



**National Educational Association
of Disabled Students**
Association nationale des étudiant(e)s
handicapé(e)s au niveau postsecondaire

*POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS
WITH DISABILITIES: THEIR
EXPERIENCE – PAST AND
PRESENT*

FINAL REPORT

Adele D. Furrie

adfurrie@rogers.com

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Executive Summary

- This National Educational Association of Disabled Students' (NEADS) research initiative, "The Landscape of Accessibility and Accommodation for Students with Disabilities in Canadian Post-Secondary Education: 2016 – 2018" presents a comprehensive picture of the landscape of accessibility and accommodations for persons with disabilities pursuing higher education in publicly funded colleges and universities.
- This report contributes to the secondary analyses of existing surveys by providing an analysis of the data collected in the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (2012 CSD).
- Of the 3,775,910 Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and older, there were 325,170 who:
 - ✓ are attending school at the time of the 2012 CSD interview AND are attending a post-secondary institution OR
 - ✓ who were not attending school at the time of the 2012 CSD interview but had since September 2007 AND has a post-secondary degree, diploma or certificate.
- Of the 325,170 who are attending post-secondary institutions or who attended recently, 190,290 or 58.5% are currently attending.
- The manner in which the data were collected on type of post-secondary education precludes the possibility of identifying the population who are attending or did recently attend non-university publicly-funded institutions. Therefore, the 2012 CSD can divide the population of 325,170 adults with disabilities who are attending or recently attended post-secondary institutions into those attending/recently attended university (117,990) and those who are attending or recently attended non-university public and private post-secondary institutions (207,180).
- Of the 3,775,910 adults with disabilities in Canada, 42% had some post-secondary education.
 - ✓ Of those, 980,090 (62%) had some post-secondary non-university education and 605,100 (38%) report some post-secondary university education.
 - ✓ Among the 980,080 Canadians with disabilities who report post-secondary non-university education, 21% are part of our research population; among the 605,100 who report post-secondary university education, 19.5% are part of our research population.
- University students with disabilities are younger, slightly more likely to be female, much less likely to identify as Indigenous, more likely to be an immigrant and slightly less likely to be a member of the visible minority population than non-university students with disabilities.
- University students with disabilities are less likely to report more than one type of disability, less likely to be classified as having severe or very severe disability, and slightly more likely to have had their disability since before the age of 19 than non-university students with disabilities.
- For both research populations (non-university and university), the most prevalent type of disability is pain. This type of disability is frequently reported together with mobility and/or flexibility disabilities and/or disability as a result of a mental health condition. Among university students with disabilities, mental health was the second most prevalent disability reported; among non-university students, flexibility disability was the second most prevalent.
- Almost one in three (30.4% or 99,010 out of 325,180) of post-secondary students with disabilities report only one type of disability. Among university students with disabilities, 37.3% or 43,955 out of 118,000 reports only one type of disability while among the 207,180 non-university students with disabilities, this drops to 26.6% or 55,055 students.
- Overall, almost six out of 10 post-secondary students were employed at the time of the survey and there was little difference between those attending non-university post-secondary institutions and those attending university. However, the data show that there were significant differences when the post-secondary student population was divided into those currently attending and those who had recently

attended. Just over seven out of 10 post-secondary students who had attended university during 2001 and 2011 were employed and only 2.6% were unemployed. Contrast this to non-university post-secondary students where 67.5% are employed but 7.3% were unemployed.

- When age is factored in, the percentages who were employed at the time of the survey shows major differences. Among university students who were attending school during 2007 and 2011 and are no longer attending, 79.1% who are aged 15 to 24 years and 81.4% who are aged 25 to 34 years were employed. Contrast this to non-university post-secondary students where only 73% aged 15 to 34 and 73.7% aged 25 to 34 years were employed.
- There were 18.7% post-secondary students with disabilities who lived in households where the household income was below the low-income cut-off. Within that group, post-secondary non-university students who were currently attending were the worse off. Almost one in four (23.9%) were living in households below the low-income cut-off. By contrast, non-university students who had attended during 2007 to 2011 were the best off with the percentage dropping to 14.8.
- Few post-secondary students need adapted or modified building features to attend their chosen post-secondary institution. Of the 325,180 post-secondary students, only 7.7% needed this accommodation and this proportion was even less among university students with disabilities.
- Just over one in four (84,830 or 26.1%) needed assistive devices, support services, modification to curriculum or additional time for testing to follow courses. This need was higher among university students with disabilities. With this group, 37,970 or 32.2% needed at least one of these accommodations.
- Among those who need such accommodations, the highest need was for extended time to take tests and exams – 76.3% or 64,730 students with disabilities. This need was similar across the two types of institutions. However, the unmet need for this type of accommodation was significantly higher among non-university students with disabilities. Among university-based students with disabilities, unmet need was 8.3% while among non-university students with disabilities, this unmet need was 21.2% - over one in five who needed this accommodation did not receive it.
- Some insights into the impact that having a disability has had on the individual's ability to obtain his/her desired level of education are provided. The largest impact is among post-secondary students who had their disability before the age of 19.

Background

The National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) consumer-controlled, cross-disability charitable organization that represents its constituents through specific projects, resources, research, publications and partnerships. Since its founding in 1986, NEADS has had the mandate to support full access to education and employment for post-secondary students and graduates with disabilities across Canada. This NEADS' research initiative, "The Landscape of Accessibility and Accommodation for Students with Disabilities in Canadian Post-Secondary Education: 2016 – 2018" presents a comprehensive picture of the landscape of accessibility and accommodations for persons with disabilities pursuing higher education in publicly funded colleges and universities.

The objectives of the 18-month project include:

1. an assessment of the landscape of academic accommodations;
2. an assessment of the landscape of co-curricular and experiential learning accommodations;
3. an assessment of the landscape of accessibility and accommodation practices in transitional spaces;
4. an assessment of the evolution toward the principles of accessibility and universal design;
5. an understanding of trends in accessibility and accommodation within Canadian postsecondary education;
6. identification of best practices and benchmarks; and
7. establishment of a national collaborative network.

The objectives of the research are met through:

- a comprehensive literature review and environmental scan;
- a review of institutional accessibility and accommodations policies and best practices;
- secondary analyses of existing surveys;
- bilingual, online surveys of the relevant stakeholder groups; and
- in-person consultations on campus and in appropriate conference settings.

This report contributes to the secondary analyses of existing surveys by providing an analysis of the data collected in the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (2012 CSD).

Methodology

1. Data source

Data concerning the issues facing people with disabilities have been collected for over 30 years in Canada. The initiative started with the tabling of “Obstacles” – the report produced by the Special Parliamentary Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped as part of Canada’s response to the United Nations 1981 International Year of the Disabled. One of the report’s 130 recommendations directed Statistics Canada to develop a national database. The first in the disability-specific surveys was the Canadian Health and Disability Survey conducted as a supplement to the October 1983 and June 1984 Labour Force Survey. The 1986 Census of Population included a question about activity limitations that was used as the sampling frame for the first post-censal survey – the 1986 Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS). The same methodology was used in 1991. A similar methodology was used for the 2012 CSD where the sampling frame was provided by the responses to activity limitation questions from the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) – the voluntary survey replacement for the long form of the 2011 Census of Population.

The 2012 CSD is based on a sample of persons who were 15 years of age or older as May 2011. Since the NHS excludes the institutionalized population and persons living in other collective dwellings, the 2012 CSD covers persons living in private dwellings in Canada. Also, for operational reasons, the population living on First Nation reserves is also excluded. The sample size for the 2012 CSD was 45,443 individuals. The overall response rate was 75%.

For more details on the sample design, data collection and data processing, readers are encouraged to access [the methodology report](#) prepared by Statistics Canada.

2. Defining the research population

Of the 3,775,910 Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and older, there were 325,170 who:

- are attending school at the time of the 2012 CSD interview (variable EDU_Q01 or EDU_Q02 = Yes) AND are attending a post-secondary institution (EDU_Q03 = 2 or 3) OR
- who were not attending school at the time of the 2012 CSD interview but had since September 2007 (variable EDP_Q01) AND has a post-secondary degree, diploma or certificate (EDB_Q01 = 3 to 7).

Of the 325,170 who are attending post-secondary institutions or who attended recently, 190,290 or 58.5% are currently attending.

The manner in which the data were collected on type of post-secondary education precludes the possibility of identifying the population who are attending or did recently attend non-university publicly-funded institutions. Question EDU_Q03 (currently attending) groups trade school, college, CEGEP or other non-university institution into one category. Question EDB_Q01 (recent attendees) provide a slightly different breakdown (trade certificate or diploma, and college, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma). Therefore, the 2012 CSD can divide the population of 325,170 adults with disabilities who are attending or recently attended post-secondary institutions into those attending/recently attended university ((117,990) and those who are attending or recently attended non-university public and private post-secondary institutions (207,180).¹

¹ These estimates are based on a total sample size of 2,820 with 1,212 respondents who are attending or recently attended university and 1,608 respondents who are attending or recently attended non-university public and private post-secondary institutions.

A copy of the [questionnaire](#) provides the exact wording for each of the questions used to define the research population.

Analysis

Of the 3,775,910 adults with disabilities in Canada, 42% had some post-secondary education. Of those, 980,090 (62%) had some post-secondary non-university education and 605,100 (38%) report some post-secondary university education. Among the 980,080 Canadians with disabilities who report post-secondary non-university education, 21% are part of our research population; among the 605,100 who report post-secondary university education, 19.5% are part of our research population.

1. Their demographics and disability characteristics

For ease of presentation, we refer to our research population as “post-secondary students with disabilities”, “university students with disabilities” and “non-university students with disabilities” throughout the remainder of this report.

University students with disabilities are younger, slightly more likely to be female, much less likely to identify as Indigenous, more likely to be an immigrant and slightly less likely to be a member of the visible minority population than non-university students with disabilities.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of post-secondary students with disabilities by type of post-secondary institution			
Demographic characteristics	Post-secondary students with disabilities		
	Non-university	University	Total
Number of post-secondary students with disabilities	207,180	118,000	325,180
Age			
15-19 years	6.9%	6.8%	6.9%
20-24 years	12.8%	16.9%	14.3%
25-29 years	11.0%	16.5%	13.0%
30-34 years	10.7%	12.5%	11.4%
35-39 years	11.3%	8.4%	10.3%
40-44 years	12.9%	8.3%	11.2%
45-49 years	13.2%	8.0%	11.3%
50 years and older	21.0%	22.5%	21.5%
Sex			
Male	45.6%	41.0%	44.0%
Female	54.4%	58.9%	56.0%
Aboriginal	9.9%	3.3%	7.5%
Immigrant	17.4%	20.1%	18.4%
Visible minority	18.0%	16.7%	17.5%

Source: Unpublished data, 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability

Age

University students with disabilities are younger than students attending non-university post-secondary institutions. Among non-university students with disabilities, 58.5% are aged 35 and older. Among university students with disabilities, only 47.2% are aged 35 and older.

Sex

Almost six out of ten (58.9%) of university students with disabilities are female; this proportion is slightly lower among non-university students with disabilities.

Aboriginal (Indigenous) status

Overall, 7.5% of post-secondary students with disabilities identify as Aboriginal. Students with disabilities who identify as Aboriginal (Indigenous) are three times more likely to attend non-university than university.

Immigrant status/Visible minority status

Just over one in five (20.1%) university students with disabilities report being an immigrant compared to 17.4% among non-university students with disabilities. South Asian and Chinese account for just over half of post-secondary students with disabilities

– 52.6% (non-university) and 51.4% (university). The reverse is true when visible minority status is considered.

Discussion

When age and sex are looked at together, the differences become even more pronounced. Among students aged 15 to 34 years, females outnumber males – 66.5% versus 47.5% respectively. Among females, those aged 25 to 34 years outnumber those aged 15 to 24 years while among males, the proportions are almost evenly split.

Table 2. Major field of study reported by post-secondary students with disabilities by type of post-secondary institution		
Students Demographic characteristics	Post-secondary students with disabilities	
	Non-university	University
Number of post-secondary students with disabilities*	152,950	93,950
Field of study		
Education	1.2%	11.5%
Humanities	1.9%	15.4%
Social and behavioural sciences and law	7.6%	16.2%
Business, management and public administration	17.0%	18.5%
Physical and life sciences and technologies	1.0%	7.0%
Mathematics, computer and information sciences	3.2%	1.9%
Architecture, engineering, and related technologies	23.3%	6.7%
Health and related fields	27.9%	8.8%
Personal, protective and transportation services	7.7%	1.2%
Visual and performing arts	3.7%	5.6%
Agriculture and other	5.4%	7.2%
* There were 54,220 non-university and 24,250 university students who had not yet achieved a post-secondary degree, diploma or certificate. These students are excluded from this table.		
<i>Source: Unpublished data, 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability</i>		

Students were asked to identify the highest certificate, diploma or degree that they had completed and to indicate the major field of study. For 78,470 of the 325,180 students currently attending post-secondary institutions, their highest certificate or diploma was their high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate. For these students, we do not know the program that they are enrolled in. We only know that they are attending a non-university institution or university.

Table 2 provides field of study for the remaining students with disabilities. Except for business, management and public administration, the choice of field of study is quite different between the two populations. Just over four out of 10 (43.1%) students with disabilities attending university report their fields of studies to be education (11.5%), humanities (15.4%) and social and behavioural sciences and law (16.2%); these three disciplines account for only 10.7% of non-university post-secondary

students with disabilities. By contrast, 51.2% on non-university post-secondary students with disabilities report their fields of studies to be architecture, engineering, and related fields (23.3%) and health and related fields (27.9%); by contrast, these two disciplines account for only 15.5% among university students with disabilities.

Table 3. Disability characteristics of post-secondary students with disabilities by type of post-secondary institution

Disability characteristics	Post-secondary students with disabilities		
	Non-university	University	Total
Number of post-secondary students with disabilities	207,180	118,000	325,180
Number of disabilities			
Only one type	26.6%	37.3%	30.4%
Two types	19.8%	27.1%	22.4%
Three or more types	53.6%	35.6%	47.1%
Degree of disability			
Mild	35.2%	45.8%	39.1%
Moderate	19.1%	22.3%	20.3%
Severe	23.7%	19.9%	22.3%
Very severe	22.0%	12.0%	18.3%
Onset of disability			
Before school (birth to 4 years)	16.1%	11.3%	14.3%
Five to 18 years	23.0%	32.7%	26.5%
19 to 29 years	21.2%	20.9%	21.1%
30 to 44 years	25.5%	23.7%	24.9%
45 to 54 years	8.4%	6.7%	7.8%
55 to 64 years	2.6%	1.5%	2.2%
Age of onset unknown	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%
Type of disability			
Seeing	21.1%	14.3%	18.7%
Hearing	21.0%	16.9%	19.5%
Mobility	40.3%	27.4%	35.6%
Flexibility	49.7%	34.9%	44.3%
Dexterity	23.4%	13.2%	19.7%
Pain	69.7%	61.9%	66.9%
Learning	28.7%	17.6%	24.7%
Developmental	8.5%	4.2%	7.0%
Memory	22.7%	12.8%	19.1%
Mental Health	42.4%	35.1%	39.7%
Type unknown	1.9%	2.6%	2.2%

Source: Unpublished data, 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability

University students with disabilities are less likely to report more than one type of disability, less likely to be classified as having severe or very severe disability, and slightly more likely to have had their disability since before the age of 19 than non-university students with disabilities. For both research populations (non-university and university), the most prevalent type of disability is pain. This type of disability is frequently reported together with mobility and/or flexibility disabilities and/or disability as a result of a mental health condition. Among university students with disabilities, mental health was the second most prevalent disability reported; among non-university students, flexibility disability was the second most prevalent.

Number of disabilities

The 2012 CSD asks questions so that one can identify 10 distinct types of disabilities plus type unknown (a general limitation because of a health condition or health problem). These screening questions are included in the first section of the [questionnaire](#). Almost one in three students (30.4%) report only one type of disability. Proportionately, more of these individuals are attending/have recently attended university rather than non-university (37.3% and 26.6% respectively).

The same is noted among those reporting two types of disabilities – 22.4% overall and 27.1% (university) and 19.8% (non-university).

The reverse is true among persons reporting three or more types of disabilities – 47.1% overall and 35.6% (university) and 53.6% (non-university)

Degree of disability

Using the information provided by respondents

concerning the nature and extent of their disability, Statistics Canada officials developed a [severity of disability index](#). Almost two out of five post-secondary students (39.1%) are classified as having a mild disability. This

proportion was much higher among university students with disabilities – 45.8%. This same pattern is noted among post-secondary students classified as having a moderate disability. The reverse is true among post-secondary students classified as having a severe or very severe disability.

Onset of disability

Just over four out of ten (40.8%) of post-secondary students with disabilities had acquired their disability before the age of 19. Among university students with disabilities, this rose to 44%.

Type of disability

Among the 10 types of disabilities identified in the 2012 CSD, the most prevalent type of disability is pain for both research populations (non-university and university). This type of disability is frequently reported together with mobility and/or flexibility disabilities and/or disability as a result of a mental health condition. Among university students with disabilities, mental health was the second most prevalent disability reported; among non-university students, flexibility disability was the second most prevalent.

Discussion

There are two measures that could be used to measure the impact on one's daily life activities. The number of disabilities is directly derived from responses provided by the individual. The severity index is a derived variable based on responses provided by the individual concerning intensity of limitation and frequency of limitation. While there is a strong correlation between these two measures, we decided to focus the remainder of the analysis on the number of disabilities because each type of disability may require different types of accommodation found that the number of disabilities tells the more compelling story for our research population.

Table 4. Demographic and disability characteristics of post-secondary students with disabilities reporting only one type of disability

Demographic and disability characteristics	Non-university students	University students	Post-secondary students
Estimated number of post-secondary students	55,060	43,960	99,010
Age			
15 - 19	12.0%	8.1%	10.3%
20 - 24	18.3%	24.0%	20.9%
25 - 29	13.9%	23.6%	18.2%
30 - 34	13.1%	9.7%	11.6%
35 - 39	16.2%	10.9%	13.8%
40 - 44	5.9%	5.8%	5.8%
45 - 49	4.2%	4.7%	4.4%
50 years and older	16.4%	13.1%	14.9%
Sex			
Male	51.9%	34.6%	44.2%
Female	48.1%	65.4%	51.3%
Severity			
Mild	84.2%	84.3%	84.2%
Moderate	15.1%	12.6%	14.0%
Severe
Very severe
Onset of disability			
Before school (0 – 4)	13.0%	13.7%	13.3%
School years (5 – 18)	33.7%	41.8%	37.3%
In transition (19 – 29)	19.2%	19.5%	19.3%
Work years (30 years plus)	34.1%	25.0%	30.1%
Type of disability			
Seeing	6.2%	10.3%	8.0%
Hearing	11.8%	14.1%	12.8%
Mobility	3.9%	2.6%	3.3%
Pain	27.5%	37.8%	32.1%
Learning	11.1%	6.7%	9.1%
Mental	23.4%	13.6%	19.0%

Source: Unpublished data, 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability

university students report a seeing disability; among non-university students, 25.2% report a pain disability and 17.6% report a learning disability.²

Early onset of disability (before the age of 30) is more prevalent among university students with disabilities who report only one type of disability than those who are in non-university programs – 75% versus 65.9% respectively.

Almost one in three (30.4% or 99,010 out of 325,180) of post-secondary students with disabilities report only one type of disability. Among university students with disabilities, 37.3% or 43,960 out of 118,000 reports only one type of disability while among the 207,180 non-university students with disabilities, this drops to 26.6% or 55,060 students.

Both the age and gender profile are different between non-university and university students with disabilities who have one type of disability with females predominating among university students with disabilities and males among non-university students with disabilities. While the difference between the two research populations is not as dramatic, younger adults are more prevalent among university students with disabilities.

For the majority of post-secondary students with disabilities who report only one type of disability, their severity index is mild thus demonstrating a strong correlation between number of disabilities and the derived severity index. There are however 15.8% who are classified as having moderate/severe/very severe disabilities and have only one type of disability. Among this group, 34.6% of

² Unpublished data from the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability.

The disability-type profile is also very different between the two research populations. More than one-third (37.8%) of university students with disabilities report pain as their only disability with migraines, Crohn's disease, arthritis and pain in joints and back being the most often reported underlying health condition. Among the 19% of post-secondary students with disabilities who report a disability as a result of a mental health condition, proportionately almost twice as many are non-university students compared to university students – 23.4% and 13.6% respectively. The most frequently reported underlying health conditions among this group is depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder.³

Table 5. Demographic and disability characteristics of post-secondary students with disabilities reporting only two types of disability			
Demographic and disability characteristics	Non-university students	University students	Post-secondary students
Estimated number of post-secondary students	40,980	31,990	72,970
Age			
15 - 19	7.9%	6.4%	7.3%
20 - 24	14.9%	10.7%	13.0%
25 - 29	12.4%	12.4%	12.4%
30 - 34	13.5%	15.3%	14.3%
35 - 39	5.6%	8.6%	6.9%
40 - 44	15.4%	9.1%	12.6%
45 and older	30.3%	37.5%	33.4%
Sex			
Male	56.7%	53.8%	55.5%
Female	43.3%	46.1%	44.5%
Severity			
Mild	63.4%	51.8%	58.3%
Moderate	14.8%	27.4%	20.3%
Severe and very severe	21.8%	20.8%	21.4%
Onset of disability			
Before school (0 – 4)	12.5%	6.4%	9.8%
School years (5 – 18)	24.7%	32.0%	27.9%
In transition (19 – 29)	19.9%	18.4%	19.2%
Early work years (30-44)	28.3%	36.1%	31.7%
Later work years (45 years plus unknown onset)	14.6%	7.0%	11.3%
Type of disability			
Seeing	15.9%	8.7%	12.7%
Hearing	4.8%	11.4%	7.7%
Mobility	18.8%	18.2%	18.5%
Pain	63.9%	65.5%	64.6%
Learning	21.5%	13.8%	18.1%
Mental	34.1%	30.5%	32.6%

Source: Unpublished data, 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability

Just over one in five (22.4% or 72,790 out of 325,180) of post-secondary students with disabilities report two types of disability. Among university students with disabilities, 27.1% or 31,990 out of 118,000 reports two types of disability while among the 207,180 non-university students with disabilities, this drops to 19.8% or 40,980 students.

Both the age and gender profile are different between non-university and university students with disabilities who have two types of disability with males predominating among both university students with disabilities and non-university students with disabilities. While the difference between the two research populations is not as dramatic, younger adults are more prevalent among university students with disabilities.

For the majority of post-secondary students with disabilities who report two types of disability, their severity index is mild thus demonstrating a strong correlation between number of disabilities and the derived severity index.

The disability-type profile is very different between the two research populations. Non-university students

³ Ibid.

with disabilities who report having two types of disability are more likely than their university peers to report a seeing disability, less likely to report a hearing disability and more likely to report a learning disability.

Table 6. Demographic and disability characteristics of post-secondary students with disabilities reporting three or more types of disability			
Demographic and disability characteristics	Non-university students	University students	Post-secondary students
Estimated number of post-secondary students	111,150	42,050	153,200
Age			
15 - 19	4.1%	5.9%	4.6%
20 - 24	9.3%	14.3%	10.7%
25 - 29	9.1%	12.2%	9.9%
30 - 34	8.5%	13.4%	9.9%
35 - 39	11.0%	5.7%	9.6%
40 - 44	15.6%	10.2%	14.1%
45 - 49	20.2%	12.7%	18.1%
50 years and older	22.2%	25.7%	23.2%
Sex			
Male	38.4%	38.0%	38.3%
Female	61.6%	62.0%	61.7%
Severity			
Mild/Moderate	23.2%	29.5%	25.0%
Severe	35.9%	37.1%	36.2%
Very severe	40.9%	33.4%	38.9%
Onset of disability			
Before school (0 – 4)	18.9%	12.6%	17.2%
School years (5 – 18)	17.1%	23.6%	18.9%
In transition (19 – 29)	22.7%	24.3%	23.2%
Early work years (30 – 44)	25.9%	23.0%	25.1%
Later work years (45 years plus and unknown)	12.0%	8.3%	11.0%
Type of disability			
Seeing	30.4%	22.8%	28.3%
Hearing	31.6%	23.9%	29.5%
Mobility	66.3%	60.4%	64.7%
Pain	92.8%	84.4%	90.5%
Learning	40.2%	31.9%	37.9%
Mental	54.8%	61.2%	56.5%
<i>Source: Unpublished data, 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability</i>			

Almost half (47.1% or 153,200 out of 325,180) of post-secondary students with disabilities report three or more types of disability. Among university students with disabilities, 35.6% or 42,050 out of 118,000 reports two types of disability while among the 207,180 non-university students with disabilities, this increases to 53.6% or 111,050 students.

Both the age and gender profile are different between non-university and university students with disabilities who have three or more types of disability with females predominating among both university students with disabilities and non-university students with disabilities. Non-university student who report three or more types of disability are more likely to be older than their university peers – 69% versus 54.3% respectively are aged 35 years and older.

For the majority of post-secondary students with disabilities who report three or more types of disability, their severity index is severe or very severe again demonstrating a strong correlation between number of disabilities and the derived severity index.

A pain disability is one of the types of disabilities reported by almost all post-secondary students who report three or more types of disabilities.

Table 7. Demographic and disability characteristics of post-secondary students with disabilities by number of disabilities reported

Demographic and disability characteristics	One type of disability	Two types of disabilities	Three or more types of disabilities
Estimated number of post-secondary students	99,010	72,970	153,200
Age			
15 to 34 years	60.9%	47.0%	38.4%
35 years and older	39.1%	53.0%	61.6%
Sex			
Male	44.2%	55.5%	43.8%
Female	55.8%	44.5%	56.2%
Severity			
Mild	84.2%	58.3%	41.5%
Moderate/Severe/Very severe	15.8%	41.7%	58.5%
Onset of disability			
Before age of 30 years	69.9%	57.0%	58.4%
Type of disability			
Seeing	8.0%	12.7%	23.8%
Hearing	12.8%	7.7%	22.8%
Mobility	3.3%	18.5%	50.4%
Pain	32.1%	64.6%	82.6%
Learning	9.1%	18.1%	32.1%
Mental	19.0%	32.5%	48.8%
<i>Source: Unpublished data, 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability</i>			

Table 7 provides the demographic and disability characteristics by number of types of disabilities reported by the respondent. With respect to age, number of disabilities increase as age increases among post-secondary students. This finding is consistent with the population with disabilities in general.

Severity of disability increases as number of types of disabilities; 84.2% of post-secondary students who report only one type of disability report mild severity and this drops to 41.5% among post-secondary students reporting three or more types of disabilities.

The prevalence of cognitive⁴ disabilities increases as number of types of disabilities increases. Only 19% of post-secondary students who report only one type of disability report that it is as a result of a mental health condition. Among post-secondary students with two types of disabilities, this increases to 32.5% - almost one in three – and among those reporting three or more types of disabilities, this increases to almost one in two (48.8%). A

similar pattern is noted among post-secondary students reporting a learning disability increasing from 9.1% among those reporting only one type of disability to almost double (18.1%) among those reporting two types of disabilities to almost one in three (32.1%) among those reporting three or more types of disabilities.

⁴ Cognitive disabilities include developmental (Down Syndrome, Asperger's Syndrome, etc.), learning (ADD, ADHD, dyslexia, etc.), memory and mental illness.

2. Their labour force characteristics

Table 8. Labour force characteristics of post-secondary students with disabilities by current versus recent past attendance			
Labour force characteristics	Post-secondary students with disabilities		
	Non-university	University	Total
Number of students with disabilities	207,180	118,000	325,180
% employed	58.4%	59.8%	58.9%
Currently attending	51.7%	52.0%	51.8%
Attended between 2007 and 2011	67.5%	71.8%	69.0%
% unemployed	13.5%	8.3%	11.6%
Currently attending	16.2%	11.1%	14.3%
Attended between 2007 and 2011	7.3%	2.6%	5.5%
% who believe they have been refused a job interview because of disability	12.3%	9.9%	11.4%
Currently attending	11.6%	12.5%	12.0%
Attended between 2007 and 2011	13.2%	6.0%	10.7%
% who believe they have been refused a job because of disability	17.2%	14.7%	16.3%
Currently attending	17.4%	16.8%	17.1%
Attended between 2007 and 2011	17.0%	11.6%	15.2%
% who believe they have been refused a job promotion because of disability	14.0%	8.3%	12.0%
Currently attending	9.5%	8.7%	9.2%
Attended between 2007 and 2011	20.1%	7.8%	15.8%
% who consider themselves to be disadvantaged in employment because of disability	43.0%	35.0%	40.1%
Currently attending	35.3%	28.9%	32.9%
Attended between 2007 and 2011	53.3%	44.4%	50.2%
% who believe they that their current employer or any potential employer would be likely to consider them disadvantage in employment because of disability	35.3%	35.9%	35.5%
Currently attending	31.3%	30.9%	31.2%
Attended between 2007 and 2011	40.7%	43.6%	41.7%

Source: Unpublished data, 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability

aged 25 to 34 years were employed.

Table 8 provides data concerning the employment status of post-secondary students at the time of the survey. Overall, almost six out of 10 post-secondary students were employed at the time of the survey and there was little difference between those attending non-university post-secondary institutions and those attending university. However, the data show that there were significant differences when the post-secondary student population was divided into those currently attending and those who had recently attended. Just over seven out of 10 post-secondary students who had attended university during 2007 and 2011 were employed and only 2.6% were unemployed. Contrast this to non-university post-secondary students where 67.5% are employed but 7.3% were unemployed.

Table 8 also provides some insights into perceived discrimination in the workforce. Across four of the five measures, non-university post-secondary students report higher rates of discrimination than their university peers.

Discussion

When age is factored in, the percentages who were employed at the time of the survey shows major differences. Among university students who were attending school during 2007 and 2011 and are no longer attending, 79.1% who are aged 15 to 24 years and 81.4% who are aged 25 to 34 years were employed. Contrast this to non-university post-secondary students where only 73% aged 15 to 34 and 73.7%

3. Their economic characteristics

Table 9. Economic characteristics of post-secondary students with disabilities by current versus recent past attendance			
Economic characteristics	Post-secondary students with disabilities		
	Non-university	University	Total
Number of students with disabilities	207,180	118,000	325,180
% living in households below low-income cut-off (after tax)	20.0%	16.4%	18.7%
Currently attending	23.9%	16.0%	21.0%
Attended between 2007 and 2011	14.8%	17.0%	15.5%
Source of income in 2011 - % reporting			
Wages and salaries	58.7%	64.9%	61.0%
Self-employment	16.7%*	18.1%*	17.2%
Workers' Compensation	13.5%*	..	10.4%*
Canada Pension Plan – Disability benefit	6.2%*	3.4%*	5.2%*
Long-term disability (Private plan)	7.2%*	6.0%*	6.7%*
Social assistance	12.0%	9.4%*	11.1%
Employment Insurance	13.5%	6.6%	11.0%
% reporting out-of-pocket expenses relating to disability that were not reimbursed	20.4%	31.0%	24.2%
* Use with caution – high CV. .. suppressed because of quality Source: Unpublished data, 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability			

university students.

While the majority of post-secondary students live in households where the income is above the [low income cut-off \(after taxes\)](#), there were 18.7% who lived in households where the income was below the low-income cut-off. Within that group, post-secondary non-university students who were currently attending were the worse off. Almost one in four (23.9%) were living in households below the low-income cut-off. By contrast, non-university students who had attended during 2007 to 2011 were the best off with the percentage dropping to 14.8.

Data concerning sources of income is provided but the majority of the estimates are flagged because of low quality. That said, many post-secondary students are relying on income support programs including social assistance.

Almost one in four (24.2%) post-secondary students reported out-of-pocket expenses related to their disability for which they were not reimbursed. Among university students, this increased to 31%.

The majority of the 79,900 students with disabilities who reported out-of-pocket expenses has expenses of less than \$1,000 – 88% of non-university students and 78.5% of

4. The impact of disability on their education

Table 10. Accommodations sought and obtained by post-secondary students with disabilities by current versus recent past attendance

Accommodations	Post-secondary students with disabilities		
	Non-university	University	Total
Number of students with disabilities	207,180	118,000	325,180
% need/needed adapted or modified building features to attend school	9.1%	5.3%	7.7%
% need/needed any assistive devices, support services, modification to curriculum or additional time for testing to follow courses	22.6%	32.2%	26.1%
# need/needed any assistive devices, support services, modification to curriculum or additional time for testing to follow courses	46,860	37,970	84,830
% need/needed a teacher's aide or tutor	41.8%	26.5%	34.9%
% need/needed a modified or adapted course curriculum	30.5%	23.0%	27.1%
% need/needed extended time to take tests and exams	75.3%	77.5%	76.3%
# need/needed a teacher's aide or tutor	19,570	10,060	29,630
% who did not receive what they needed	18.9%	32.0%	23.4%
# need/needed a modified or adapted course curriculum	14,280	8,730	23,010
% who did not receive what they needed	14.4%	25.1%	18.4%
# need/needed extended time to take tests and exams	35,300	29,430	64,730
% who did not receive what they needed	21.2%	8.3%	15.9%

Source: Unpublished data, 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability

Few post-secondary students need adapted or modified building features to attend their chosen post-secondary institution. Of the 325,180 post-secondary students, only 7.7% needed this accommodation and this proportion was even less among university students with disabilities.

Just over one in four (84,830 or 26.1%) needed assistive devices, support services, modification to curriculum or additional time for testing to follow courses. This need was higher among university students with disabilities. With this group, 37,970 or 32.2% needed at least one of these accommodations.

Among those who need such accommodations, the highest need was for extended time to take tests and exams – 76.3% or 64,730 students with disabilities. This need was similar across the two types of institutions. However, the unmet need for this type of accommodation was significantly higher among non-university students with disabilities. Among university-based students with disabilities, unmet need was 8.3% while among non-university students with disabilities, this unmet need was 21.2% - over one in five who needed this

accommodation did not receive it.

Just over one in three post-secondary students with disabilities (34.9%) needed a teacher's aide or tutor with the need higher among non-university post-secondary students with disabilities at 41.8%. The unmet need for this aid was 23.4% meaning that 29,630 students with disabilities who needed this accommodation did not get it. Proportionately, this unmet need was much higher among university students with disabilities where almost one in three (32%) who needed this accommodation did not get it.

Just over one in four (27.1%) needed a modified or adapted course or curriculum. Among those, 23,010 or 18.4% did not get the accommodation. This rate climbed to 25.1% among university students with disabilities.

There were other accommodations asked about but numbers were too low to be included. These accommodations included recording equipment or a portable note-taking device, a computer or laptop with specialized software or adaptations, a device for playing audio books or e-books, CCTV's, large print reading materials or Braille reading materials or manual braille for students with a seeing disability, a cell phone or smart phone with specialized features, a sign language interpreter for students with a hearing disability and attendant care services.

Table 11. Impact on education for post-secondary students with disabilities by current versus recent past attendance			
Impact	Post-secondary students with disabilities		
	Non-university	University	Total
Number of students with disabilities	207,180	118,000	325,180
As a result of having a long-term health condition or health problem			
% whose choice of courses or careers was influenced	54.1%	43.6%	50.2%
% who took fewer courses or subjects than otherwise would have	40.1%	41.5%	40.6%
% who took longer to achieve present level of education	35.0%	40.6%	37.1%
% who went back to school for retraining	42.6%	22.4%	35.2%
% who changed course of studies	37.1%	24.1%	32.3%
% who had their education interrupted for long periods of time	29.9%	25.6%	28.3%
% who took courses by correspondence or home study	16.0%	18.7%	17.0%
% who attended a special education school or special education classes in a regular school	20.8%	10.6%	17.0%
% who began school later than most other people their age	15.6%	14.9%	15.3%
% who changed schools	17.0%	12.3%	15.3%
% who had to leave their community to attend school	15.3%	13.2%	14.5%
% who had additional expenses for schooling	24.7%	20.4%	23.2%
<i>Source: Unpublished data, 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability</i>			

Table 11 provides some insights into the impact that having a disability has had on the individual's ability to obtain his/her desired level of education.

Half (50.2%) of all post-secondary students with disabilities report that their choice of courses or careers was influenced by the presence of their long-term health condition or health problem. This rate was considerably lower among university students.

Almost two out of five (37.1%) took longer to achieve their present level of education with the percentage somewhat higher among post-secondary (university) students. This potentially has a negative impact on their economic status.

Almost three in ten students (28.3%) reported that their education had been interrupted for long periods of time. Among the 40.8% (see Table 2) who reported that their disability began before the age of 18, 32.1% reported that

they had long interruptions and among non-university students, this increased to 34.4%.

Another economic impact is starting school later than peers. Among the 40.8% (see Table 2) who reported that their disability began before the age of 18, 19% reported that they started school later and among university students, this increased to 22.4%.

An additional economic impact is additional expenses for schooling. Almost one in four (23.2%) of post-secondary students incurred additional expenses. Among the 40.8% (see Table 2) who reported that their disability began before the age of 18, 25.4% reported that they had additional expenses for school and among non-university students, this increased to 28.2%.