

EPRI #GradEarnings RESEARCH BRIEF #1 (Version '14-11-20)

Introduction

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Overview of EPRI #GradEarnings Research Briefs:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Data and Methodology
- 3) How Much Do University Graduates Earn?
- 4) The Boom and Bust of ICT Graduates' Earnings Over Time

The authors would like to thank the University of Ottawa's Institutional Research and Planning office for providing the administrative data on which this project is based. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the assistance of Pierre Mercier (Associate Vice-President, Institutional Research and Planning) and Victoria Diaz (Assistant Director, Institutional Research and Planning).

The authors would also like to express their gratitude to Statistics Canada for their partnership in this project. In particular, we are very thankful to Sylvie Michaud (Director General, Education, Labour and Income Statistics) whose support made this work possible. Our sincere appreciations also go to Diane Galarneau (Section Chief, Current Labour Analysis and Perspectives on Labour and Income, Statistics Canada) for all her efforts, sometimes under challenging conditions.

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What We Do

This series of Research Briefs (#GradEarnings) uses tax records to track the earnings of graduates from the University of Ottawa on a year-by-year basis following graduation. What emerges is a unique and powerful picture of how graduates from different faculties performed in the labour market from 1998 through 2011.

In #GradEarnings Research Brief #3 we present findings for graduates across all areas of study, while in #GradEarnings Research Brief #4 we focus on ICT (Information and Communication Technology) graduates.

Why It Matters

Information of this type is valuable to a range of Canadian stakeholders:

1. Students about to make schooling choices, providing them with information on the labour market outcomes of previous graduates from different programs of study;
2. PSE institutions making decisions about what programs to offer, expand, or contract, and even how curricula could be reformed to improve student outcomes;
3. Policy makers, including those directly interested in students' outcomes (e.g., education ministries), as well as those concerned with a range of labour market issues such as skill shortages, skill gaps, and human resources issues more generally;
4. Employers making hiring decisions;
5. The general public;
6. Researchers who will exploit these data to answer important policy related research questions regarding education, earnings, incomes, and the country's general prosperity.

At the same time, we emphasize that the information generated in this research represents only a part of what we would like to know about graduates' outcomes. We also need better information on the job and education skill match, career satisfaction and other life outcomes, but these are beyond the scope of this particular analysis.

How We Do It

The Education Policy Research Initiative (EPRI) collaborated with the University of Ottawa and Statistics Canada to carry out this work in the winter of 2013, supported by funding from Industry Canada and the Ontario Human Capital Research and Innovation Fund.

All work was undertaken at Statistics Canada, including the linking of administrative data from the University of Ottawa. EPRI carried out the analysis. See #GradEarnings Research Brief #2 for more on the data used and methodology employed.

Next Steps

One general direction for further work would be to *expand the project in breadth* by adding more institutions at both the college and university levels. This would allow us to see, for example, whether the results reported here for University of Ottawa graduates generalise to other university graduates, to extend the analysis to college graduates, and to see how results compare for graduates in different regions.

Extending the project in this way would also allow for the kind of more detailed analysis the larger resulting samples sizes would permit. This could include breaking outcomes down at a more detailed program level (e.g., at the department level for university graduates), or by individual student characteristics (e.g., for those from different socio-economic backgrounds).

One related longer-term goal might be to include all graduates from all post-secondary education institutions across the country, which could possibly be facilitated by the extensive collection of administrative data already being undertaken by Statistics Canada. Short of that, complete coverage could be generated for specific provinces or for other specific groups of institutions.

A second general direction further work would be to *deepen the analysis* by linking post-graduation earnings to a range of student characteristics and schooling experiences so as to improve our understanding of which graduates go on to have higher earnings and which do not, with the ultimate goal being to not only better understand student outcomes, but to improve them.

In short, the current work represents but a first analysis of one set of graduates from a single institution, but the potential for further work building from this starting point is vast.