleges Canada (AUCC), to understand and improve the academic environment for Indigenous students attending post-secondary institutions. A list of all AUCC member institutions can be found on the Association's website at www.aucc.ca/canadian-universities/our-universities. A list highlighting the number of post-secondary institutions in Canada is available in Appendix D.

This study highlights the fact that further work remains to be done before higher post-secondary graduation rates for Indigenous students can be achieved. Indspire will continue to build relationships with Indigenous communities, government, post-secondary education institutions, and corporate partners to positively impact Indigenous post-secondary graduation and employment rates in Canada.

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Appendix A: Graduation Survey

- Education:**
1. Did you graduate? Yes/No/Still in School
If you did not graduate please go to question 6
If you are still in school go to question 10
 2. Did Indspire funding support your educational goals? Yes/No
Please explain:
 3. In which year did you graduate?
 4. What is your highest level of educational attainment?
High school
Institutional Certificate
College Diploma
University Undergraduate Degree
University Graduate Degree including Doctorate
Professional Designation
 5. What was your program of study?
 6. If you did not graduate, please select the reason(s) why not (check all that apply):
Still in school
Changed to a new field of study
Coursework
School expectations
Time management
Family and school life balance
Childcare issues
Spousal issues
Financial concerns
Health concerns
No barriers
- Employment**
7. Are you employed? Yes / No
 8. If you are employed, are you (check all that apply)
Full-time
Part-time
Seasonal
Contract/Temporary
Self-employed
 9. What is your job title?

10. What was your take home pay last year?

- Less than \$9,999
- \$10,000 to \$19,999
- \$20,000 to \$29,999
- \$30,000 to \$39,999
- \$40,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$59,999
- \$60,000 to \$69,999
- \$70,000 to \$79,999
- \$80,000 to \$89,999
- \$90,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 or more

11. Are you employed in a field similar to your education/training? Yes/ No

12. Did your education/training prepare you for your current job/occupation? Yes/No
Please explain:

13. Are you working in a role that supports the Indigenous population? Yes/ No

14. If you are not employed, are you thinking about returning to school? Yes/No
Please explain:

15. If you are no longer in school, are you thinking of returning? Yes/No
Please explain:

16. If you are still in school are you studying in your original Field?
If yes go to education question 4
If no go to question 11

17. What field are you studying?

Appendix B: Alumni Outreach 2013

Did you complete the program?

Graduate	
Yes	84%
No	16%
	100%

Level of Study

Level of Study	
Certificate	2%
Diploma	2%
Undergraduate	77%
Graduate	18%
Professional Designation	1%
	100%

Are you currently employed in your selected field?

Employed	
Yes	80%
No	20%
	100%

Appendix C: Telephone Survey Script

Good Afternoon_____, it's [STAFF NAME] calling from Indspire, formerly the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation. Do you have a moment (is now a good time)?

We are currently in the process of updating all of the records of our past scholarship & bursary recipients. This will allow Indspire to have a better understanding of the effectiveness of our programs and enables us to support even more students.

May I verify your current address? Phone? Email?

Did you complete the program? What year?

Are you currently employed in your selected field? This is the field you studied?

Did you have to relocate to find a position in your chosen field?

We would like to keep you up to date of our various activities and events, we have a quarterly newsletter that gets distributed online to all of our stakeholders, would you be interested in receiving it?

((I'm so glad to hear that Indspire played a significant role in your success, let me know if you would be interested in receiving more information regarding our various Donor and Alumni programs))

Thank you very much for your time today, _____. It was a pleasure speaking with you. All the best.

Appendix D: Number of Post-Secondary Institutions in Canada

Provinces	# of Universities	# of Colleges	Total
British Columbia	11	22	33
Alberta	8	17	25
Saskatchewan	6	18	24
Manitoba	6	8	14
Ontario	32	27	59
Quebec	19	49	68
New Brunswick	4	3	7
Prince Edward Island	1	2	3
Nova Scotia	9	5	14
Newfoundland	1	1	2
Nunavut	0	1	1
Northwest Territories	0	1	1
Yukon	0	0	0
Total across Canada	97	154	251

Appendix E: List of Occupations

Aboriginal Child - Youth Social Worker	Business Advisor
Aboriginal Child Protection Worker	Business Analyst
Aboriginal Community Liaison	Business Development Specialist
Aboriginal Consultation and Local Content Specialist	Camp Counsellor
Aboriginal Economic Development Manager	Canada Research Chair Aboriginal Health and Wellness
Aboriginal Healthy Living Program Coordinator	Canadian Mental Health
Aboriginal Interpretive Intern	Care Aide
Aboriginal Recruitment - Community Liaison	Case Manager
Aboriginal Student Advisor-Student Development	Cashier
Aboriginal Student Services Coordinator	Casual Nurse Practitioner
Aboriginal Support Teacher	Casual Relief
Academic Director, Masters of Education	Casual: Health Care Aid
Innovative Cohort, Indigenous Peoples Education	Caterer
Accounting Clerk	Chemical Implementation Specialist
Accounts Receivable Technician	Chief Executive Officer
Actor, Props Assistant	Child and Youth Worker
Addictions Counsellor	Child Protection Social Worker
Administration Support Worker	Child Therapist
Administration Technician	Chiropractic Doctor
Administrative Assistant	Church Advocate
Advisor	Civil Design Technologist
Agent de	Clerk
Aircraft Maintenance Engineer	Client Relations Manager
Analyst - Financial Advisory (Aboriginal Client Services)	Client Service Worker
Animator	Client Success Manager
Archivist	Clinical Advisor
Articling Student	Clinical Coordinator - Pharmaceutical Services
Artist	Clinical Nurse Educator
Artistic Lead	Collections Manager Intern - Registrar
Arts Teacher	Commerce Trainee in Marketing
Assistant Director-Producer/Director/Production Coordinator	Communications Coordinator
Assistant Language Teacher	Communications Instructor
Assistant Project Manager	Communications Officer
Associate	Community Advocate
Associate Dentist	Community Health Nurse
Associate Research Fellow	Community Health Worker
Automotive Service Technician Apprentice	Community Liaison and Outreach Officer
Bachelor of Commerce, Candidate Appraiser	Community Outreach Support Worker
Baker	Computer Tomography (CT) Scans Technician
Biology fieldwork assistant	Consultant
Bookkeeper- Owner of Textile business	Consultant and Curriculum Writer
	Coordinator Aboriginal Access and Services
	Coordinator of Language Commission
	Coordinator, Stakeholder Engagement
	Coordinator; Family Law Project

Coordinator-Instructor
Counsel
Cultural Resource Teacher
Customer Service Agent
Customer Service Rep
Dental Technologist
Dental Therapist
Dentist
Development Assistant
Development Clerk
Diabetes Nurse Educator
Diagnostic Imaging Technologist
Diagnostic Radiation Technician
Digitization Clerk
Digitization Video Technician
Director Post-Secondary Student Support Program
Director
Disabilities Support Worker
Division Team Leader Aboriginal Education
Doctor of Chiropractic
Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine (ND)
Dream Broker
Early Childhood Educator
Economic Development Corporate Consultant
Ecosystem Analyst
Editor
Education Ambassador
Education Assistant
Educational Support Services Coordinator
Electrical Helper
Electrical Technician
Elementary Teacher
Emergency Outreach Worker
Employee for the Office of the City Clerk
Employment Consultant
Employment Counsellor
Engagement Coordinator
Engineer II
Engineer: Geotechnical
Engineering Student Position
Environmental Summer Student
Esthetician
Estimator- Projects Manager
Events Facilitator
Executive Assistant
Executive Director
Exercise Therapist

Faculty at Nova Scotia Community College
(Mi'kmaq Health - Wellness Program)
Family Development Worker-Social Worker
Family Doctor
Family Enhancement Social Worker
Family Helper
Family Medicine Resident
Family School Liaison Worker
Family Strengthening Worker
Family Therapist
Filmmaker-TV
Finance Assistant
Finance Clerk
Finance Officer
Financial Advisor
Fire Fighter
First Nation Coordinator
First Nation, Metis, Inuit Graduation Coach
French Immersion Elementary Teacher
Front Desk Manager
Golf Starter Marshal and Cashier
Graduate Nurse
Graphic Artist
Graphic Designer and Web Developer
Guidance Counsellor
Gymnastics Coach
Health Economist
Health Outreach Nurse
Health, Safety, and Environment Coordinator
Heritage Presenter
High School and Social Studies Teacher
Home Care Worker
Host
Human Resources Advisor
Human Resources Assistant
Human Resources Manager Trainee
HVAC Technician
Indigenous Arts Programs Manager
Indigenous Development - Student Initiatives
Indigenous Housing Liaison
Indigenous Liaison Admissions Coordinator
Indigenous Youth Coordinators
Instructor
Instructor Therapist
Instrumentation Technician
Intake Nurse, Mental Health and Addictions
Journeyman Electrician
Journeyman Red Seal Heavy Duty Technician

Journeyman Red Seal Welder
Judicial Law Clerk
Junior Consultant-Researcher
Junior Legal Assistant
Labourer
Land Assistant
Lands and Resources
Law Clerk
Lawyer
Legal Assistant
Legal Counsel
Library Clerk
Library Technician
Licenced Practical Nurse
Lighting Technician
Management Consultant
Manager
Manager, Post-Secondary Programs
Marketing Specialist
Marketing-Publicity Manager - Gala Coordinator
Mechanic
Mechanical Engineer Technologist
Medical Laboratory Technologist
Medical Radiation Technologist
Medical Receptionist
Medical Resident
Mental Health Case Manager-Therapist
Mental Health Connections Coordinator
Mental Health Worker
Midwife
Mineral Land Negotiator
Mohawk Language Instructor
Multimedia Designer
Music teacher
National Conference Assistant, Summer Student
Native Ministries Coordinator
Naturopathic Doctor
Nurse
Nursing Professor
Occupational Therapist
Office Admin Clerk
Operations Specialist
Owner-Operator
Owner-Principal
Paramedic
Partnership Coordinator
Parts Cleaner in Aerospace Industry.
Payroll Officer

Pediatric Dentist
Personal Trainer and Wellness Leader
Pharmacist
Physical Therapist
Physician
Physics Researcher
Physiotherapist
Policy Advisor
Politician
Post-doctoral Research Scientist
Post-Secondary Coordinator
Primary Care Physician
Principal
Pro Shop Manager
Produce Clerk-Cashier/Shift Supervisor and
Transportation Dispatcher
Producer
Professional Artist
Program Advisor
Program Officer
Programming + Industry Coordinator
Project Manager
Psychiatric Aide, Casual
Psychiatry Resident
Psychotherapist
Public Health Nurse
Quality Control Tech Coordinator
Research Associate
Receptionist-Accounts Payable
Regional Environmental Coordinator
Registered Aboriginal Midwife
Registered Dental Assistant
Registered Dental Hygienist
Registered Dietician
Registered Early Childhood Educator
Registered Midwife
Registered Practical Nurse
Registered Psychiatric Nurse
Registered Psychologist
Relief Residential Counsellor
Relief Worker at the Native Women's Shelter
Reporter Correspondent
Research Advisor
Research Assistant
Research Coordinator
Researcher
Reservoir Engineer
Residence Life Coordinator

Resident of Gynaecology
Resident Physician
Run-Plant Engineer
Science Radio Producer
Coordinator
Security of School
Security Officer, Aboriginal Youth Worker
Self Employed health Practitioner
Senior Construction Coordinator
Senior Engineer
Senior Policy Advisor
Senior Rehab Occupational Therapy in
Functional Rehabilitation
Senior Student Assistant
Server
Site Supervisor
Social Development Manager
Social Media Coordinator
Social Worker I
Sonographer
Special Projects
Speech Language Pathologist
Stone Mason - Personal Trainer & Fit Desk
Assistant
Strategic Development Manager
Student Ambassador, First Peoples House of
Learning, Trent University
Student-at-law
Substance Abuse Counsellor
Summer Intern
Supervisor
Support and Youth Care Worker

Support Counsellor
Support Worker
Support Worker
Systems Collaboration Specialist
Teacher
Teaching Assistant
Team Member
Technical Support Specialist
Technicienne de laboratoire
Timber Cruiser Tally
Traditional Harvest Research Coordinator
Travel Counsellor
Tree Planter
Tutor
University Instructor
University Nurse- Clinical Coordinator
University Aboriginal Recruitment Coordinator
Victim Service Coordinator
Video Editor
VIP Hosting Coordinator
Visitors Services Representative
Volunteer Video Producer
VP Operations and Finance
Waitress-bartender
Water plant assistant
Workplace Wellness Coordinator
Youth Civic Engagement Coordinator
Youth Homelessness Outreach Worker
Youth Justice Worker
Youth Mentor
Youth Research Coordinator
Youth Worker