

Graduate Retention: Who Stays, Who Leaves, and Why?



Classes of 2012 and 2018, surveyed six years after graduation

Statistical tables for Maritime university graduates (First-degree holders)

April 2026

First-degree holders (FDH) are bachelor's degree graduates who entered their program without a prior post-secondary credential.

Place of origin refers to graduates' primary place of residence during the 12 months prior to enrolling in their program.

Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

wN = weighted sample size.

Table 1. Distribution of FDH by province of graduation and place of origin

Province of graduation and place of origin	Class	
	2012 (wN = 1,888)	2018 (wN = 1,566)
New Brunswick	(wN = 616)	(wN = 384)
New Brunswick	71%	66%
Nova Scotia	12%	11%
Prince Edward Island	2%	3%
Rest of Canada	11%	14%
Outside Canada	5%	6%
Nova Scotia	(wN = 1,147)	(wN = 1,085)
New Brunswick	6%	7%
Nova Scotia	58%	55%
Prince Edward Island	2%	2%
Rest of Canada	29%	29%
Outside Canada	6%	8%
Prince Edward Island	(wN = 124)	(wN = 96)
New Brunswick	6%	7%
Nova Scotia	6%	5%
Prince Edward Island	81%	79%
Rest of Canada	4%	5%
Outside Canada	3%	*

* Data suppressed due to small cell size (unweighted n < 5)

Table 2. Distribution of FDH by province of graduation and place of residence six years after graduation

Province of graduation and place of residence six years after graduation	Class	
	2012 (wN = 1,888)	2018 (wN = 1,566)
New Brunswick	(wN = 616)	(wN = 384)
New Brunswick	51%	60%
Nova Scotia	12%	13%
Prince Edward Island	1%	3%
Rest of Canada	33%	22%
Outside Canada	3%	3%
Nova Scotia	(wN = 1,147)	(wN = 1,085)
New Brunswick	3%	5%
Nova Scotia	47%	53%
Prince Edward Island	1%	2%
Rest of Canada	42%	35%
Outside Canada	7%	5%
Prince Edward Island	(wN = 124)	(wN = 96)
New Brunswick	6%	*
Nova Scotia	8%	7%
Prince Edward Island	53%	68%
Rest of Canada	30%	15%
Outside Canada	4%	5%

* Data suppressed due to small cell size (unweighted $n < 5$)

Table 3. Changes in the distribution of FDH by place of origin and place of residence six years after graduation

Graduating class and place of residence	Residence		
	Origin	After graduation	Difference (percentage points)
Class of 2012	(wN = 1,888)	(wN = 1,888)	
New Brunswick	27%	19%	-8
Nova Scotia	39%	33%	-6
Prince Edward Island	7%	4%	-3
Rest of Canada	21%	38%	17
Outside Canada	5%	5%	0
Class of 2018	(wN = 1,566)	(wN = 1,566)	
New Brunswick	21%	18%	-3
Nova Scotia	41%	41%	0
Prince Edward Island	7%	6%	-1
Rest of Canada	24%	31%	7
Outside Canada	7%	4%	-3

Table 4. Percentage of FDH residing in the Maritimes six years after graduation, by province of graduation

Province of graduation	Class	
	2012 (wN = 1,888)	2018 (wN = 1,566)
New Brunswick	(wN = 616)	(wN = 384)
% residing in the Maritimes	64%	75%
Nova Scotia	(wN = 1,147)	(wN = 1,085)
% residing in the Maritimes	51%	60%
Prince Edward Island	(wN = 124)	(wN = 96)
% residing in the Maritimes	66%	80%
All provinces combined	56%	65%

Table 5. Percentage of FDH residing in the Maritimes six years after graduation, by place of origin

Place of origin	Class	
	2012 (wN = 1,888)	2018 (wN = 1,566)
New Brunswick	(wN = 510)	(wN = 332)
% residing in the Maritimes	69%	86%
Nova Scotia	(wN = 741)	(wN = 642)
% residing in the Maritimes	71%	81%
Prince Edward Island	(wN = 141)	(wN = 107)
% residing in the Maritimes	68%	79%
Rest of Canada	(wN = 398)	(wN = 374)
% residing in the Maritimes	15%	22%
Outside Canada	(wN = 97)	(wN = 110)
% residing in the Maritimes	26%	40%
All origins combined	56%	65%

Table 6. Percentage of FDH residing in their province of graduation six years after graduation, by province of graduation

Province of graduation	Class	
	2012 (wN = 1,888)	2018 (wN = 1,566)
New Brunswick	(wN = 616)	(wN = 384)
% residing in their province of graduation	51%	60%
Nova Scotia	(wN = 1,147)	(wN = 1,085)
% residing in their province of graduation	47%	53%
Prince Edward Island	(wN = 124)	(wN = 96)
% residing in their province of graduation	53%	68%

Table 7. Percentage of FDH residing in their province of graduation six years after graduation, by province of graduation and place of origin

Province of graduation and place of origin	Class	
	2012 (wN = 1,888)	2018 (wN = 1,566)
New Brunswick		
<i>Maritimes</i>	(wN = 523)	(wN = 308)
% residing in their province of graduation	57%	70%
<i>Outside Maritimes</i>	(wN = 94)	(wN = 76)
% residing in their province of graduation	18%	19%
Nova Scotia		
<i>Maritimes</i>	(wN = 754)	(wN = 686)
% residing in their province of graduation	63%	71%
<i>Outside Maritimes</i>	(wN = 393)	(wN = 400)
% residing in their province of graduation	15%	23%
Prince Edward Island		
<i>Maritimes</i>	(wN = 116)	(wN = 88)
% residing in their province of graduation	57%	70%
<i>Outside Maritimes</i>	(wN = 8)	(wN = 9)
% residing in their province of graduation	*	*

* Data suppressed due to small subsample size (unweighted n < 50)

Table 8. Percentage of out-of-province FDH residing in their province of graduation six years after graduation, by province of graduation

Province of graduation	Class	
	2012 (wN = 691)	2018 (wN = 642)
New Brunswick	(wN = 180)	(wN = 130)
% residing in their province of graduation	15%	16%
Nova Scotia	(wN = 487)	(wN = 492)
% residing in their province of graduation	17%	24%
Prince Edward Island	(wN = 23)	(wN = 20)
% residing in their province of graduation	*	*

* Data suppressed due to small subsample (unweighted n < 50)

Table 9. Reasons for staying in the province of graduation, by province of graduation (Class of 2018 FDH only)

Reason	Province of graduation			
	New Brunswick (wN = 228)	Nova Scotia (wN = 574)	Prince Edward Island (wN = 65)	All provinces combined (wN = 867)
To be closer to family and friends	72%	66%	85%	69%
Obtained employment	56%	53%	52%	54%
Cost of living (e.g., affordability of housing)	31%	15%	10%	19%
Partner obtained employment	17%	16%	14%	16%
Pursuit of further education	7%	12%	13%	11%
Ability to work remotely	8%	5%	*	5%
More opportunities for potential employment	4%	6%	*	5%
Cultural reasons	3%	6%	*	5%
Illness or disability	*	3%	*	2%
Weather	*	3%	*	2%
Travel	*	2%	*	2%
Better salary/pay	4%	*	*	2%
Other	6%	10%	7%	9%

* Data suppressed due to small cell size (unweighted n < 5)

Table 10. Reasons for staying in the province of graduation, by region of origin (Class of 2018 FDH only)

Reason	Region of origin		
	Maritimes (wN = 756)	Rest of Canada (wN = 70)	Outside Canada (wN = 39)
To be closer to family and friends	75%	26%	*
Obtained employment	53%	56%	*
Cost of living (e.g., affordability of housing)	19%	22%	*
Partner obtained employment	15%	25%	*
Pursuit of further education	9%	25%	*
Ability to work remotely	6%	6%	*
More opportunities for potential employment	4%	10%	*
Cultural reasons	4%	10%	*
Illness or disability	2%	*	*
Weather	1%	6%	*
Travel	1%	*	*
Better salary/pay	2%	*	*
Other	8%	19%	*

* Data suppressed due to small subsample (unweighted $n < 50$) or cell size (unweighted $n < 5$)

Table 11. Reasons for leaving the province of graduation, by province of graduation (Class of 2018 FDH only)

Reason	Province of graduation			
	New Brunswick (wN = 152)	Nova Scotia (wN = 498)	Prince Edward Island (wN = 30)	All provinces combined (wN = 681)
Obtained employment	41%	34%	*	35%
To be closer to family and friends	35%	35%	*	34%
More opportunities for potential employment	29%	35%	*	33%
Pursuit of further education	33%	24%	*	28%
Better salary/pay	20%	23%	*	22%
Cost of living (e.g., affordability of housing)	4%	14%	*	11%
Partner obtained employment	6%	9%	*	8%
Travel	6%	8%	*	8%
Cultural reasons	4%	4%	*	4%
Ability to work remotely	*	3%	*	3%
Weather	*	3%	*	3%
Illness or disability	*	*	*	1%
Other	5%	7%	*	7%

* Data suppressed due to small subsample (unweighted $n < 50$) or cell size (unweighted $n < 5$)

Table 12. Reasons for leaving the province of graduation, by region of origin (Class of 2018 FDH only)

Reason	Region of origin		
	Maritimes (wN = 314)	Rest of Canada (wN = 299)	Outside Canada (wN = 68)
Obtained employment	37%	33%	37%
To be closer to family and friends	24%	47%	29%
More opportunities for potential employment	28%	38%	35%
Pursuit of further education	32%	24%	23%
Better salary/pay	20%	22%	31%
Cost of living (e.g., affordability of housing)	13%	9%	6%
Partner obtained employment	13%	4%	*
Travel	10%	6%	7%
Cultural reasons	4%	3%	*
Ability to work remotely	3%	3%	*
Weather	3%	2%	*
Illness or disability	*	*	*
Other	6%	8%	7%

* Data suppressed due to small cell size (unweighted n < 5)

Table 13. Percentage of graduates residing in their home province six years after graduation, by province of graduation

Province of graduation	Class	
	2012 (wN = 1,197)	2018 (wN = 923)
New Brunswick	(wN = 436)	(wN = 254)
% residing in their home province	65%	82%
Nova Scotia	(wN = 660)	(wN = 593)
% residing in their home province	69%	78%
Prince Edward Island	(wN = 101)	(wN = 76)
% residing in their home province	61%	78%

Table 14. Main activity of graduates six years after graduation, by place of residence

Place of residence and main activity	Class	
	2012	2018
New Brunswick	(wN = 358)	(wN = 288)
Working	77%	76%
Studying	14%	13%
Other	9%	11%
Employed (on leave)	7%	7%
Unemployed and looking for work	2%	3%
Not looking for work	*	*
Not reported	*	*
Nova Scotia	(wN = 620)	(wN = 635)
Working	72%	77%
Studying	17%	15%
Other	11%	8%
Employed (on leave)	4%	3%
Unemployed and looking for work	4%	4%
Not looking for work	2%	1%
Not reported	1%	*
Prince Edward Island	(wN = 84)	(wN = 94)
Working	77%	80%
Studying	13%	18%
Other	10%	*
Employed (on leave)	*	*
Unemployed and looking for work	6%	*
Not looking for work	*	*
Not reported	*	*
Outside Maritimes	(wN = 826)	(wN = 548)
Working	73%	72%
Studying	18%	16%
Other	9%	12%
Employed (on leave)	3%	3%
Unemployed and looking for work	3%	6%
Not looking for work	2%	2%
Not reported	1%	2%

* Data suppressed due to small cell size (unweighted $n < 5$)