



Research Note 3:

“What About the Boys?” An Overview of Gender Trends in Education and the Labour Market in Ontario

By: Angelika Kerr, HEQCO

Females are outnumbering males in application rates, enrolment and attainment rates at Ontario’s colleges and universities, which begs the question, are males becoming under-represented in Ontario’s postsecondary education landscape?

“What About the Boys?” An Overview of Gender Trends in Education and the Labour Market in Ontario provides an overview of gender patterns in participation, performance and attainment in Ontario higher education and examines the implications these patterns have on labour market choices and outcomes. This research note also examines gender patterns at the elementary and secondary school levels.

The report finds that the percentages of male and female participation and attainment have increased in all forms of PSE, but the rate of increase has been greater for females. Females also have higher participation rates in more than half of the disciplines in Ontario’s postsecondary institutions.

These trends in education are attributed in part, to gender differences that appear to arise before PSE decisions are made. Performance and choices at the elementary and secondary school levels have an effect on participation and attainment.

Yet despite the overall advances females have made in PSE attainment, this has not translated into full equality in occupational choices and earnings, where males have higher full-time employment levels and higher earnings in some occupations.

About the Author:

Angelika Kerr is a research analyst at the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO). She is a graduate of the University of Toronto and of the Research Analyst Post-Graduate program at Georgian College. She has previously held positions as a research assistant, college instructor and coordinator of adult education and professional development programs.

Angelika’s current projects include gender patterns in postsecondary education, postsecondary transfer and mobility, and work-integrated learning.