

Opportunity for All?

Exploring the Social Barriers to Post-Secondary Education in Nova Scotia

FACT SHEET

Examining the Makeup of Institutions

Before determining how to improve the opportunity for various identifiable groups to access post-secondary education in Nova Scotia, we need to understand the makeup of our institutions. Here's a snapshot of the student population in the province.



Each of these students face increased barriers to getting an education. In most cases, they are not proportionally represented on campuses.



Deep Dive into Cost

We know that one of the greatest barriers to post-secondary education (PSE) is cost. With the price of not only tuition and fees, but also the increasing cost of living every year, socio-economic status can often determine if a student pursues PSE.

	University		NSCC	
	Total 17+	%	Total 17+	%
Racialized Populations 1	4,980	11.4%	N/A	N/A
Aboriginal Students	1,485	3.4%	559	5%
African Nova Scotian Students	1,160	2.7%	449	4%
Francophone Students	1,175	2.7%	N/A	N/A
Rural Origin	9,025	20.7%	4,094	38%
Students Affected by Disability	5,495	13%	1,333	12%
Female Students	25,418	58%	5,450	51%
Female Students in STEM/Trades & Tech	1,143	25%	527	15%
Mature Students 30-40	5,625	13%	1,306	12%
Mature Students 40-64/60+	4,365	10%	1,001	9%

1 (excluding indigenous and African Nova Scotian students)

By learning more about the financial barriers students face we can recommend positive changes to social programs, including student assistance programs. To increase opportunities for students StudentsNS believes in the following student assistance reform:

1. Student Financial Assistance (SFA) programs typically do not cover a student's full cost of education;
2. Growth in annual assistance levels typically lag behind growth in students' expenses;
3. Certain categories of students (e.g. students with children, students with disabilities, part-time students) have historically received far too little assistance to make pursuing PSE a feasible option;

4. Many students entering PSE with existing financial or social disadvantages are left with considerable post-graduate debts, creating a potential new burden to be overcome; and
5. Other forms of government SFA – pre-study incentives to invest in RESPs and post-study education tax credits – tend to favour individuals from higher income families and with higher post-graduate incomes, respectively.

University Student from Low-Income Families		
Population	Total 17+	
Nova Scotia	66,040	8.9%
University	8,895	20.4%

NSCC Low-Income Proxy Statistics				
NSCC Students	First Generation	Sponsored		
		Community Services	Employment Nova Scotia	First Nations
#	3,761	413	916	194
% of pop.	35.0%	3.8%	8.5%	1.8%

Tuition + Fees + Rent + Food + Books and Supplies + Incidentals	
University Student	\$18,346
College Student	\$15,560

Increasing Opportunity for All

So how do we fix the problem of access to PSE?

Financial Aid Reform • Inclusive and Supportive Public Education Systems • Better Data Collection • Promoting Diversity at Institutions

To learn more about “*Opportunity for All? Exploring the Social Barriers to Post-Secondary Education in Nova Scotia*”, visit www.studentsns.ca and view the Full Report, Executive Summary, and Summary of Recommendations.

