

Post-Secondary Education

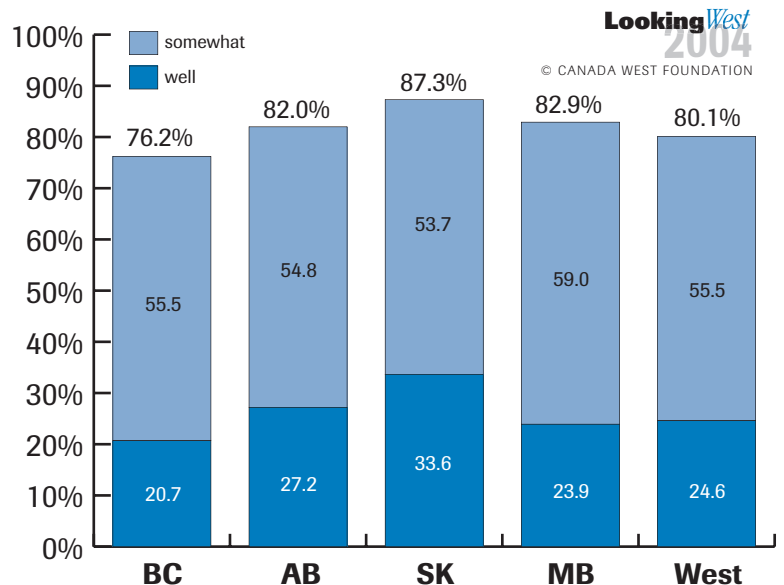
May 2004

Skilled labour is clearly a priority to western Canadians: seven in ten (70.8%) westerners feel ensuring skilled labour is a high priority for long-term provincial prosperity and quality of life, and another quarter (23.0%) state it is a medium priority. Only one in twenty states ensuring skilled labour is a low priority (4.6%) or not a priority (1.1%). Yet while skilled labour is widely seen as a high priority, there is somewhat lower support for improving post-secondary education: six in ten (58.6%) westerners feel it is a high priority, and three in ten (31.7%) feel it is a medium priority. Almost one in ten feels it is either a low priority (7.6%) or not a priority (1.4%).

One possible explanation for this gap is that westerners feel that their post-secondary system is doing a good enough job, and therefore needs little improvement. Looking West 2004 respondents were asked, "I would now like you to think about [province]'s job market and labour needs over the next five years. To what extent are graduates from [province]'s universities, colleges and trade schools prepared for the job market? Graduates are well-prepared for the job market; Graduates are somewhat prepared for the job market; Graduates are not well-prepared for the job market; Graduates are not at all prepared for the job market."

One-quarter (24.6%) of westerners feel that post-secondary graduates are well-prepared for the job market, while the majority (55.5%) feels that graduates are only somewhat prepared. Less than two in ten feel that post-secondary graduates are either not well prepared (12.6%) or not at all prepared (3.2%). Saskatchewan respondents are the most positive about their post-secondary system, with one-third stating that graduates are well-prepared for the job market and almost nine in ten stating that graduates are either well or somewhat prepared. BC respondents are the least positive, with only two in ten stating their graduates are well-prepared and three-quarters stating their graduates are well or somewhat prepared.

Figure 1:
Grads Well/Somewhat Prepared for job Market -
Western Canadian Respondents, 2004



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This summary was authored by CWF Director of Research Loleen Berdahl, and is part of the Canada West Foundation's Building the New West Project. The Kahanoff Foundation, Western Diversification, the Privy Council Office, the Government of Saskatchewan, and Alberta International and Intergovernmental Relations provided funding support for this research study. The opinions expressed in this document are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Canada West Foundation's donors, subscribers or Board.