

# Provincial Highlights



Prepared for the  
Heads of CE  
Ontario Colleges of  
Applied Arts & Technology

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# INTRODUCTION

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This report provides highlights from the Fall 2002 Continuing Education Provincial Survey in Ontario, and compares these results with previous years' survey results. It will answer questions pertaining to student satisfaction with their courses, their instructors, and their college facilities and services. It will provide insight into what types of people are taking college level continuing education courses in the province of Ontario. For example, their educational background and goals, their employment status, gender, age, and first language.

In the Fall of 2002, a comprehensive survey was administered to continuing education students in twenty-two community colleges in Ontario. This survey was also administered in the fall of 2000, 1998 and 1996. The colleges together have over 170,000 part-time student registrations each fall, and this co-operative survey provides a solid body of information about these students. This collaborative effort has allowed each college to benefit from results at the provincial level right down to the course section level with feedback provided to individual instructors. The project has had numerous benefits including shared costs and shared results, comparative student profile data and the development of important performance benchmarks against which to measure future results.

Colleges who participated received summary results for each of their course sections, their college, the province and, where appropriate, other colleges. As well, large, medium, small and metro colleges were grouped together and results were analyzed. The colleges with the highest ratings were identified to enable others to benefit from best practices.

The Heads of Continuing Education in the province of Ontario agreed to this on-going research project in order to achieve the following objectives:

- To acquire a comprehensive profile of their continuing education students.
- To establish benchmarks to assess performance and future trends in all aspects of a student's experience, including teaching and learning, the physical environment and services.
- To benefit from the efficiencies of shared cost and consistency of survey and process.
- To maximize the use of the data for each course, division, location and college in the system.
- To illustrate the benefits of cooperative research among the colleges.

The 1996 research model was developed from the Metro Survey (winter 1993) and later Central Region Survey (winter 1995), and was used again for the fall 1996, fall 1998 and fall 2000 surveys. In 2002, the survey was revised with the most significant change being the scale by which students rate teaching, courses, registration, facilities and services. This scale 'very satisfied', 'satisfied', 'dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied' cannot be compared to the scale from previous surveys: 'excellent', 'good', 'fair' and 'not satisfactory'.

# INTRODUCTION

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The survey administration period was from September 23<sup>th</sup> to November 15<sup>th</sup> in the fall of 2002. In total, 80,303 surveys were collected which reflects a return rate of approximately 47%. The study was conducted on behalf of the colleges by Compustat Consultants Inc. who had conducted the previous projects.

The following chart shows the statistics summary for the Fall of 2002.

College	Projected Fall registrations	Survey period registration as of Nov. 15th/02	Surveys returned	% of students surveyed in available period	% of Fall registrants surveyed
Algonquin College	15,815	14,978	7,565	51%	48%
Cambrian College	2,045		363		18%
Canadore College	1,534	1,534	251	16%	16%
Centennial College	13,210	10,000	6,485	65%	49%
Conestoga College	11,223	8,359	5,667	68%	50%
Confederation College	2,021	1,274	585	46%	29%
Durham College	5,958	4,457	2,843	64%	48%
Fanshawe College	8,800		4,445		51%
George Brown College	14,147	14,147	6,635	47%	47%
Humber College	19,049	13,785	7,637	55%	40%
La Cité collégiale	1,500	1,000	649	65%	43%
Lambton College	1,298		502		39%
Loyalist College	4,239	1,757	1,490	85%	35%
Mohawk College	12,095		7,167		59%
Niagara College	6,346	3,370	2,489	74%	39%
Northern College	540	247	222	90%	41%
Sault College	1,090	1,018	410	40%	38%
Seneca College	23,000	17,078	11,571	68%	50%
Sheridan College	12,415	10,812	7,202	67%	58%
Sir Sandford Fleming College	3,013	1,393	1,223	88%	41%
St. Clair College	7,679	5,900	3,733	63%	49%
St. Lawrence College	3,449	1,791	1,169	65%	34%
The Province	170,466	112,900	80,303	*60%	47%

\*estimated return rate based on 18 colleges who tracked the necessary statistics.

Survey results from students indicating that they were registered in a full-time program (9,182 students) have been excluded from this report, due to the fact that they are characteristically different. In addition to this, surveys from 3,414 students who either did not answer the question regarding their full-time status or answered with a double response, have been excluded.

Surveys from students who filled out multiple surveys were included in the report. This allowed students attending more than one course to cast a second vote or in other cases to give information specific to their course. These students were likened unto customers making a second purchase. Therefore the student-course combination was the independent observation in this report unless noted, and should be kept in mind when interpreting results.

# PROVINCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

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## ***Excellence in Education***

One indication that colleges are continuing, successfully, to strive for excellence in education is the fact that 'excellent' ratings increased gradually but steadily between 1996 and 2000 in the four survey questions about overall quality. In 2002, with the survey scale change, it can still be observed that provincially, continuing education students are satisfied overall. The combined 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied' ratings were 94% to 95% for overall 'quality of instructors', 'quality of courses', 'facilities and services' and 'helpfulness of staff'. Between 22% and 35% were 'very satisfied' which shows that there is still room for improvement.

## ***Growing Reputation of Ontario Colleges***

From 1996 through to 2000, the largest proportion of students (almost 40%) indicated that the most important reason for choosing to register in their particular college was due to the location of the college campus. Over the same time period a growing proportion indicated their most important reason for choosing to register was the 'reputation of this college'.

In 2002, a new option was added to this question allowing students to select that their main reason for attending was 'previous positive experience at this college'. This was chosen by 23% of students provincially which was just 1% less than 'location' as being students' most important reason for attending.

## ***High Course Satisfaction***

Students gave very high combined 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' ratings to all aspects of their courses and instructors (90% or higher). 'Very satisfied' ratings are a better indicator in teaching and learning of where there are strengths and areas for improvement. 'Very satisfied' ratings ranged from 49% up to 65% with two exceptions. The highest rated aspect was 'instructor's knowledge of the subject' (71% 'very satisfied') and the lowest was 'instructor's presentation of the subject' (35% 'very satisfied'). These results again underscore the quality and value that is provided to students by colleges through continuing education courses. While these results are very positive, the colleges recognize the need for improvement, and are continuing to strive for excellence, and to develop strategies to raise student satisfaction even higher in the future.

## ***Diversity from College to College***

Once again, the survey indicated that there is tremendous diversity among the colleges in terms of the continuing education student profile. Across the province, the proportion of students whose first language is other than English or French is up by 2% since 2000 and 8% since 1996. This increase is most evident in metro colleges up 4% since 2000 and 11% since 1996. Forty percent of students at metro colleges have a first language other than English or French compared to 24% provincially.

# PROVINCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

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Female students continue to outnumber male students by a significant amount in continuing education courses across the province (64% to 36%). The proportion ranges from a low of 53% female students in one college to a high of 78% females at another.

The age of the student body varies from one college to another. Across the province, 61% of the continuing education students are between the ages of 25 and 44 inclusive, with 28% of these in the 35-44 age bracket. However, students in the 35-44 age bracket varies from 23% at one college, to 36% at another. The proportion of older students also varies significantly from college to college. In one college, only 1% are 65 years of age or older, while at another college, 15% are in this age bracket.

There continues to be diversity among the programs offered by colleges and the goals that students have in taking continuing education courses. For example, across the province 17% of students are working towards completion of a single course, but this ranges from a low of 8% at one college to a high of 56% at another; and while provincially, 40% of students are working towards a certificate, the range is from 17% to 50%.

## ***Unemployed but Educated***

In 2000, there was a growing proportion of students employed full-time. There were 71% employed which had been steadily increasing since 1996. However, in 2002 there was a 4% decrease provincially in the proportion of students who were employed full-time by and 3% more students said that they were unemployed. In contrast to this, the proportion of students who have completed a university degree continues to climb steadily. In 2002, 31% of continuing education students had completed a university degree prior to taking their course. This is up by 6% since 1996. With a tougher and ever changing job market, employees are required to have increased education and skills. A significant proportion (64%) of students are taking continuing education courses for career related reasons. However, there has been a shift in the composition of this group in 2002. There are less who are looking to improve themselves in their current career and more who are looking for a job.

## ***Increased Technology***

The availability and use of computer technology has continued to increase since the last survey. In 2002, 93% had access to a computer, up 9% since 1998. In addition, use of internet is steadily rising. This increased use of technology is impacting different aspects of college education. Use of web site registration was up 12% this year and has taken over from 'in person' as the most preferred method of future registration provincially. With the introduction of web site as an option for a source of information about continuing education courses, 25% of students selected it as a most valuable source of information resulting in a decrease of those choosing the CE catalogue/calendar. When asked which method of taking a similar course would be of interest to them in the future, though traditional classroom is still the number one choice, 11% selected 'Internet/WEB with E-mail support' up from 8% in 2000 and 6% in 1998. Web-site appears to be the way of the future.

# PROVINCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

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## ***College Facilities/Services and Support***

The study measured student satisfaction with the information available for course selection and the usefulness and accessibility of course catalogues. Questions about students' experience with registration, dealing with the college by phone and in person, and a wide variety of college services and facilities were also included.

Student satisfaction ratings for questions regarding telephone and information services ranged from 81% to 90% 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with 'very satisfied' ratings from 25% to 31%. Registration ratings were slightly higher from 83% to 95% 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with 'very satisfied' ratings from 26% to 43%.

In 2002, to assist in reviewing the results for facilities and services an importance rating was introduced. Now, not only can satisfaction be assessed but also how important a particular facility or service is to a student. When considering the combined 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied' ratings for facilities and services they ranged from 79% to 93% with two exceptions. These exceptions were 'cost of parking' and 'price of books' which received combined 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied' ratings of 68% and 45% respectively. These are provincial problems. To go along with this 'price of books' also had a very high importance rating, only 45% were satisfied but 93% considered it important. Provincially, those facilities and services which were considered most important were 'classroom temperature and air circulation' as well as cleanliness of 'washrooms', 'classrooms' and 'buildings'. Those which were rated with highest satisfaction were cleanliness of 'classrooms', 'buildings' and 'helpfulness of library staff'.

## ***Barriers & Safety***

Again, the greatest barrier to success by a wide margin was seen to be finances (22%), and colleges need to continue to provide financial support for part-time students through student loans, scholarships and bursaries so that continuing education courses are accessible to all students.

It should be noted that a decreasing proportion of students are receiving the catalogue/calendar at their home without their request. However, this seems to be compensated for with the introduction of the web site option of receiving the catalogue/calendar in 2002. Thirteen percent chose it as their source for the catalogue/calendar.

Ninety percent or more students provincially feel safe in college buildings and on the grounds. Females however, feel less safe than males with 13% of females saying they do not feel safe on colleges grounds in comparison to 4% of males. Also incorporated into the survey this year was a question about the awareness of the escort program. Sixty percent of students were not aware of the escort program.

# PROVINCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

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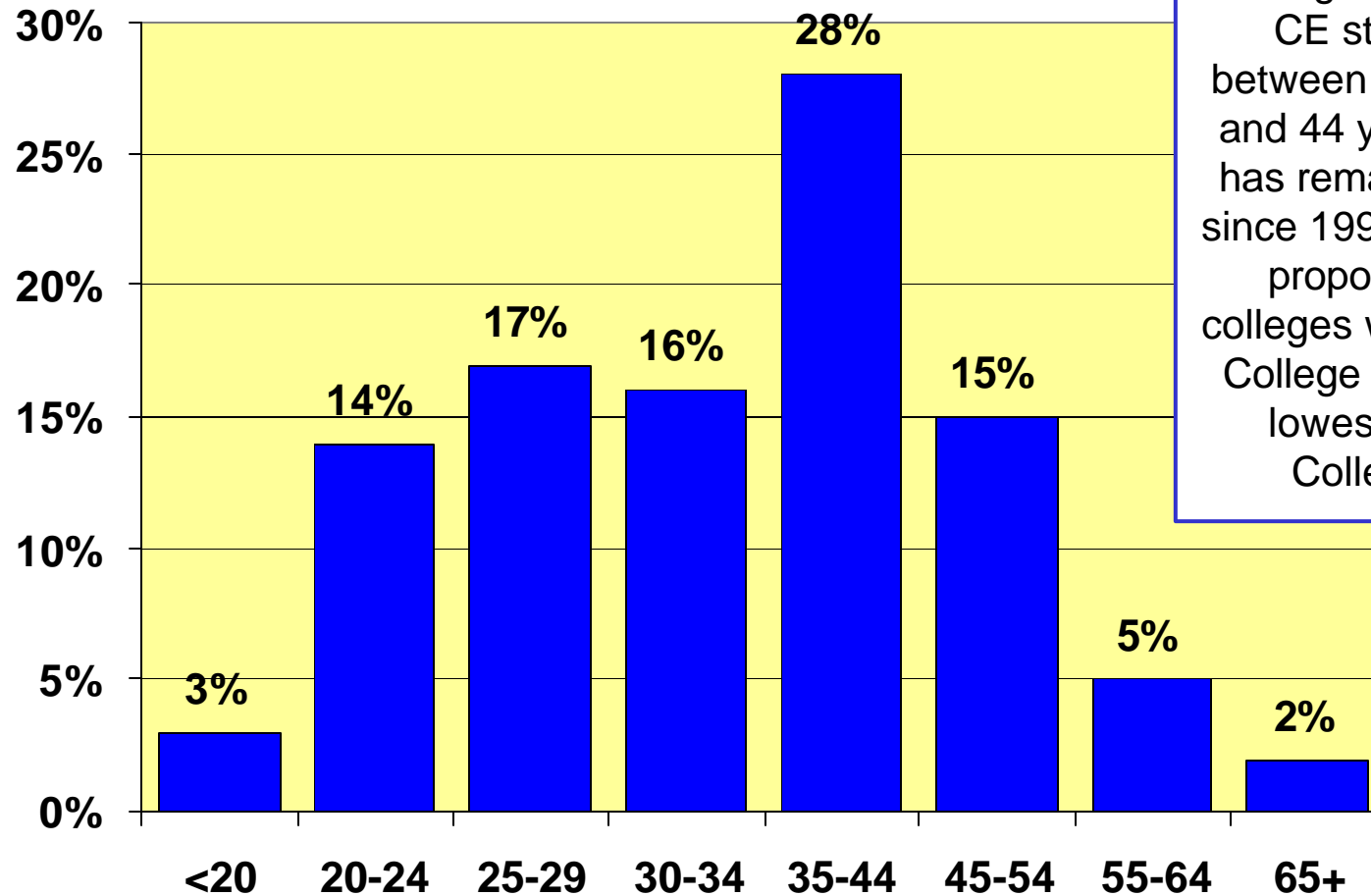
## *In Summary*

This on-going project has provided a wealth of information, allowing the Heads of Continuing Education to define who their students are and why they are taking Continuing Education courses. It has allowed colleges to monitor trends and raise their awareness of changes within their student body. It also reflects each institution's strong and not-so-strong characteristics, indicating where improvement is necessary and where special advantages can be highlighted. Individual colleges have engaged in specific further studies of interest to them; some have conducted a focused analysis on such subjects as "Registration", "Learning & Technology", "Facilities & Services", "Teaching & Learning", "Marketing" and "Safety on campus". Although each college will use the survey results in the ways that best meet their individual needs, the overall outcome in all the colleges should be a greater sensitivity and more direct response to the needs and preferences of the part-time student population. The colleges plan to survey at least every two years to determine ongoing satisfaction levels and monitor trends. In some colleges, student evaluations of courses and instructors are being done every semester.

For further information regarding this survey please contact one of the following:

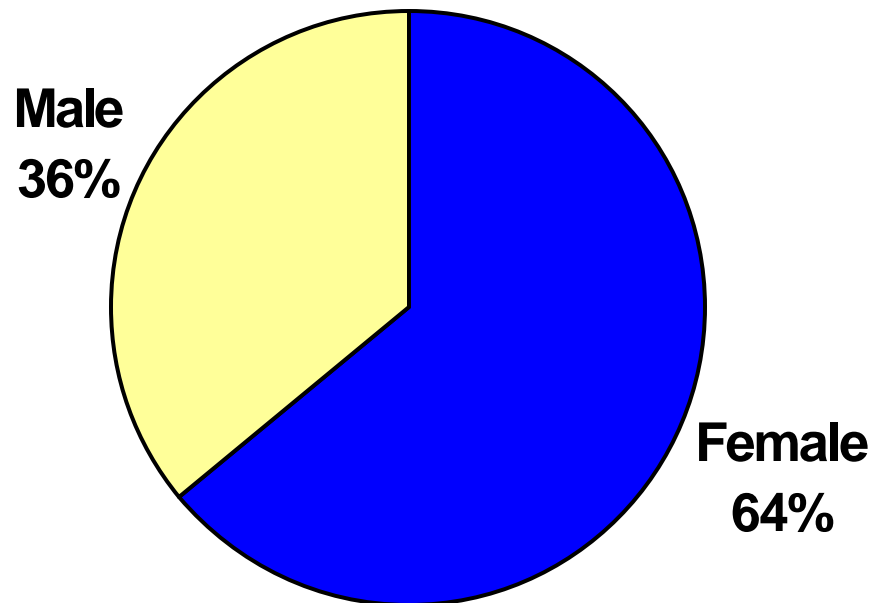
Algonquin College – Linda Rees, Acting Executive Director  
Cambrian College – Linda Renaud, Chair, Continuing Education  
Canadore College – Greg Russell, Acting Chair – Continuing Education & Corporate Training  
Centennial College – Debby Kaplan, Dean, Continuing Education  
Conestoga College – Dan Piedra, Program Administrator, Managerial and Professional Programs  
Confederation College – Don Lovisa, Director, School of Access  
Durham College – Catherine Drey, Director, Continuous Learning  
Fanshawe College – Ann Everatt, Directory of Continuing Education  
George Brown College – Mary Raspor, Director of Continuing Education  
Humber College – Janis Miller, Dean, Corporate & Continuing Education  
La Cité collégiale – Martine Cardinal, Director, Continuing Education & Distance Education  
Lambton College – Dave Gotts, Director, Corporate Training  
Loyalist College – Trudie Lake, Administrative Coordinator  
Mohawk College – Donna McMillan, Chair, Creative & Applied Arts & Distance Education  
Niagara College – Patricia Labonte, Director, Continuing Education  
Northern College – Debbie Petrus, Manager, Continuing Education  
Sault College – Patricia Gibbons, Director, Centre for Continuing Education & Contract Training  
Seneca College – Susan Savoie, Director  
Sheridan College – Michael Lefer, Manager, Continuing and Part Time Studies  
Sir Sandford Fleming College – Rosemary Goodacre, Manager, Fleming Training Services  
St. Clair College – James Wilson, Chair, Continuing Education  
St. Lawrence College – David White – Director of Marketing  
Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario – Joan Homer, Executive Director  
Compustat Consultants Inc. – Edward T. Hodge, President

## Age of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 2002



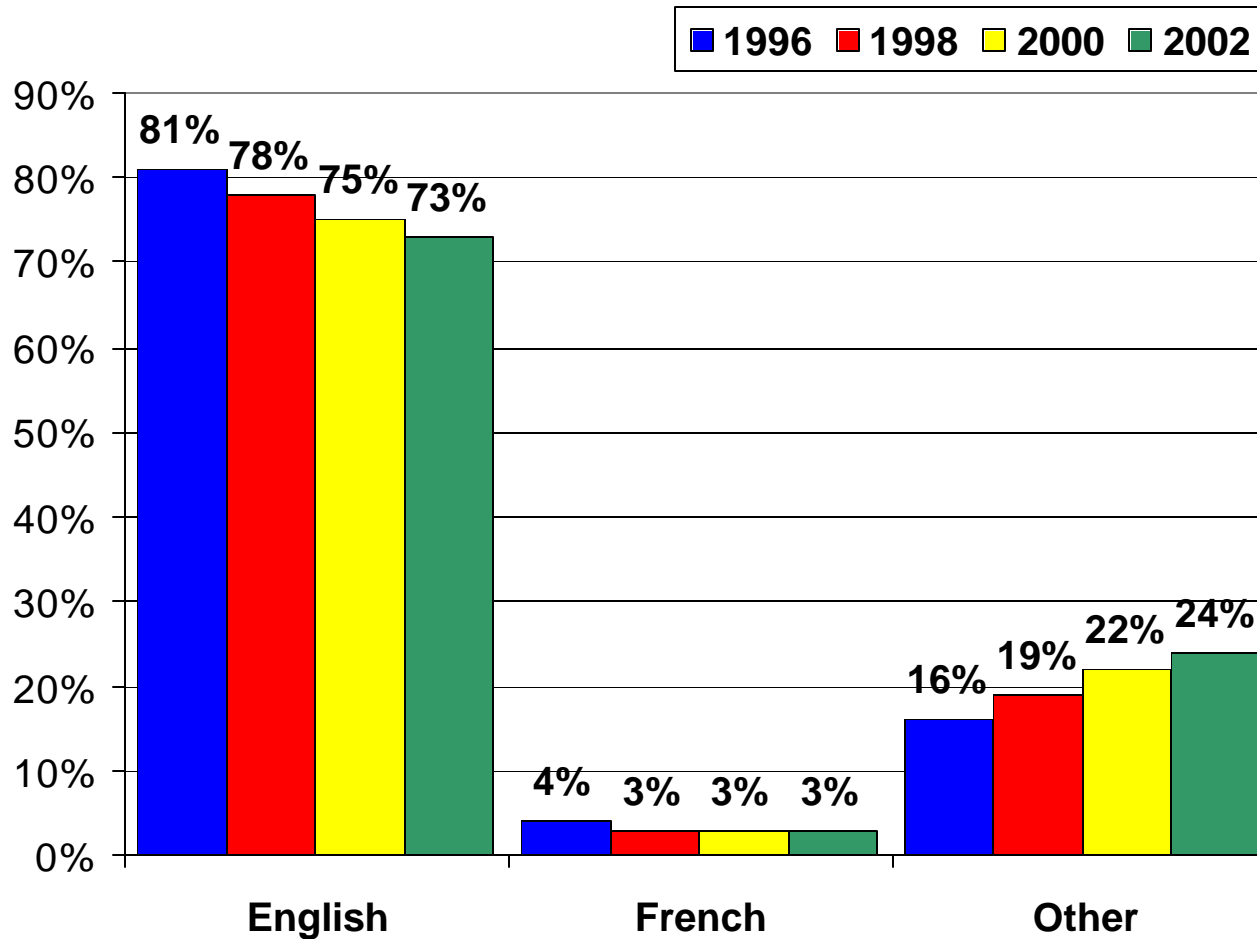
The highest proportion of CE students falls between the ages of 35 and 44 years old. This has remained constant since 1996. The highest proportion among colleges was at Northern College (36%) and the lowest at Loyalist College (23%).

## ***Gender of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 2002***



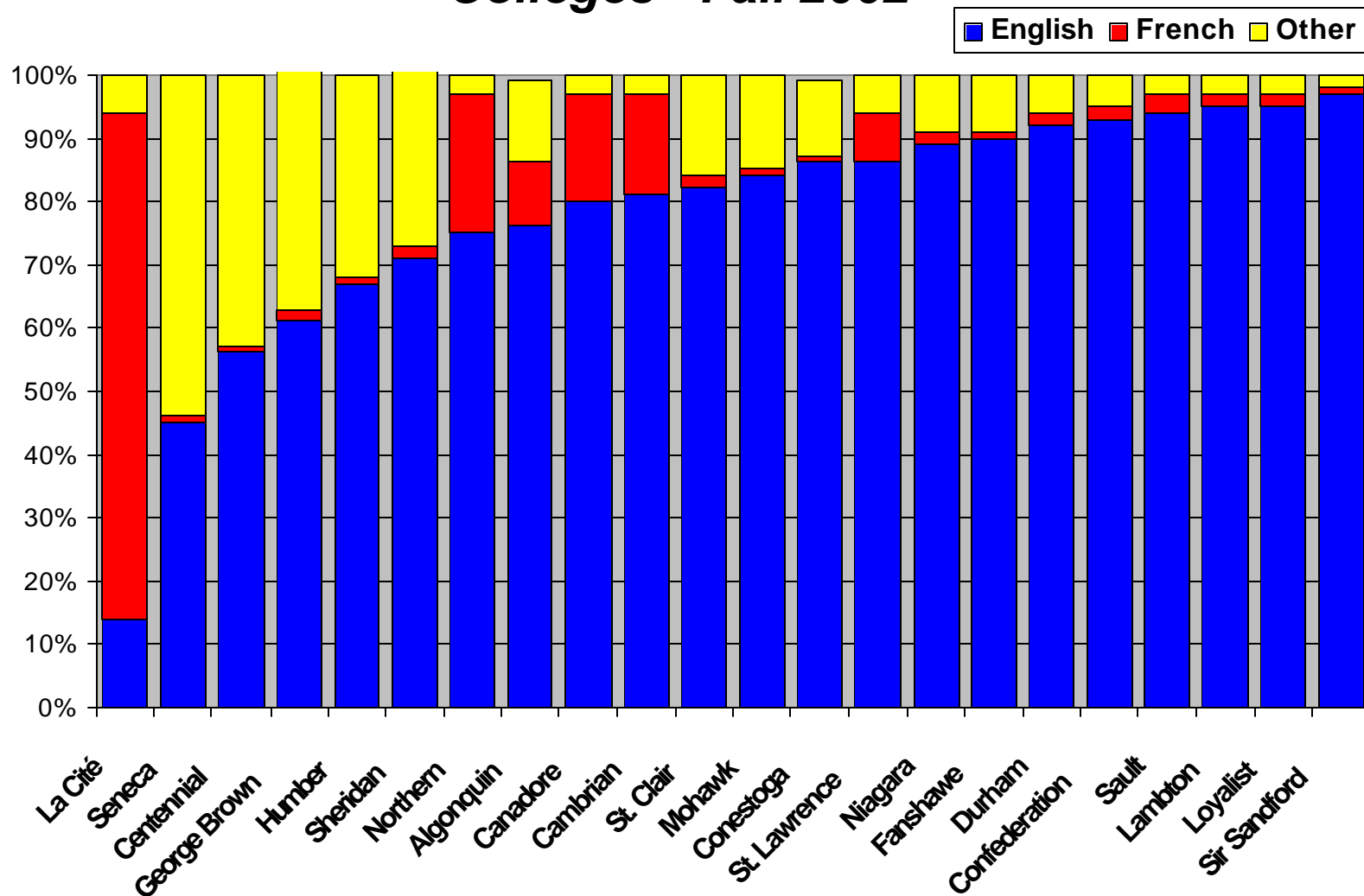
The proportion of males and females taking continuing education courses across the province has remained stable since 1996. A proportion of 10% more males are employed full-time, 7% more females are employed part-time and 6% more females are homemakers.

## ***First Language of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 2002***



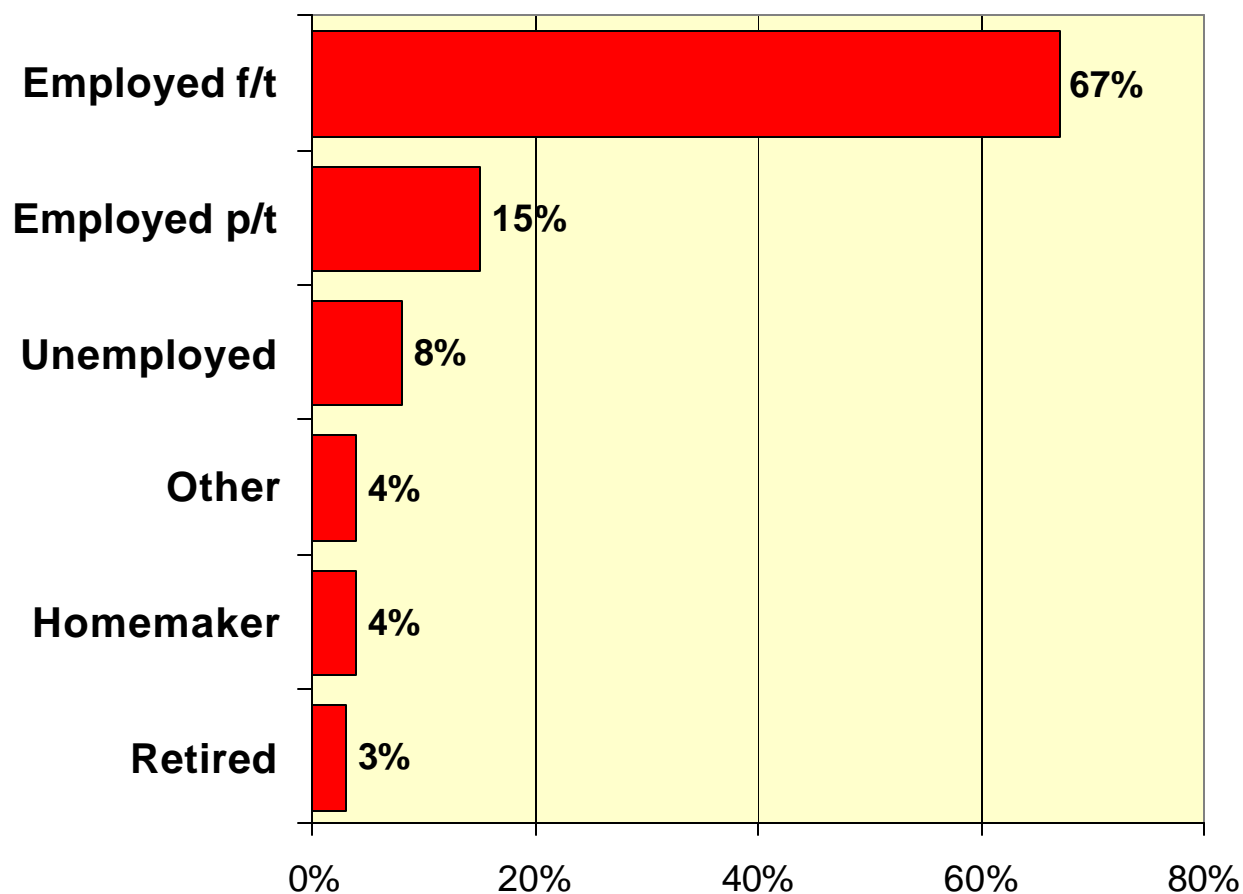
Provincially since 1996, there appears to be a smaller proportion of students who speak English as their first language and a growing proportion who speak a language other than English or French. The proportion of those speaking French has remained constant.

# First Language of Continuing Education Students Colleges - Fall 2002



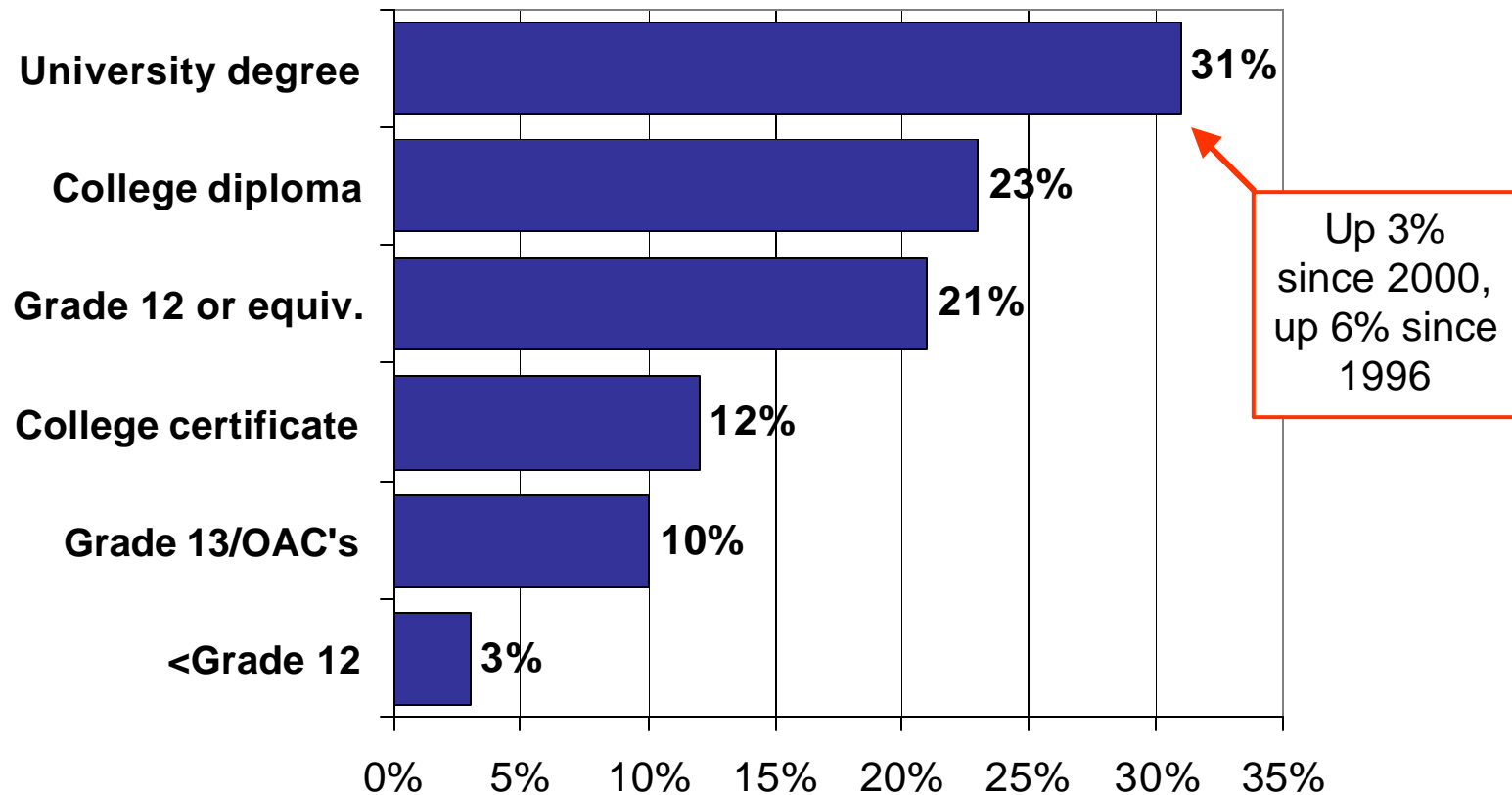
La Cité has the highest proportion of French speaking students (80%) and Seneca has the highest speaking a language other than English or French (54%, up 3% since 2000)

## ***Employment Status of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 2002***



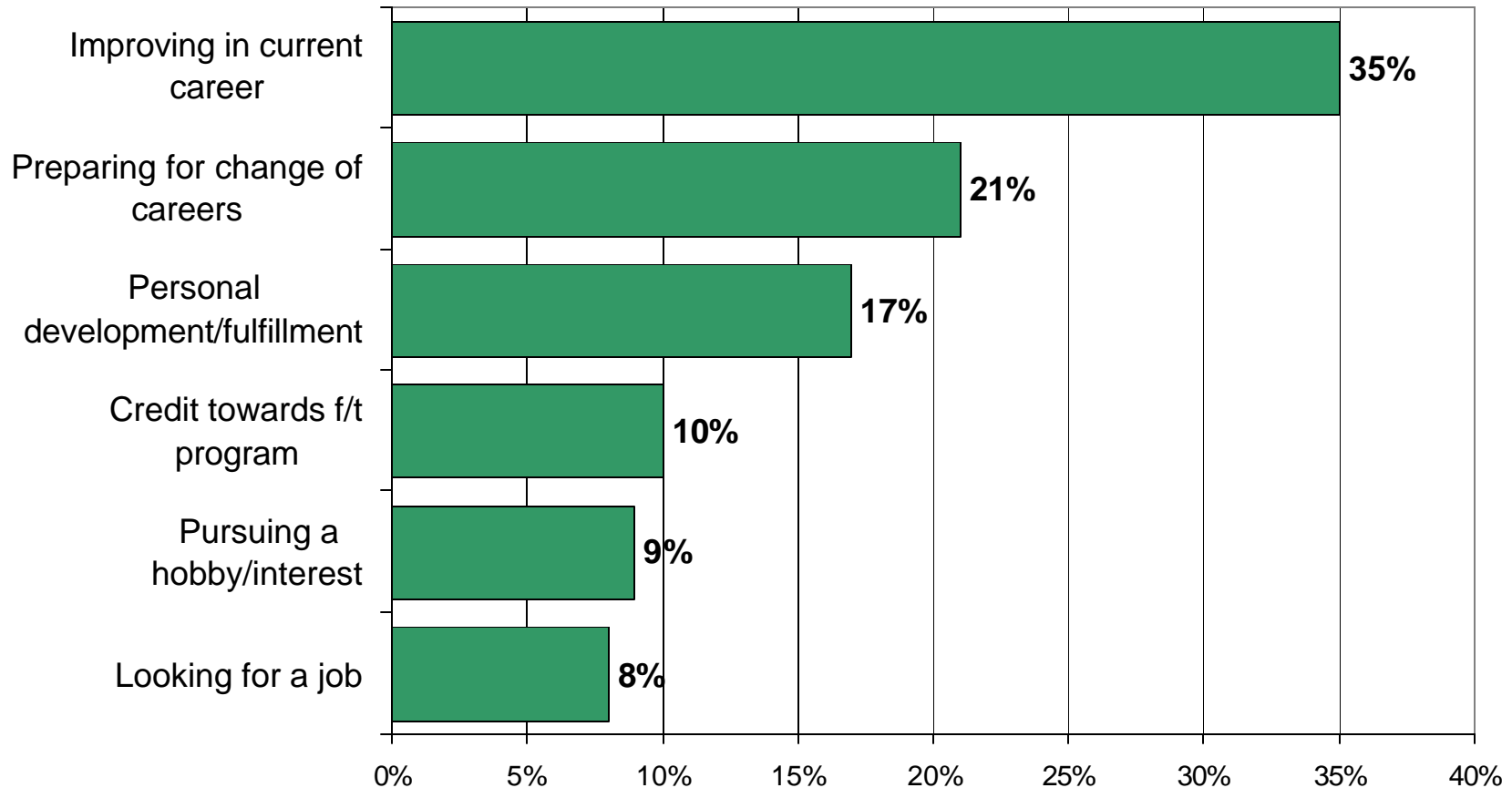
Eighty-seven percent of retired students are taking their courses for personal development and fulfillment or to pursue a hobby or interest. Forty-three percent of those who are employed full-time are taking their CE course to improve themselves in their current careers and 21% are preparing for a change of careers.

## Highest Level of Education of Continuing Education Students - Province - Fall 2002



66% of CE students provincially have already completed some form of post-secondary education, which is 3% more than in 2000. 78% of CE students completed their highest level of education in Canada and 22% in another country

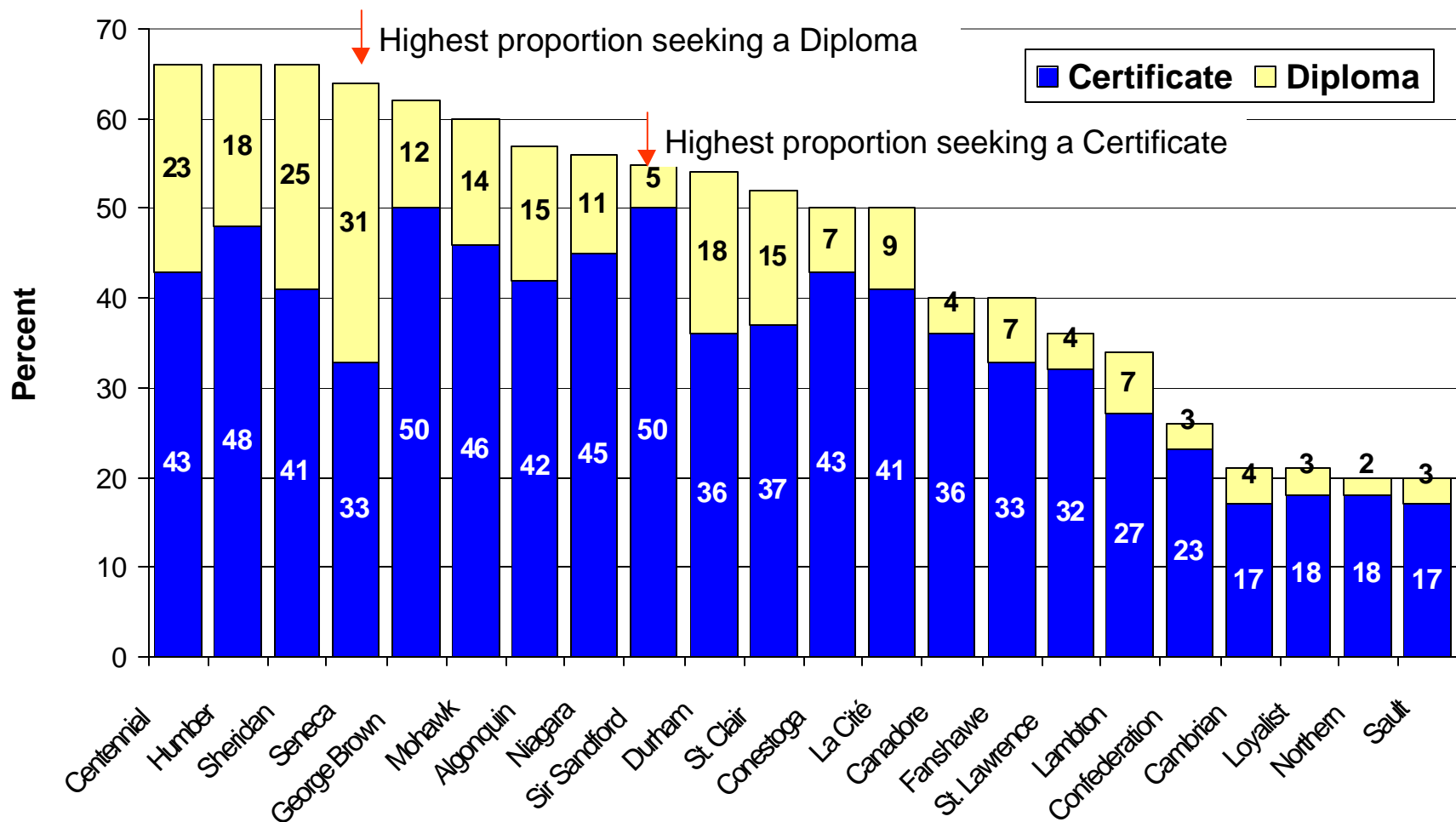
## ***Main Reasons for Enrolling Province - Fall 2002***



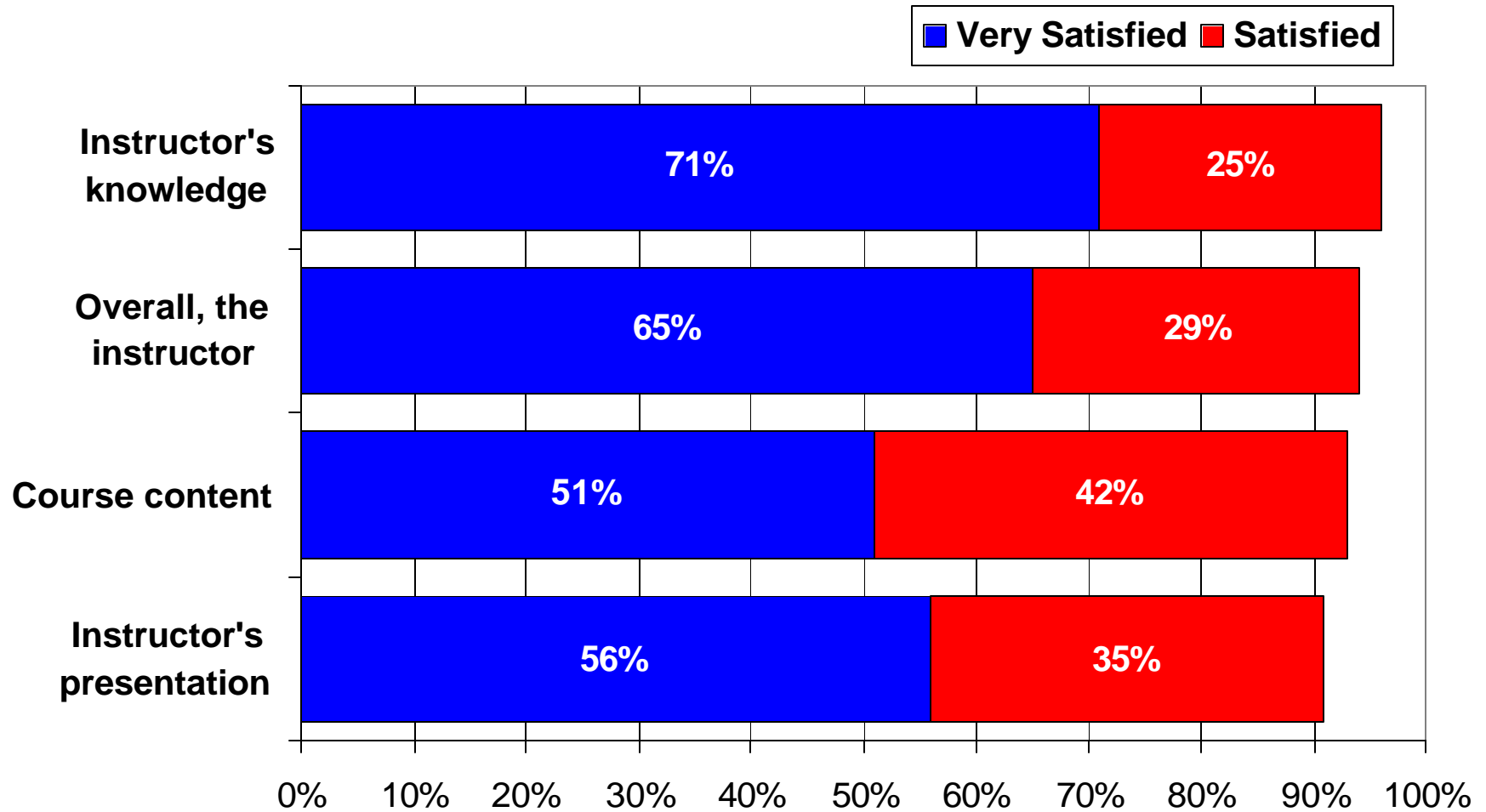
Sixty-four percent of CE students are taking their CE courses for career related reasons. This is down 3% since 2000. There is a 5% decrease in 2002 in the proportion of students taking their course to improve in their current career compared to 2000.

# What Continuing Education Students are Working Towards Province - Fall 2002

Similar to other results, there is considerable diversity from one college to the next in terms of student profile and the programs offered. In this chart it is noted that larger colleges have significantly larger proportions of students seeking diplomas & certificates.



## Course & Instructor Ratings Province - Fall 2002

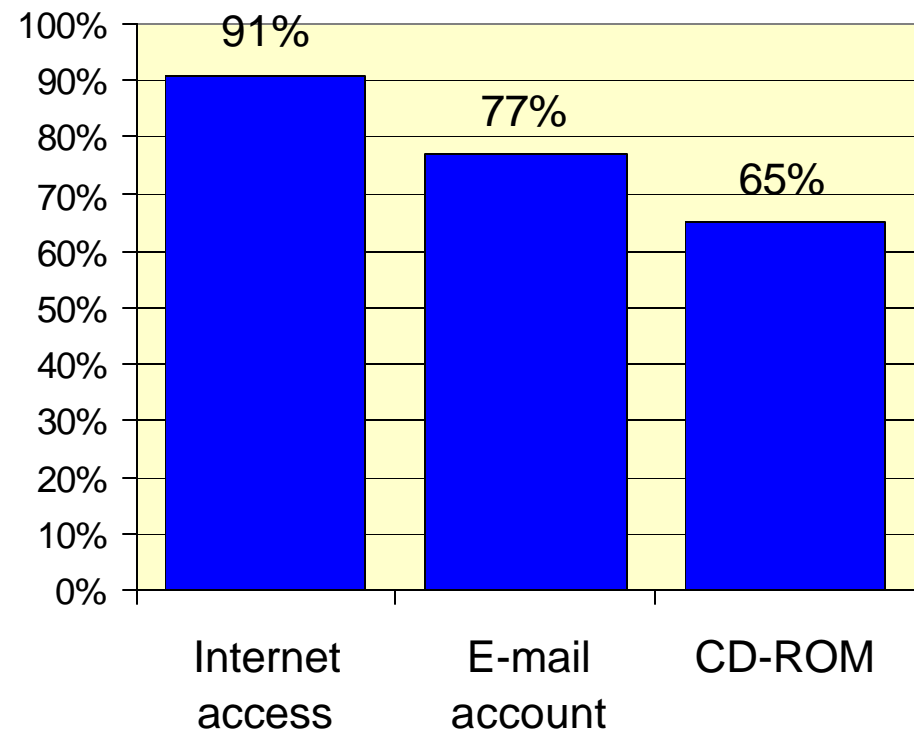
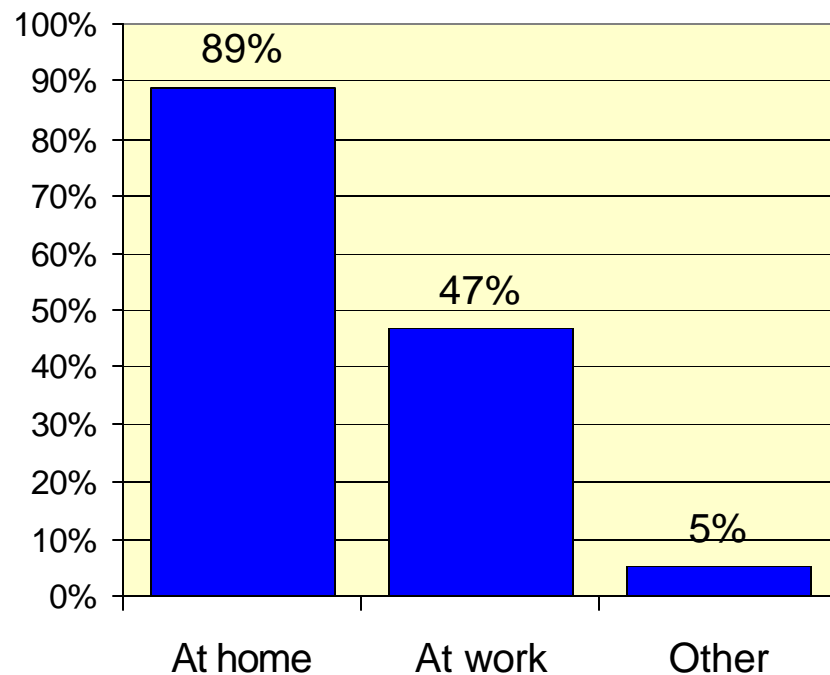


## ***Other Indicators of Satisfaction Province - Fall 2002***

- ✓ 82% of students would recommend their course to a friend with similar interests
- ✓ 31% of students said that the course was better than they expected
- ✓ 70% of students had taken courses at their present college in the past
- ✓ 35% of students had already taken 4 or more courses at their present college

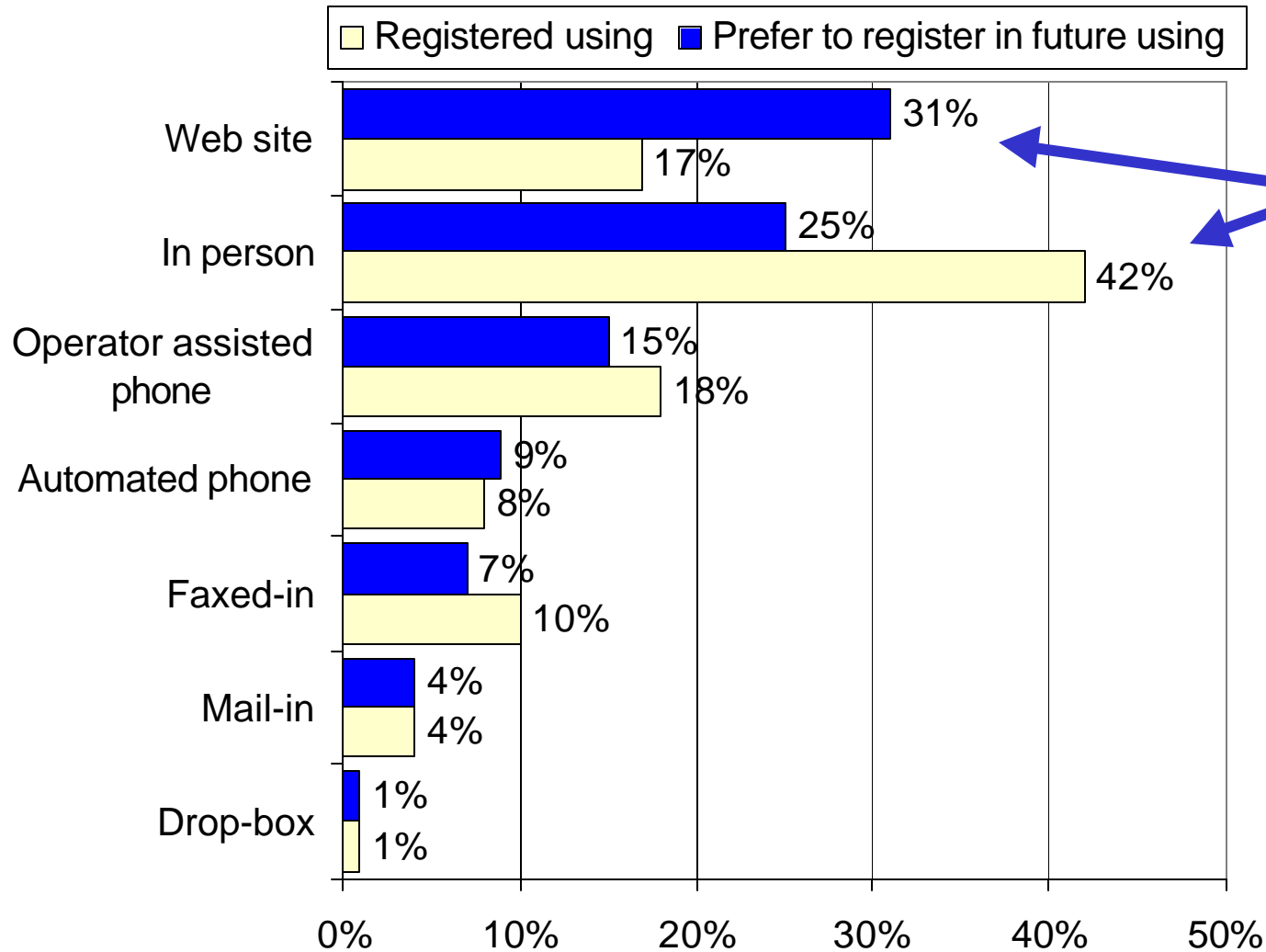
## Learning & Technology Province - Fall 2002

**93% of Continuing Education students across the province have computer access.**  
The following charts show where this access is and the accessories that it includes.



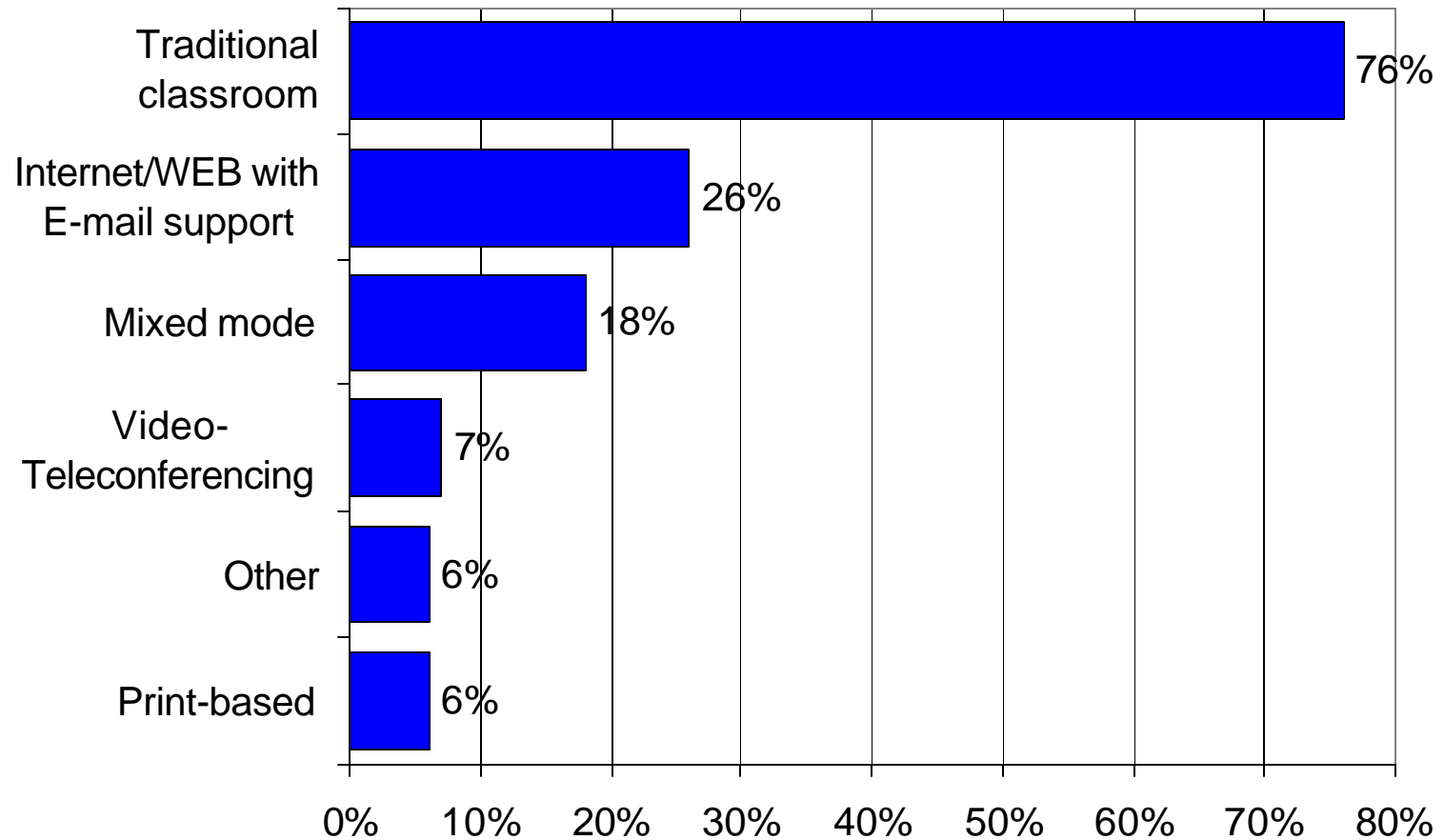
The proportion of those having computer access is up 4% since 2000.

## Registration Province - Fall 2002

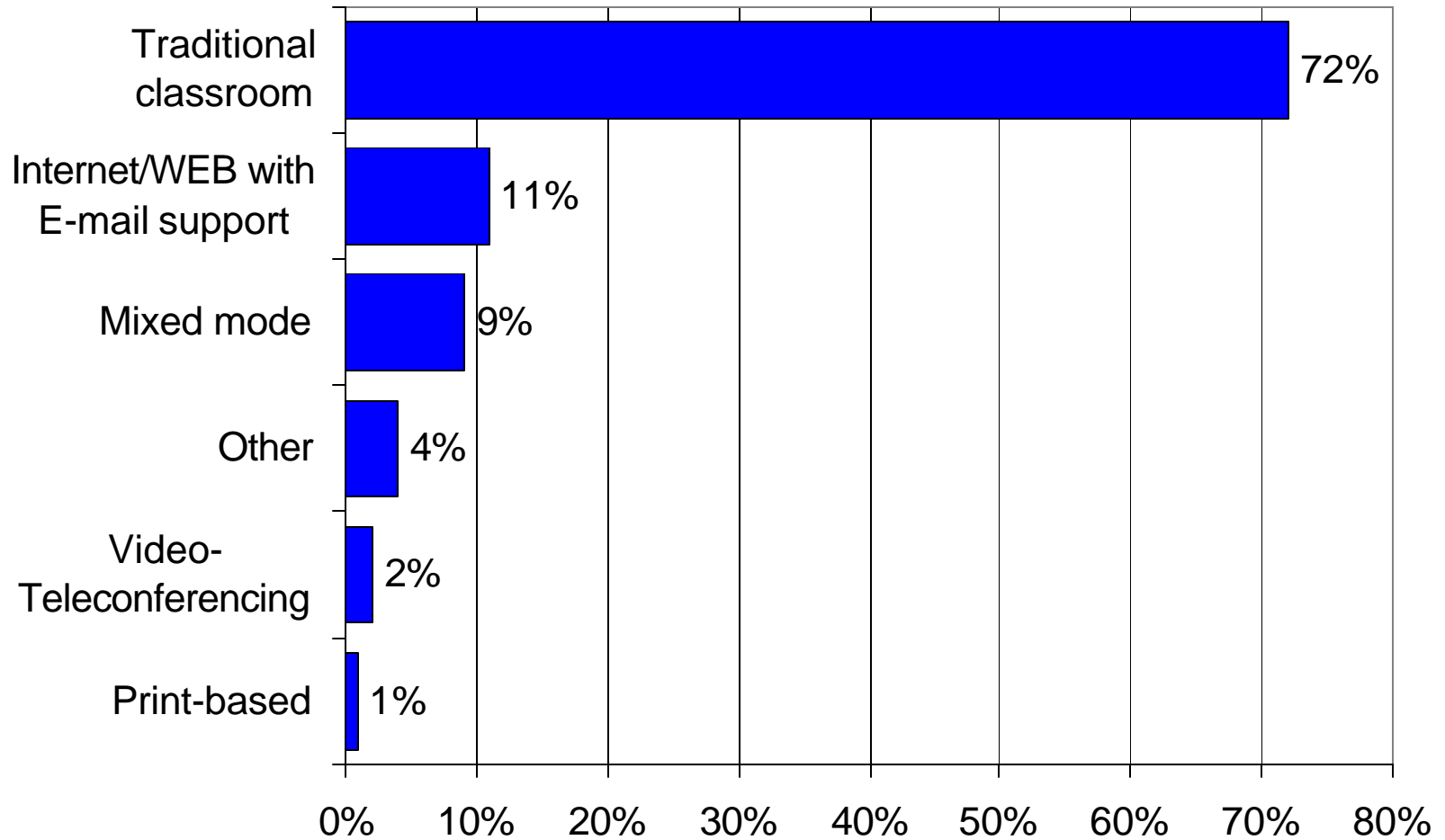


The most common registration method across the province is in person. However, the preferred method by 31% of students provincially is by web site.

## ***Method(s) of Interest for Taking Course (Select all that apply) Province - Fall 2002***



**Method of Interest for Taking Course (Select one)  
Province - Fall 2002**



## ***Changes up 3% or more Province - 2002***

- ◆ up 12% to 17% - registered by Web site
- ◆ up 10% to 31% - prefer to register by Web site
- ◆ up 3% to 37% - given useful advice about alternative courses after a course they registered for was unavailable
- ◆ up 3% to 72% - intend to register in another CE course at the College next semester
- ◆ up 4% to 93% - have access to a computer
- ◆ up 3% to 22% - completed their highest level of education in another country
- ◆ up 3% to 31% - have completed a university degree
- ◆ up 4% to 12% - are unemployed

Note: Rating questions could not be compared as the scale changed in 2002. There were also other questions that could not be compared due to changes in 2002.

## ***Changes down 3% or more Province - 2002***

- ◆ down 5% to 35% - whose main reason for taking their course is to improve in their current career
- ◆ down 6% to 10% - who registered by fax
- ◆ down 4% to 9% - prefer to register by automated phone
- ◆ down 3% to 7% - prefer to register by fax
- ◆ down 3% to 78% - completed their highest level of education in Canada
- ◆ down 4% to 65% - employed full-time

Note: Rating questions could not be compared as the scale changed in 2002. There were also other questions that could not be compared due to changes in 2002.