

## **5.0 THE POST-SECONDARY STATUS OF THE JUNE 1996 VERSUS THE JUNE 2001 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE**

The survey model for the 2001 High School Follow-up Survey differs from the model used in 1996 therefore detailed comparison of data from both surveys is not feasible. It is, however, possible to determine: (a) the post-graduation activities of both cohorts; (b) what challenges prevent graduates from engaging in post-secondary studies directly out of high school; and, (c) the future post-secondary plans of the non-post-secondary cohort in both years.

### **5.1 POST-GRADUATION STATUS**

In June of 1996, 7251 students graduated from high school in Newfoundland and Labrador. In June, 2001, with the impact of declining enrolment over the last decade, the number of high school graduates had declined to 5,992.

As shown in Table 5.1.1, while there were fewer students graduating in 2001 than in 1996, a greater percentage (one percentage point) of 2001 high school graduates chose to engage in post-secondary studies directly out of high school than did their 1996 counterparts. While the percentage increase is small, it is encouraging to see the trend towards higher levels of educational attainment continue with the most recent graduates.

The number of graduates upgrading their marks in 2001 is approximately half the number who did so in 1996 and this is likely a reflection of more academic success in the 2001 graduating class. While approximately 24% of graduates from both the 1996 and 2001 cohorts entered the labour market directly out of high school, the success of graduates in finding employment decreased in 2001 and the rate of unemployment grew by one and a half percentage points.

There was also a significant shift between choice of institutional sectors noted in 2001 graduates. Proportionately, almost 40% of graduates in 2001 chose to attend Memorial University compared to 37% of the graduating class in 1996. In real numbers, however, the first year student count at Memorial from this cohort is down by 9%.

In 2001, a smaller percentage of graduates chose to pursue their education in out-of-province institutions. Furthermore, the percentage of graduates attending the College of the North Atlantic increased from 12% in 1996 to 17% in 2001. Parallel to this increase, was a decrease in the number of graduates attending in-province private colleges. In fact, the percentage of high school graduates attending a private college in Newfoundland and Labrador directly out of high school fell from 13% in 1996 to 4% in 2001.

Status	June 1996 High School Graduates		June 2001 High School Graduates	
	#	%	#	%
Memorial University	2346	36.8	2126	39.6
College of the North Atlantic	748	11.7	931	17.3
Marine Institute	-	-	112	2.1
NF Private College	812	12.7	229	4.3
Out-of-Province Universities	466	7.3	338	6.3
Out-of Province Colleges	96	1.5	72	1.3
<b>Subtotal Post-Secondary</b>	<b>4468</b>	<b>70.2</b>	<b>3808</b>	<b>70.9</b>
Upgrading	257	4.0	143	2.7
Employed	1137	17.8	898	16.7
Unemployed	402	6.3	416	7.7
Other	106	1.7	106	2.0
<b>Subtotal Non-Post-Secondary</b>	<b>1902</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>1563</b>	<b>29.1</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6370</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5371</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 5.1.1 Comparison of Post-Graduation Status of  
June 2001 High School Graduates to June 1996 High School Graduates**

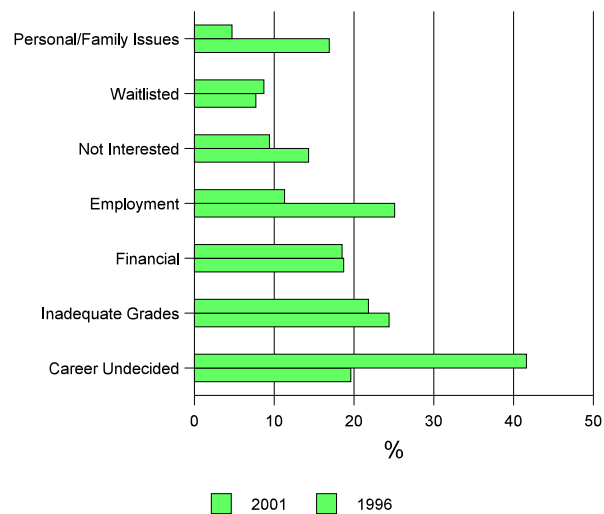
## 5.2 Reasons for Not Attending a Post-Secondary Institution Directly out of High School

The major factors influencing the decision of 2001 graduates to not attend a post-secondary institution immediately after high school are presented in Figure 5.2.1 and compared to the main reasons reported by 1996 graduates for non-attendance. In both years the survey design allowed respondents to give multiple reasons.

For the graduates of 1996, low grades or failure to meet entrance requirements as well as the prospect of employment were cited most frequently as the main reason for not engaging in post secondary studies after high school graduation. While inadequate grades also had an impact on the decision of 2001 graduates, the overwhelming factor in their decision was the lack of a career goal.

Another factor of significant influence on both cohorts was the inability of graduates to finance their post-secondary education. Personal and family issues appear to have affected fewer graduates, proportionately, in 2001. Waitlists were a barrier for a slightly higher percentage of graduates in 2001 compared to 1996.

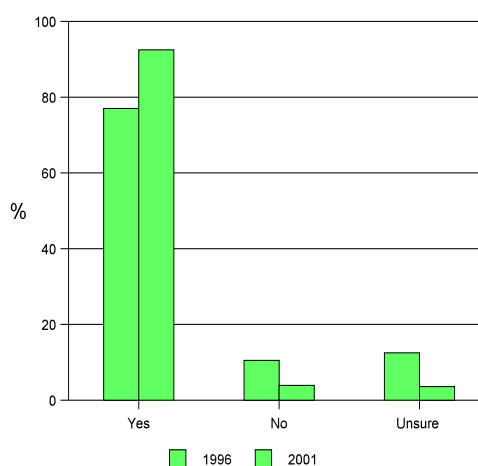
**Figure 5.2.1 Reasons for Not Attending a Post-Secondary Institution After Graduation  
Graduates of June 1996, 2001**



### 5.3 Plans of Graduates Not Pursuing a Post-Secondary Education

A higher percentage of 2001 high school graduates (93%) who were not attending post-secondary at the time of survey indicated that they planned to attend in the future compared to graduates of 1996 (77%). In addition, in 2001, only 4% were unsure about future post-secondary studies compared to 1996 when 13% indicated that were undecided about future plans.

**Figure 5.3.1 Post-Secondary Plans of Graduates Not Enrolled in Post-Secondary Directly from High School Graduates of June 1996 and 2001**



### Summary Comparison of 1996 and 2001 High School Graduates

There have been significant gains in educational attainment in Newfoundland and Labrador during the past two decades. Increasingly, a higher proportion of high school graduates are realizing the value of a post-secondary education for their long-term future. Although there was only a minor increase in the proportion of high school graduates from 2001 who engaged in post-secondary studies directly out of high school compared to graduates of 1996, the positive trend is continuing. In 2001 a greater percentage of high school graduates chose to study at Memorial University (40% compared to 37% in 1996 ) and the percentage of graduates attending the College of the North Atlantic increased by five percentage points. At the same time, the percentage of graduates leaving the province to study at out-of-province institutions decreased. Additionally, a greater percentage of 2001 graduates who were not in post-secondary at the time of survey indicated that they planned on attending sometime in the future.

The reasons why graduates chose not to attend a post-secondary institution directly out of high school have not changed although greater numbers of graduates are reporting that they are undecided on a career path at the time of graduation.