



# Non-linear PSE pathways and credential accumulation patterns

Sartor, Stephen and St-Denis, Xavier "Non-linear PSE pathways and credential accumulation patterns"  
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## What the researchers did

The researchers investigated the various postsecondary pathways and credential accumulation patterns of Canadians that extend later into the life course. They examined the predictors of postsecondary pathway uptake as well as the labour market outcomes associated with such pathways and credential accumulation patterns.

## What the researchers found

The researchers found that a substantial amount of credential accumulation occurs beyond the traditional ages associated with postsecondary education, as many individuals attain first and second credentials in their late-20s and mid-30s. However, the acquisition of additional credentials is not always associated with higher annual employment income. Upward pathways (i.e., college diploma to bachelor's degree, or more linear pathways such as bachelor's to master's degree) are associated with the highest annual employment income premiums, although significant gaps according to the first credential remain.

## RDC Datasets used

**Longitudinal International Survey of Adults, Wave 3 (2016)**

## Policy areas this research can inform

- Education, training and learning
- Population and demography

## Policy implications of this research

The first postsecondary credential an individual attains plays a large role in determining the next credential they get (if any). Regardless of the pathway they take, graduates with a first credential below the bachelor's level experience lower average annual earnings than those with a first credential at the bachelor's level. These findings are useful for the design and implementation of transfer and articulation policies that can smooth the transition between credentials for students and foster educational outcomes that help to close the earnings gap between individuals that start their PSE journey in different places. Such policies will be increasingly necessary and improve institutional efficiency as a greater share of the population attain more than one PSE credential.

## Read the full article

St-Denis, X., Boujija, Y., & Sartor, S. (2021). Non-Linear PSE Pathways and Credential Accumulation Statistical Portrait and Evaluation. Toronto: Ontario Council of Articulation and Transfer. <https://oncat.ca/en/projects/non-linear-pse-pathways-and-credential-accumulation-statistical-portrait-and-evaluation>

