



# Upgrading Programs (ABE) to Further Post-Secondary in BC

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# Purpose

- How successful are ABE upgrading students in further studies?
- Does ABE upgrading function as a pathway to success for those initially under-prepared?
- How many former ABE students achieve post-secondary credentials?

# Part One: Inventory

- ABE offered at all colleges, teaching universities and some institutes (may have different name)
- Offered at main campuses, regional sites, and neighbourhood learning centres
- Some institutions still offer route to Grade 12 completion, but most are preparation for further learning or pre-requisite skills acquisition

# Part Two: Outcomes

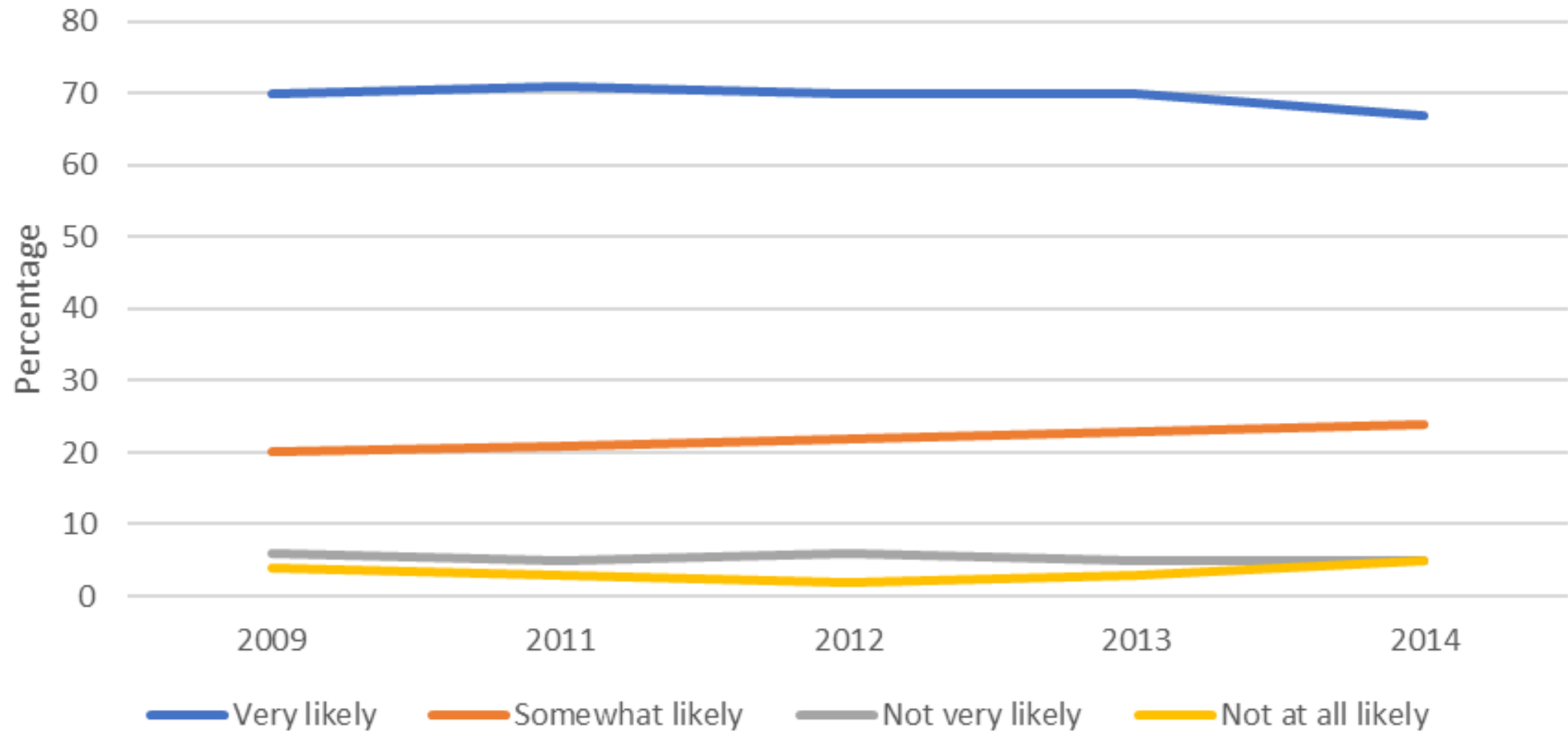
- Primary data from interviews with ABE administrators, practitioners and experts
- Secondary data from CDW extraction
- Tertiary data from previous ABE outcomes studies

# Previous Provincial Studies

- Multiple studies 1992-2022
- Based on surveys of *current* students. Results indicated high student satisfaction.
- Other research on *former* ABE upgrading students. Roughly 1 in 10 graduates of a BC post-secondary program had taken an ABE course
- Limitations
  - *Only surveys*
  - *Didn't include students who dropped out*

<b>Overall satisfaction</b>	<b>Would recommend program to others</b>	<b>86%</b>
	Courses are well-designed for me to learn	88%
	Textbooks and handouts are well-chosen	83%
	Classroom activities helped me learn	82%
<b>Quality of instruction</b>	Instructors used class time well	85%
	Instructors provided activities that helped me learn	82%
	Instructors welcomed student questions	89%
	Instructors treated every student respectfully	90%
<b>Outcomes</b>	Program is good preparation for other college courses	87%
	More confident now to achieve future educational/career goals	86%
	Improved ability to think clearly	83%
	Improved ability to perform under pressure	73%

Figure 8: How Likely ABE Upgrading Students Are to Enroll in Future Post-Secondary Education

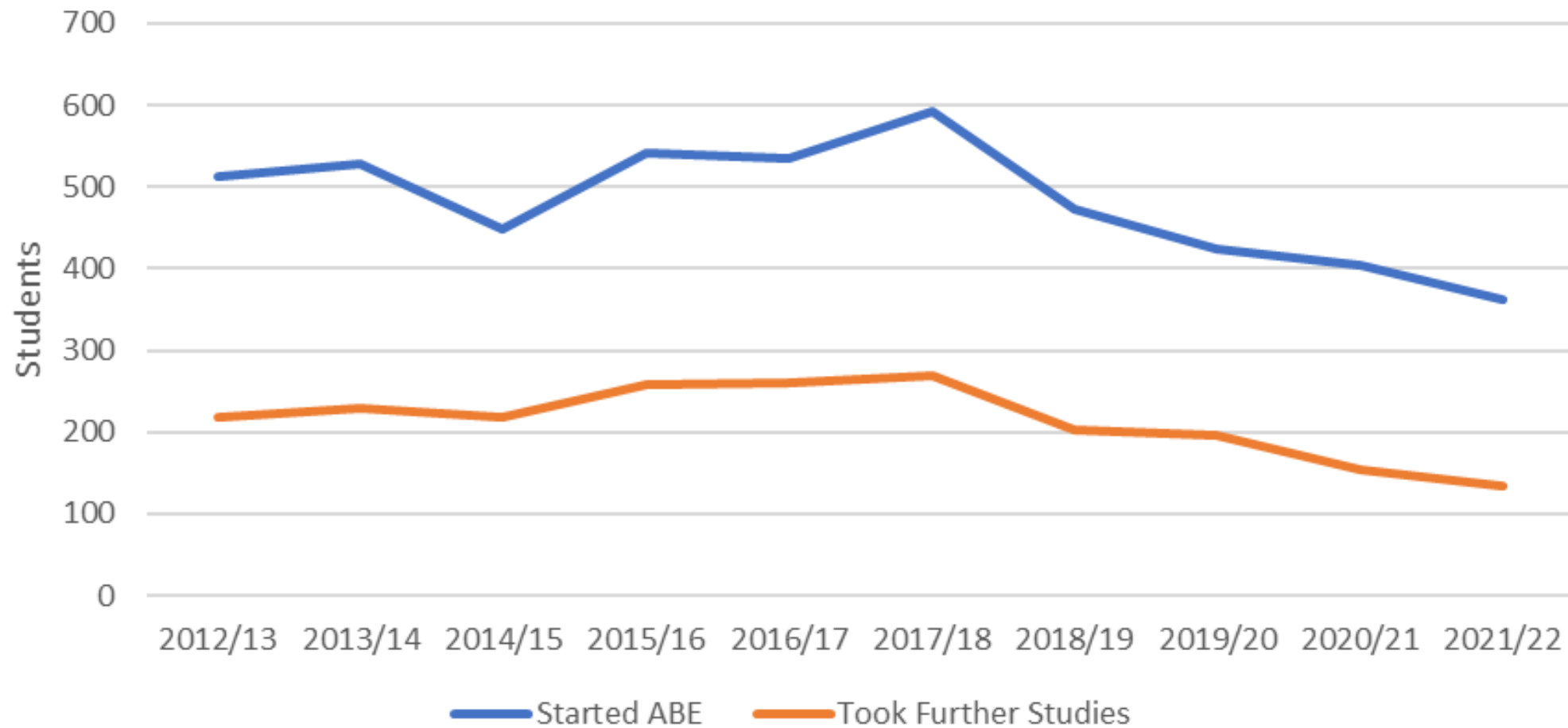


# Previous Local Studies

- One college (data 2006-08) found 10%+ of all graduates took an ABE course (even though students in ABE were only 2% of college population)
- Another college compared direct entry vs ABE entry to a mandatory first-year English course. 80% of former ABE students passed the course, compared to 76% for all students in the course.



Figure 9: ABE Student Transition Rates at One Teaching-Intensive University



# PS Credentials Earned

- CDW data extraction -- students taking at least one ABE course 2009/10 to 2022/23 who took at least one undergraduate-level or trades course during the same time period n = 124,755 students
- 63% transition rate indicates almost two-thirds of former ABE students *participated* in further studies (same institution)
- Results indicated that 44% of former ABE who participated obtained at least one credential
- Overall, therefore, 28% of former ABE cohort earned PS credential of some kind

Figure 11: Progression into Post-Secondary Studies at Same Institution:  
ABE Cohort 2009/10 - 2022/23

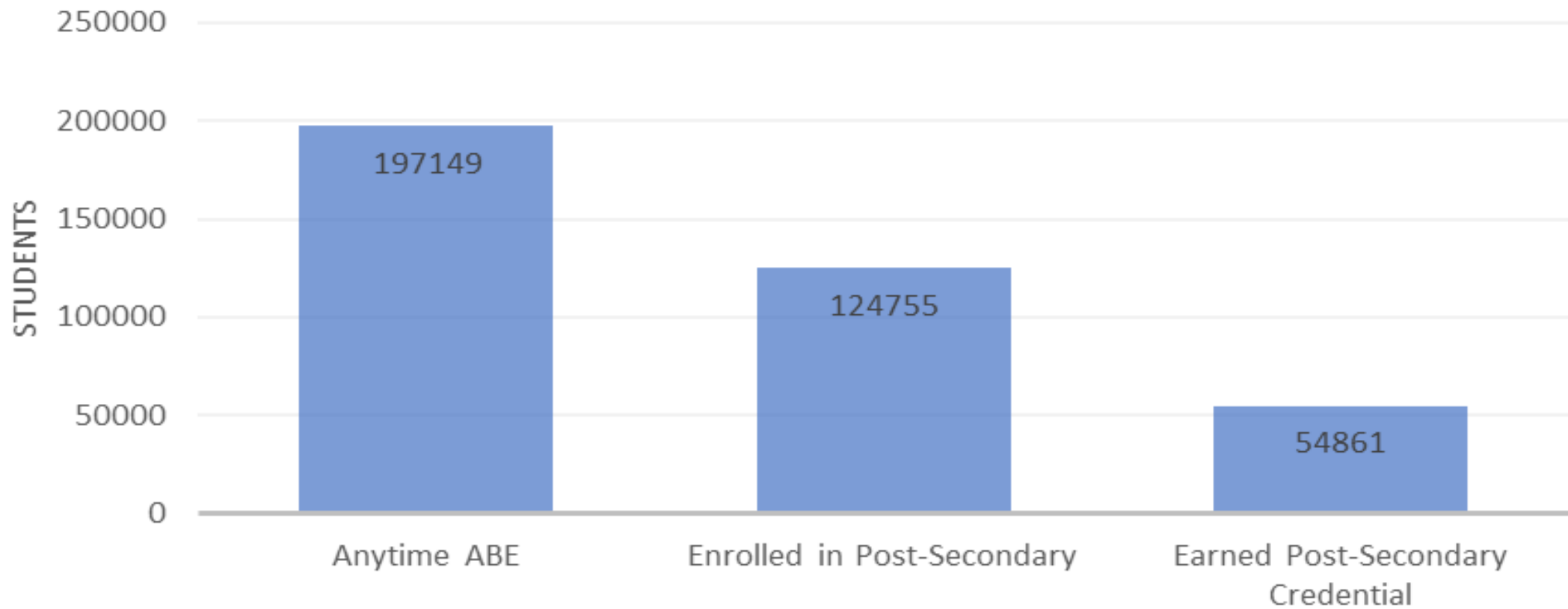


Figure 13: Total Credentials Earned Per Year:  
ABE Cohort 2009/10 - 2022/23

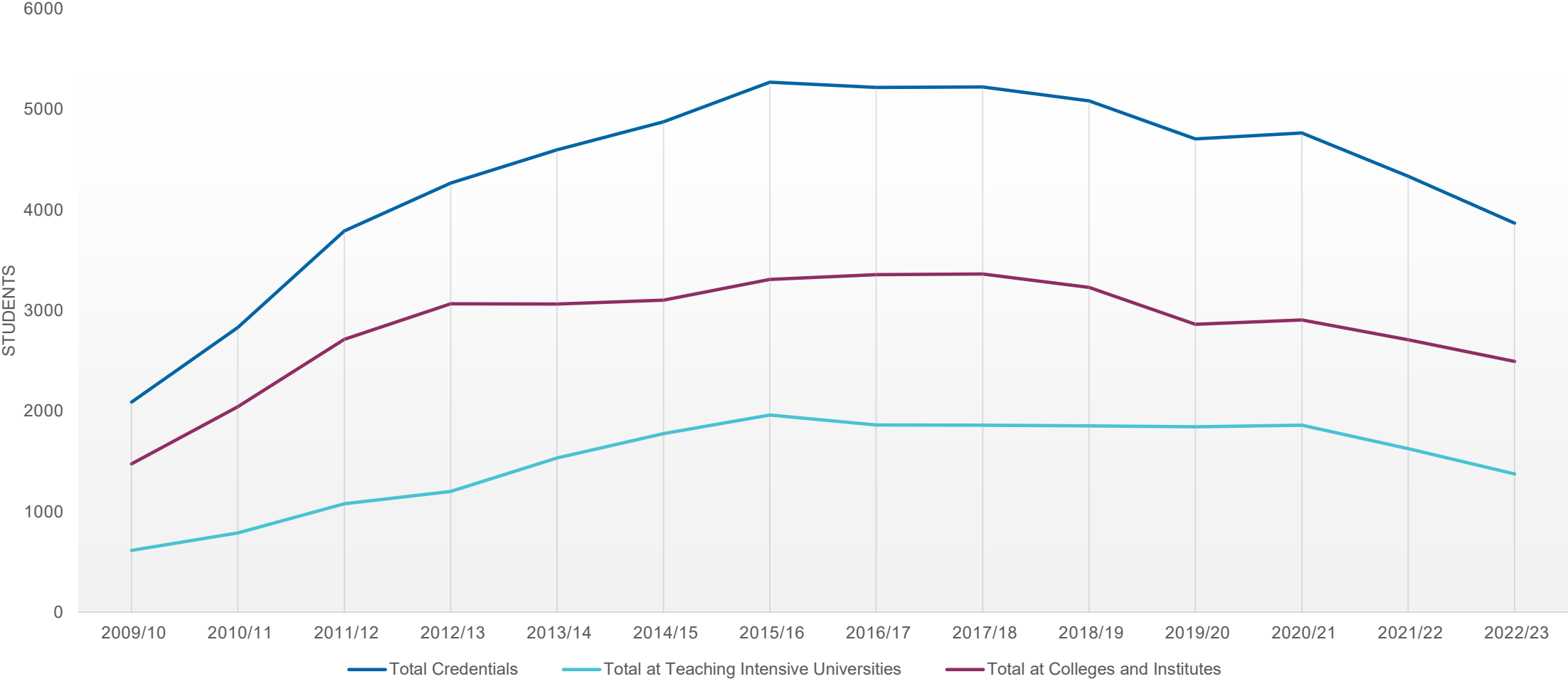


Figure 15: Percentage of Credentials Awarded by Institution Type: ABE Cohort 2009/10 - 2022/23

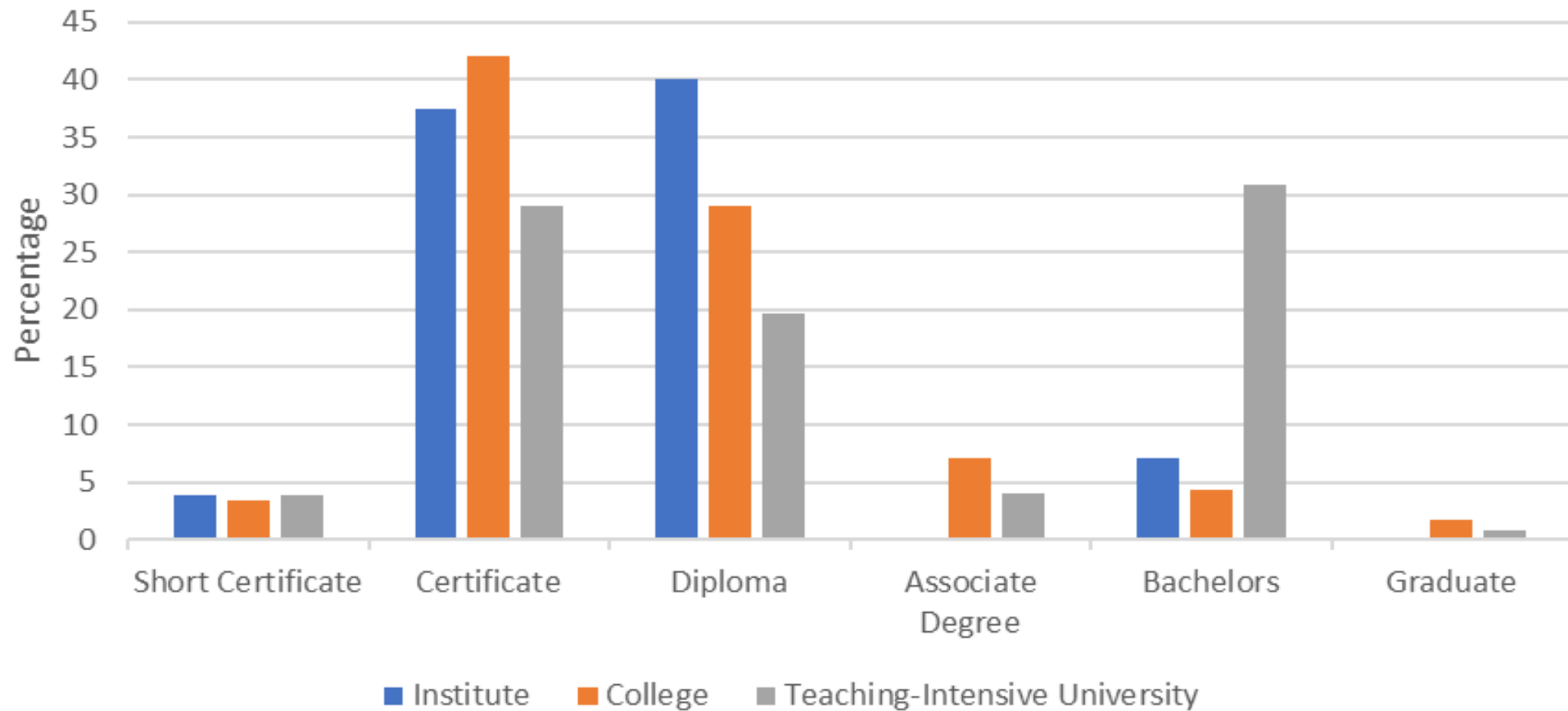
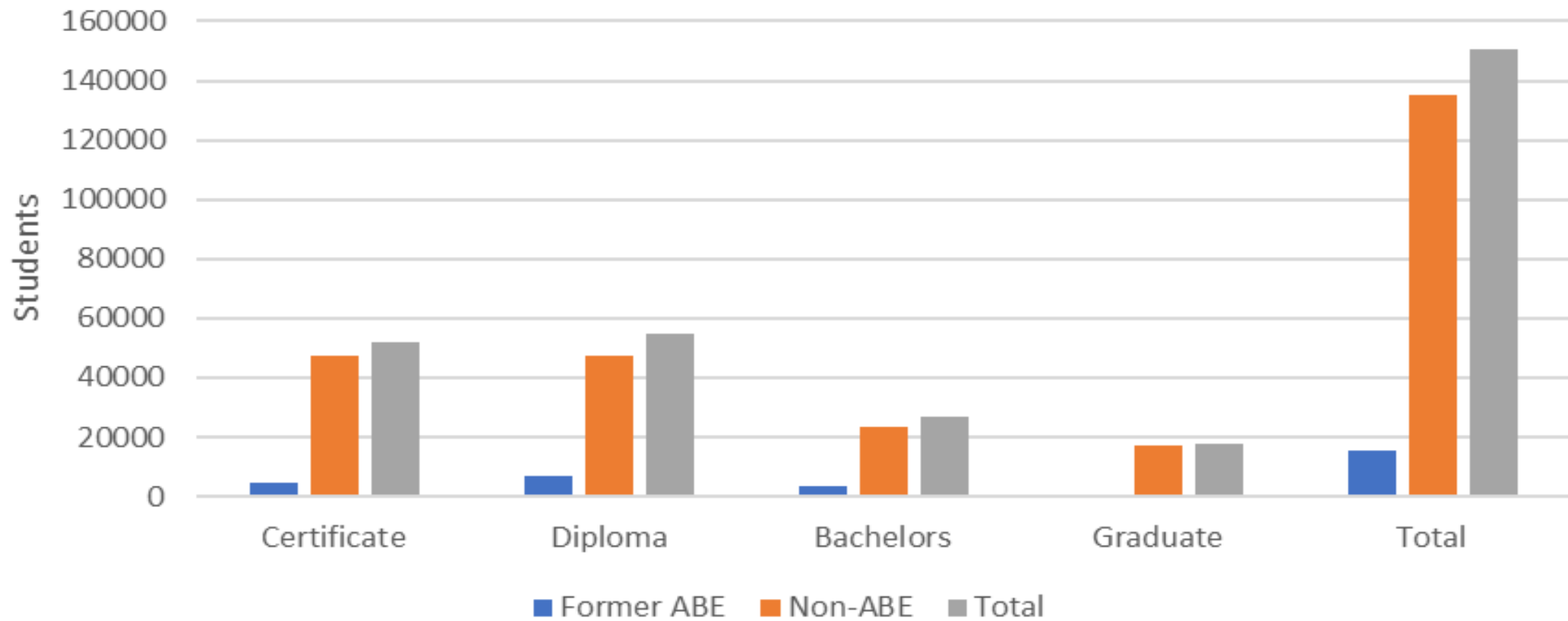


Figure 17: Credentials Awarded 2019/20 - 2022/23:  
Comparison of Former ABE Students with Non-ABE  
Students





A lot of former ABE students repeat several first-year courses as they struggle to get into their stride. It can be a rocky road for them. Their cumulative GPAs are often lower than for direct-entry undergraduates... It's understandable because they are often not just as academically strong, so things don't come so easily and they may have to work harder." (University interviewee)

# Conclusions

- ABE upgrading programs in BC are facilitating successful student transitions into further education
- Pattern is consistent across time as shown by provincial and local studies of former ABE students
- Caveats to this conclusion:
  - *Previous outcomes research was self-report data*
  - *Institutional-based data generally not publicly available*
- Additional discussion and research needed
- Many innovative practices occurring in BC to increase ABE student success rates





We are seeking out new strategies and courses that provide more “just-in-time” rather than “just-in-case” curriculum. There’s a general kind of drift of ABE programming to have more laddering into first-year courses or career core programming.

ABE programs can run the risk of “ghettoizing” students who make slow progress and eventually lose motivation. It helps if students feel they have already started their “real program”. (College interviewee)



We are somewhat on a cusp... the field is facing the need to re-invent itself from a past based on a deficit model of upgrading to a future additive model... one using tailored pathways, rather than prescribed programs.

We need to explore which ones of those can achieve the best results for students. Recent innovations are encouraging, but they need more exploration. One size won't fit all. (College interviewee)



**Thank You**