

Chapter 10: Graduation

Each September, thousands of students begin their final year of high school. This chapter will focus on this group of students to describe graduation/pass rates and diploma status. Additional information about graduation requirements can be found in the following resources:

- *On Course: A Handbook for Grade 9 Students and Parents* provides a basic overview of the graduation requirements.
- The *High School Certification Handbook* provides a more detailed explanation of graduation requirements.

Both of these resources are located on the Department of Education and Early Child Development's website and can be accessed through the following link: <http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/highschool/gradreq.html>

Pass/graduation rate defined

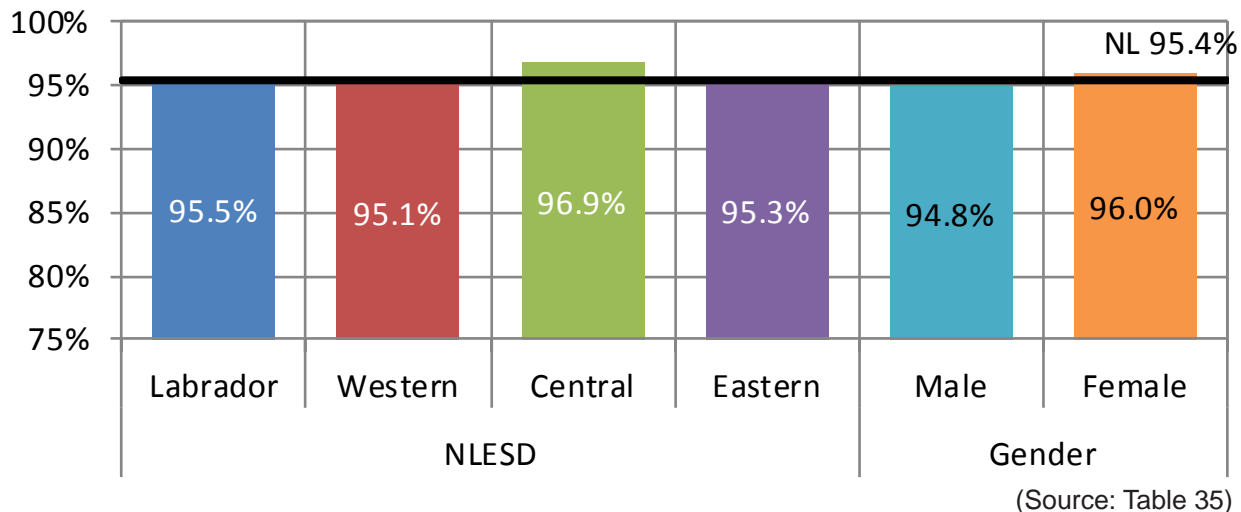
A common way to describe the high school completion rate is to use the graduation/pass rate. This is a provincial measure useful for exploring differences among the province's schools. It is calculated by dividing the actual number of graduates by the number of eligible graduates in a given school. Students are considered to be 'eligible to graduate' if they are enrolled in the courses needed to meet graduation requirements for that school year. In other words, these students will graduate IF they successfully complete the courses they are registered in.

$$\text{Pass Rate} = \frac{\text{Total number of students who 'actually' graduate}}{\text{Total number of students 'eligible' to graduate}}$$

The provincial pass rate

The vast majority of students graduate from high school. In 2014/15, 95.4% of the 4,919 eligible graduates successfully met the graduation requirements. This was virtually the same as the previous year (95.2% in 2013/14). As shown in figure 35, over 95% of students across the NLESD graduate each year. While the graduation rate within the CSFP is not reported here due to the small number of eligible graduates, the information can be found in Appendix A. For example, in 2014/15, there were only four students who were eligible to graduate. In terms of gender, the female pass rate was slightly higher than the male (96.0% vs. 94.8%).

Figure 35: Provincial and regional pass rate (2014/15)



Provincial and regional trends

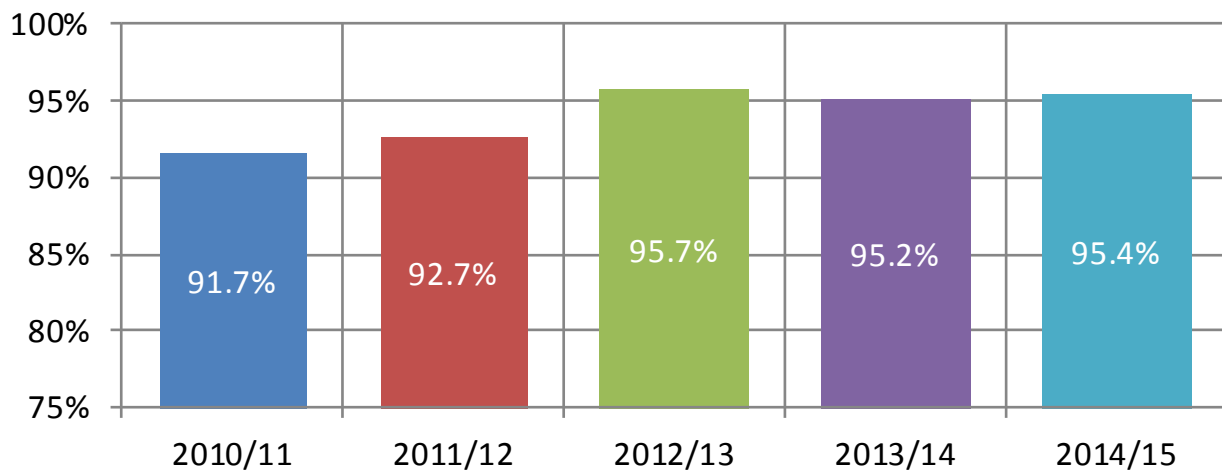
The pass rate has levelled off in the province. After increasing from 91.7% in 2010/11 to 95.7% in 2012/13, the rate has hovered around 95% for the past two years (see figure 36a). A similar trend was found in three of the four regions within the NLESD. As shown in figure 36b, an overall upward is seen between 2010/11 and 2014/15 in the Labrador, Western and Eastern regions. In the Central region, there has been little change in the pass rate over the previous three years.

The male and female pass rate have levelled off as well (see figure 36c). There was little difference between the male and female pass rate with less than two points separating the rate each year.

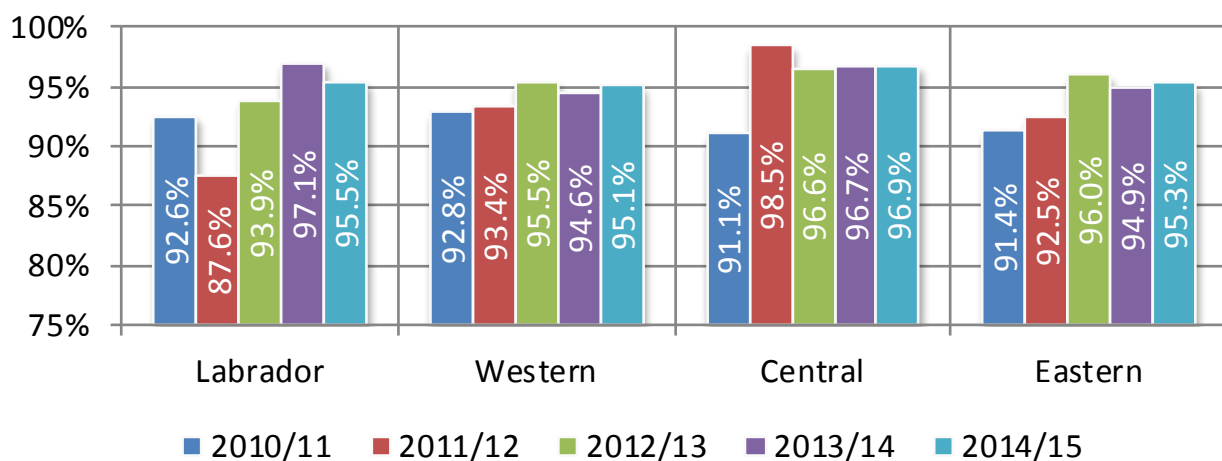


Figure 36: Pass rate trends (2010/11 – 2014/15)

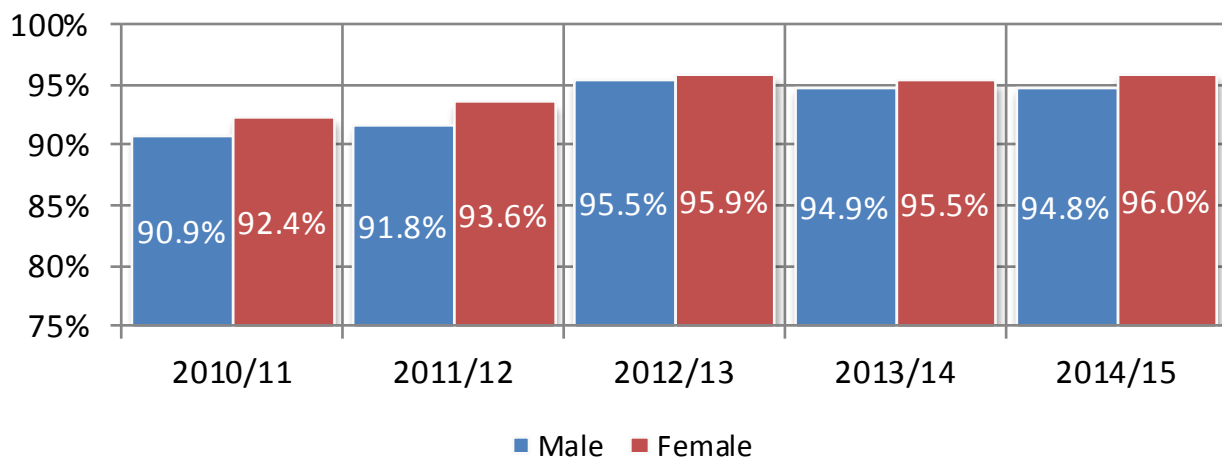
(a) Provincial



(b) Within the NLESD



(c) Gender trends



(Source: Table 36)

Graduation status

There are three different types of high school diploma students earn once they graduate. These are based on student performance.

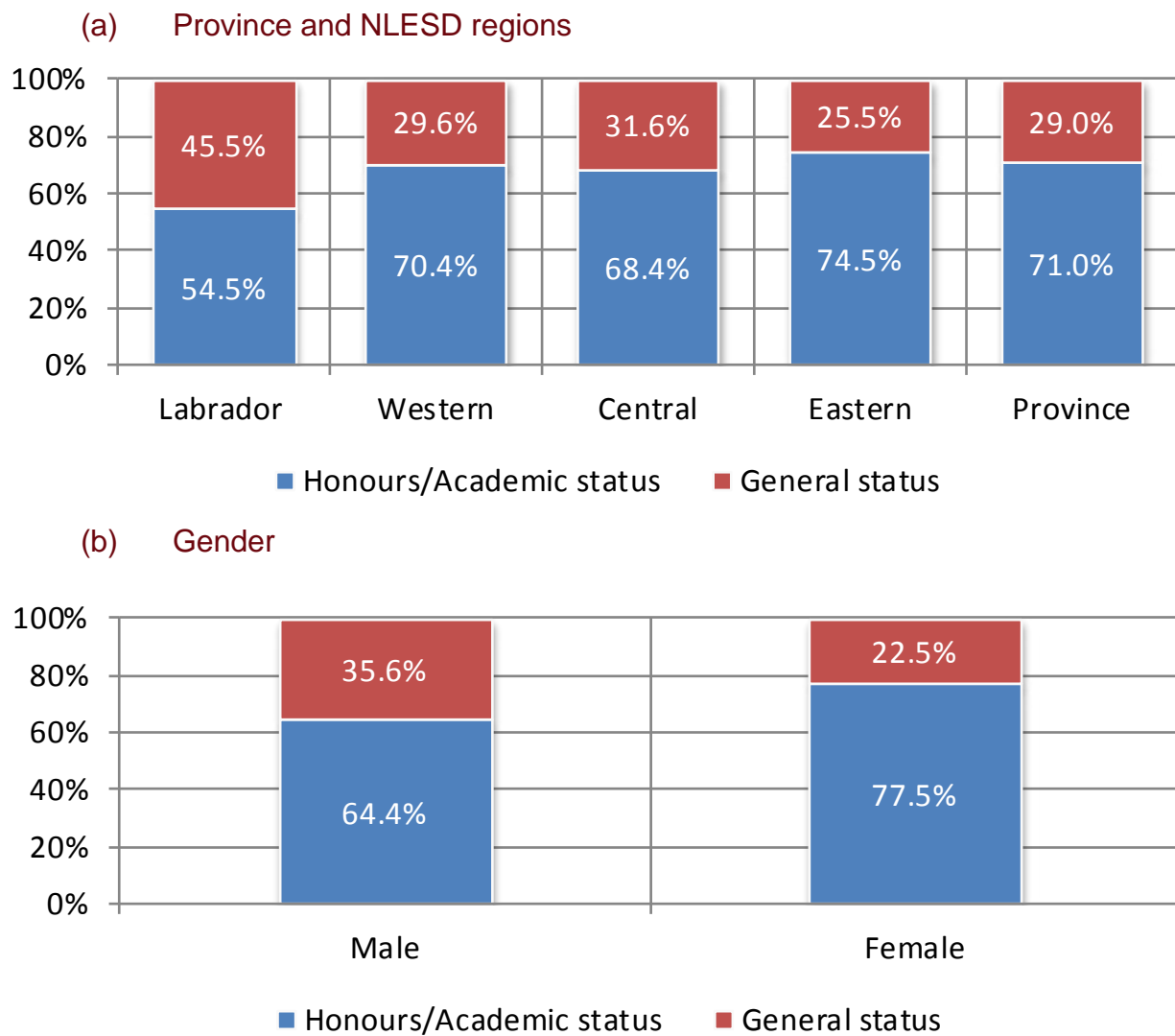
- (1) *Honours status*: Students earn an honours diploma if they achieve an overall average of 80% in five subject areas (English, mathematics, science, social studies and an elective).
- (2) *Academic status*: For students who do not meet the criteria for an honours diploma, but have a minimum mark of 50% in each of the required courses.
- (3) *General status*: For students who meet the minimum graduation requirements but not the requirements for an academic or honours diploma.



The majority of students graduate from high school with an honours or academic diploma (see figure 37a). In 2014/15, this was the case for 71.0% of the graduates with the remaining 29.0% earning a general diploma. At the regional level, the percentage of graduates with an honours/academic diploma ranged from 54.5% in the Labrador region to 74.5% in the Eastern region. In terms of gender, a higher percentage of females than males graduated with an honours/academic diploma (77.5% vs 64.4%).



Figure 37: Graduation status (2014/15)



(Source: Table 37)



Trends in graduation status

There has been a general upward trend in the percentage of students graduating with an honours/academic diploma over the past five years. Provincially, this percentage has increased from 61.7% in 2010/11 to 71.0% in 2014/15 (see figure 38a).

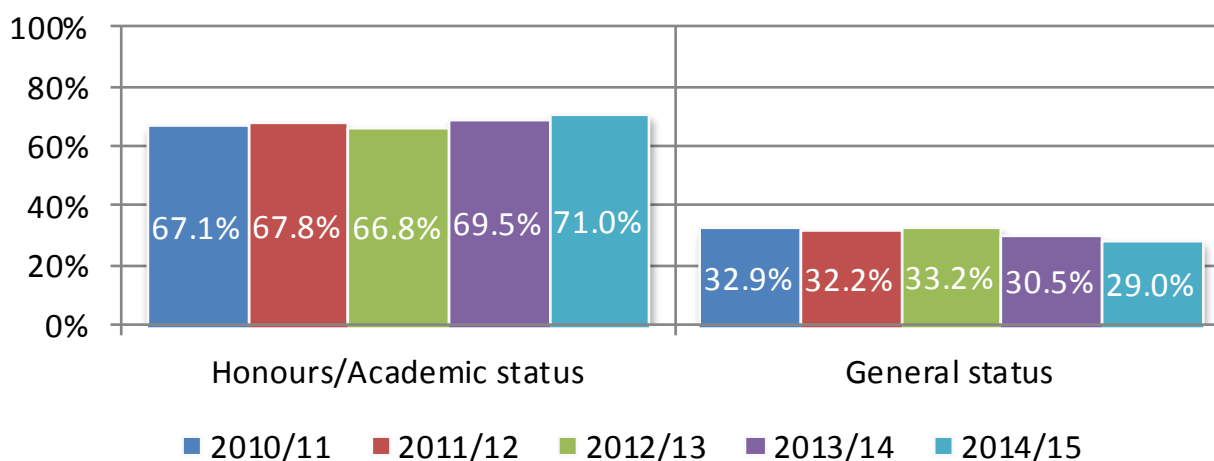
A similar trend can be found within the NLESD in three of the four regions (see figure 39b). The exception was in the Labrador region where the percentage has been gradually decreasing each year since 2011/12.

This general upward trend in the percentage of students graduating with an honours/academic diploma was also present with both females and males. Girls were typically more likely to graduate with an honours/academic diploma than boys. On average, the percentage of girls graduating with an honours/academic diploma was 13 points higher than boys each year (see figure 38c).



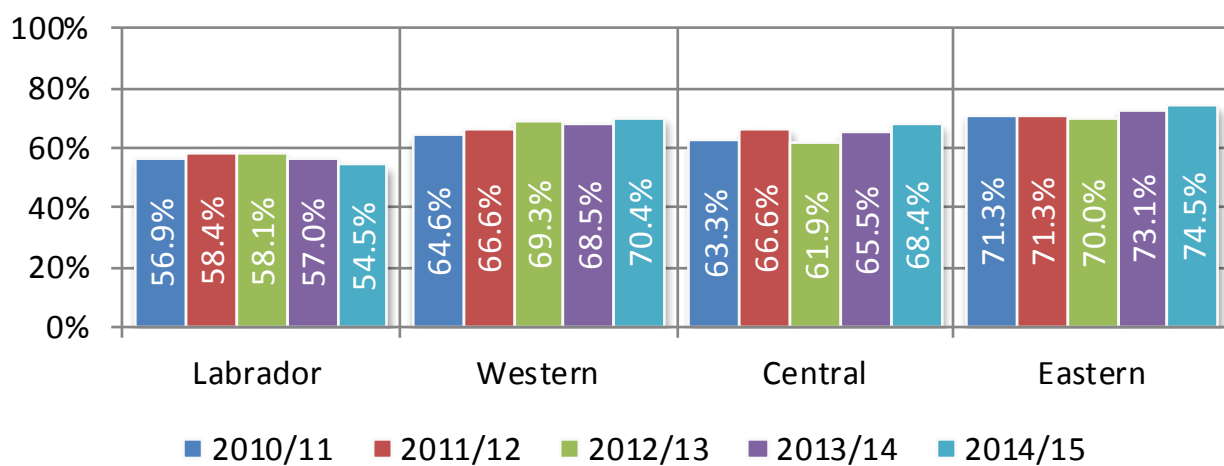
Figure 38: Trends in graduation status (2010/11 – 2014/15)

(a) Provincial trends

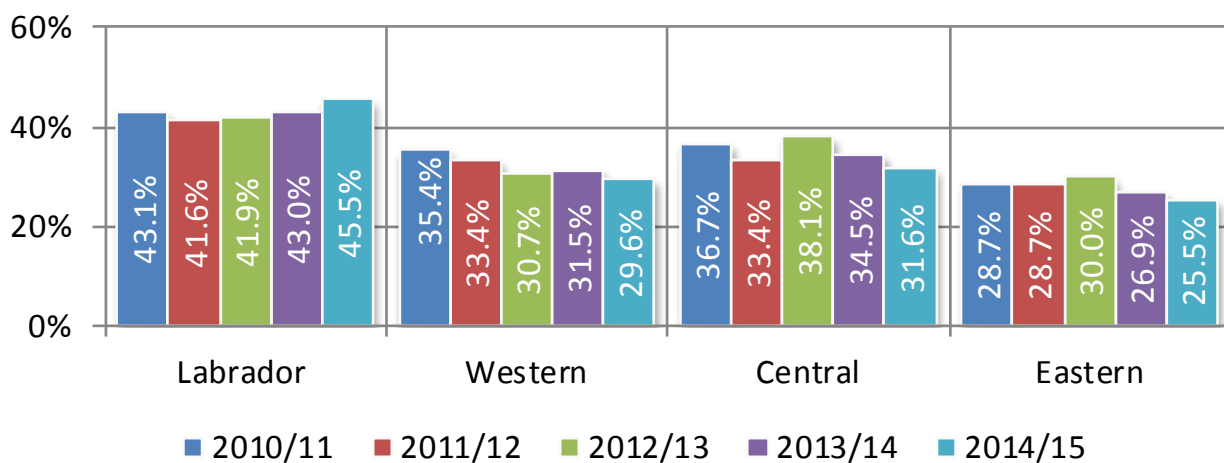


(b) Regional trends

(i) Percentage graduating with honours/academic status

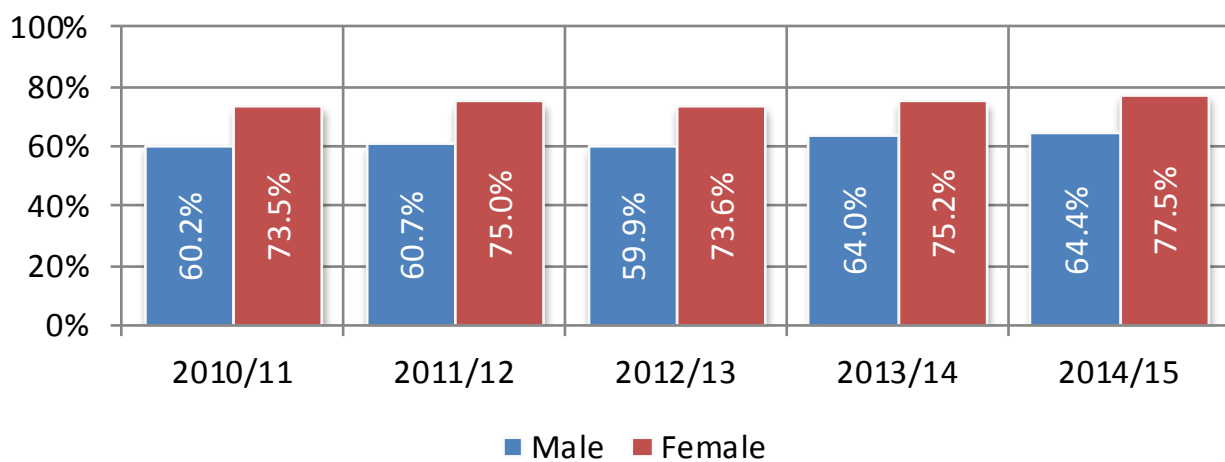


(ii) Percentage graduating with general status

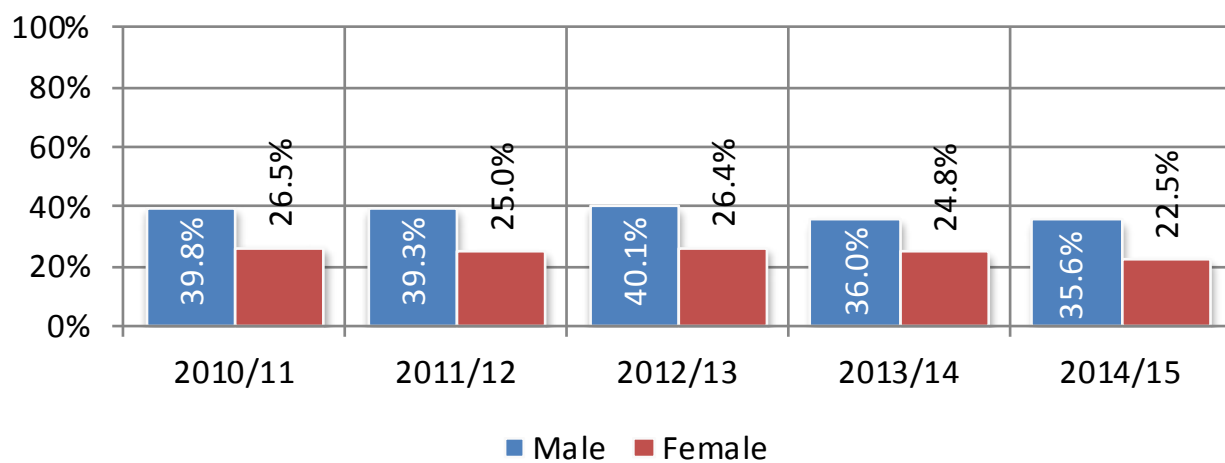


(c) Gender

(i) Percentage graduating with honours/academic status



(ii) Percentage graduating with general status



(Source: Table 38)

