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Econometric Models of Student Loan Repayment in Canada

*Marie Connolly, Claude Montmarquette,
Ali Béjaoui*

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Econometric Models of Student Loan Repayment in Canada*

Marie Connolly[†], Claude Montmarquette[‡], Ali Béjaoui[§]

Résumé / Abstract

Six mois après avoir mis fin à leurs études, complétées avec succès ou non, les ex-étudiants sont tenus de rembourser leurs prêts d'études. Une majorité d'entre eux rembourseront la totalité de leurs prêts sur une période de 10 ans. D'autres connaîtront des difficultés à respecter leur engagement. Dans cette étude, nous profitons d'une base exceptionnelle de données individuelles sur les prêts d'études au Canada pour étudier les déterminants des remboursements ou non des prêts et la durée avant le remboursement complet. Les résultats économétriques montrent l'importance de terminer ses études dans les temps requis à la fois pour éviter de faire défaut et aussi pour accélérer la période de remboursement. Une politique à envisager serait de gommer une partie des prêts lorsque l'étudiant complète ses études dans les temps requis. L'autre résultat est que le programme du report des intérêts n'a pas semblé très efficace pour faciliter le remboursement des prêts d'études pour la cohorte 1990-91 étudiée. Finalement, un programme trop généreux de prêts d'études sans mise en garde sur les risques encourus par les étudiants d'investir dans certains programmes, notamment ceux opérés par le secteur privé, a des effets importants non seulement sur la pérennité du programme des prêts, mais aussi sur les mauvaises décisions de la part des étudiants dans leur choix d'études.

Mots clés : prêts d'études, remboursement, faillite

Six months after a student ceases being enrolled full-time in an educational institution, a loan contracted with the Canada student loans program is said to be consolidated and its repayment is expected. Many ex-students will repay their loan in total (capital and interest) within a ten-year period. However, a non-negligible proportion of borrowers will experience difficulty in the repayment of their loans. We are able to shed a new light on these issues because we have access to unique data to estimate econometric models of the determinants of interest relief and claims (defaults) as well as duration models for the repayment of student loans. We found that finishing the program supported by a loan is essential to avoiding default. Therefore, it may be worth considering policies that will reward anyone who completes his or her program. On the other hand, too much flexibility in access to loans might encourage experiments by students that could turn disastrous for the student and the national loan program. A loan program should also come with some information on the risk involved for the student before he or she invests in a particular field or program. One particular concern is the relatively high level of default for students attending private schools. Relatively easy access to loans could be an invitation for private institutions to capitalize on that fact with various educational programs having little bearing on the reality of the labour market. Eventually serious institutions will establish a reputation, but for some students it will be too late. Another result concerns the interest relief measure that seems not to have played its role of helping the 1990-91 cohort of students to pass through difficult times.

Keywords: student loans, reimbursement, default

Codes JEL : I121, I128; C35

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[†] CIRANO and Department of Economics, Princeton University

[‡] CIRANO and Department of Economics, University of Montreal, email: claudio.montmarquette@cirano.qc.ca

[§] Senior Analyst, Socio-Economic Analysis Group Canada Student Loans Program, HRDC.

1. Introduction

In a knowledge based economy, investment in human capital is a key determinant of economic growth. Globalization will accentuate the competitiveness between economies and therefore, to maintain our standard of living, many believe that a substantial amount of our collective resources should be devoted to higher education. One policy to achieve this goal is to facilitate access to higher education to anyone, regardless of his or her financial situation. Investments in human capital are different from other types of investment in that they cannot be backed by material collateral. Unlike investments in machinery or real estate, human capital has nothing tangible to offer to the lending institution in case of default. Thus, the capital market is an imperfect institution when it comes to offering loans to students. The Canada Student Loans Program (CSLP) provides the necessary loans to students with demonstrated need. Loans issued, from the creation of the CSLP in 1964 up to August 1995, were granted under a program which required the government to cover the entire cost of the loan. Loans that were three or more months in arrears were transferred to the federal government, which then reimbursed the lender for the defaulted loan. From August 1995 to March 1, 2001, the CSLP backed loans made by financial institutions through a risk-sharing agreement. Now all loans come directly from the Government of Canada through the National Student Loans Service Centre (NSLSC).

In the fiscal year 1989–1990 the CSLP had 2,839.9 million dollars in its portfolio, as a total of both loans in study and loans in repayment. By 1995–1996, that amount had doubled to \$5,821.4 million and, by 1998–1999, it had more than tripled to a value of \$8,816.9 million. For students of the 1990–1991 cohort, average indebtedness, for all types of learning institutions, was \$5,834. That number went up to \$9,346 in 1998–1999, for a total of 358,931 students with loans. Over the same period, the average indebtedness for university students went from \$8,259 to \$11,900.¹

¹ More descriptive statistics and institutional details concerning Canada student loans data can be found in Plager and Chen (1999).

Six months after a student ceases being enrolled full-time in an educational institution, a loan contracted with the Canada student loans program is said to be consolidated and its repayment is expected. Many ex-students will repay their loan in total (capital and interest) within a ten-year period. However, a non-negligible proportion of borrowers will experience difficulty in the repayment of their loans. The CSLP includes various measures to help them. One of them is the interest relief option. An ex-student using this program sees his or her monthly payment of interest put on hold for a certain period of time. The CSLP is responsible for paying interest to the lending institutions, but the interest is added to the loan to be repaid by the student. The value of the interest relief afforded by this system went from \$4.2 million for the loan year 1987–1988 to \$36.1 million in 1997 to \$67.4 million in 1998–1999. In the meantime, the number of recipients went from 23,136 in 1987–1988 to 148,488 in 1998–1999.

Another reality of the educational loan system is those ex-students who simply cannot repay. A loan is deemed in default if it is in arrears for three or more months. In 1990–1991, 20.7 per cent of loans were in default. That proportion reached a peak in 1994–1995 at 29.8 per cent, and then went down to 24.9 per cent in 1998–1999. Furthermore, for the 1998–1999 consolidation cohort, the default rate of former students was 12.9 per cent of students from universities, 26.0 per cent of those from community colleges, and 43.6 per cent of those from private institutions. Until 1994 banks simply had to claim loans in default from the CSLP, which would then try to recover the funds from the student. Between 1994 and 2001, the financial institutions issuing loans had a risk-sharing agreement with the CSLP, under which they had to recover the loans that went into claims in return for a government payment of five percent of the value of the loans going into repayment. Since 2001, the new NSLSC is responsible for all phases of the program. Although the government is able to recover a portion of the loans that go into default after a claim by the bank, some of the borrowers simply never repay.

High levels of default are a threat to the viability of the system. Since the CSLP is constantly in deficit, it is actually subsidizing higher education when in fact it was created to correct the imperfect capital market. With indebtedness and the number of students who require financial aid growing larger and larger, the health of the whole system is at stake. It is thus crucial to

understand the determinants of loan repayment and default. This paper studies those determinants, as well as the probability of using the interest relief option. We are able to shed a new light on this issue because we have access to unique data through Human Resources and Development Canada (HRDC). We use this data to estimate econometric models of the determinants of interest relief and claims (defaults) as well as duration models for the repayment of student loans. In the next section we present the data used in these analyses and some descriptive statistics. In section 3 we discuss the simultaneous determinants of an individual's resorting to the interest relief option and claims. In section 4 we look at a simple duration model for repayment of student loans. We summarize the results and discuss policy issues in a concluding section.

2. The data and some descriptive statistics

The data set used in this paper consists of information about the consolidation cohort of 1990–91.² After cleaning the files, we were left with 55,648 observations. 77.1 per cent of the students never went on interest relief or defaulted. The proportion of students defaulting on their payments, whether or not they used interest relief is 13.2 per cent. Looking at Figure 1 gives us a good general description of the situation

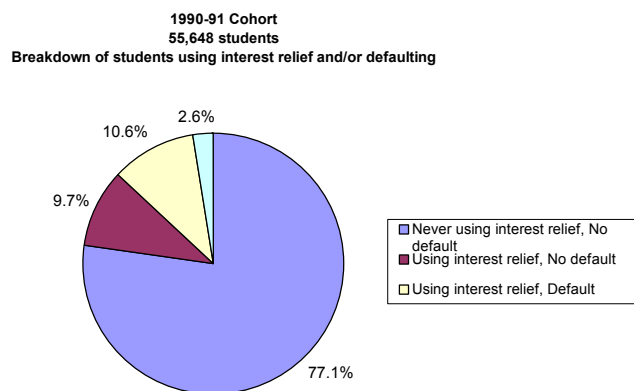


Figure 1

² Consolidation occurs six months after the end of the studies, so the data we have here covers individuals who consolidated their loans during the years 1990–1991.

The data did not include a variable for graduation, or whether or not students successfully completed their programs or quit before completion. In order to get an idea of the graduation rate and the impact of graduation on the reimbursement of loans, we create a variable for the ratio of the years of study in the last degree divided by the number of years normally required to complete the program. Although this variable is not a perfect substitute for a graduation indicator, we can speculate that an individual having a ratio lower than one probably didn't complete the degree. If the ratio is one or more, it might have been successfully completed. As shown in Figure 2, about 77 per cent of the students had a ratio of 1, while the remaining 23 per cent had a ratio under one.

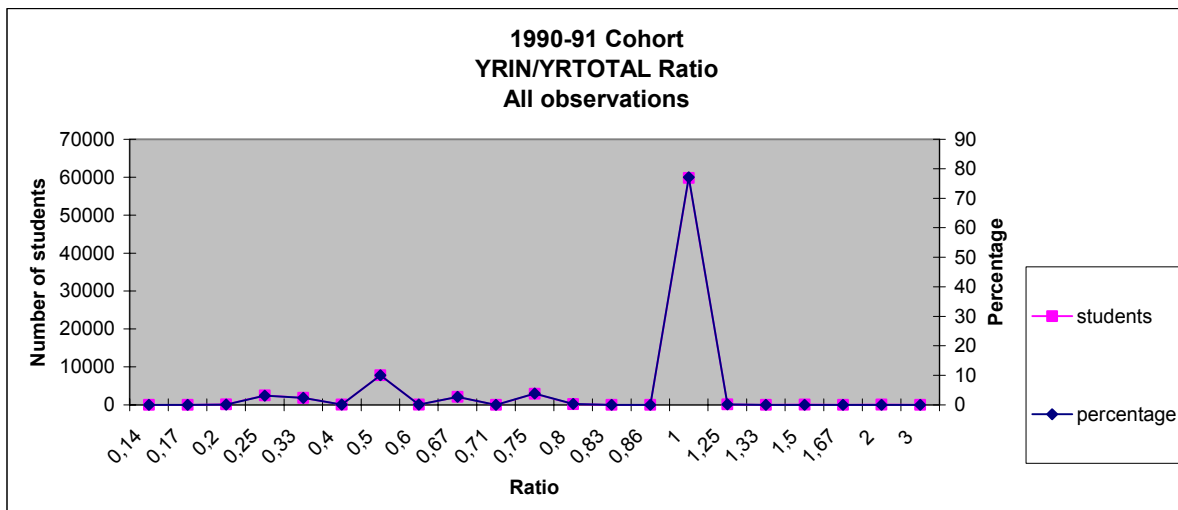


Figure 2

3. The determinants of interest relief options and claims

The interest relief option was implemented to help students with the repayment of their loan when they go through a difficult financial period. It is important for the CSLP to understand whether that measure meets its goal—whether it is used for the right purpose. To achieve this, we need to understand the determinants of the probability of a student resorting to the interest

relief option. However, to what extent does frequent resorting to the interest relief option signal inherent difficulties in loan repayment that could lead the student to default? To address this issue, we have to know the factors affecting the probability of a student having a claim, with, among other explanatory variables, the number of interest relief periods used. Both probabilities will be estimated jointly.

3.1 A joint model of interest relief and claims

To analyse what influences the probability of a student using the interest relief option and going on to default, we need to estimate the parameters of two equations simultaneously. This is because we explain the probability of claims with the number of interest relief periods, but the probabilistic latent variable corresponding to this number is also a variable explained by independent variables. What is the probability that a student never resorts to the interest relief option or resorts to it only once, twice, three times,....? To answer this question, an ordered probit explaining the number of interest relief periods using a series of explanatory variables will be used. To explain the probability of having a claim with the same set of explanatory variables, plus dummy variables for the number of interest relief periods, a probit model of claims will be jointly estimated with the ordered probit for interest relief periods. The identification of the parameters of the complete model is a tenuous exercise considering the complexity of the model. There are no obvious exclusion restriction and we strongly rely on the non-linearity of the model to ensure identification. We are comforted by the fact that in the process of estimating the model, the likelihood function has converged with different initial values for the parameters.

The probit specification for the probability of a claim is the following:

$$\text{CLAIM}_i^* = X_i\beta + \delta_1 D_{1i} + \delta_2 D_{2i} + \delta_3 D_{3i} + \delta_4 D_{4i} + \delta_5 D_{5i} + \delta_6 D_{6i} + \eta_I .$$

CLAIM_i^* is a latent variable. It is the utility derived by having a claim. It is not observed. What is observed, however, is whether or not the borrower has used a claim. Thus, we define CLAIM such as:

$CLAIM_i = 1$ if $CLAIM_i^* > 0$, that is if the utility of a claim is positive,
 $= 0$ otherwise,

where,

X_i is a vector of exogenous variables defined below.

D_{ji} are dummy variables related to the number of interest relief periods, $NBIR_i$, used by i .

Thus,

$D_{1i} = 1$ if $NBIR_i = 1$ and	$D_{1i} = 0$ otherwise,
$D_{2i} = 1$ if $NBIR_i = 2$ and	$D_{2i} = 0$ otherwise,
$D_{3i} = 1$ if $NBIR_i = 3$ and	$D_{3i} = 0$ otherwise,
$D_{4i} = 1$ if $NBIR_i = 4$ and	$D_{4i} = 0$ otherwise,
$D_{5i} = 1$ if $NBIR_i = 5$ and	$D_{5i} = 0$ otherwise,
$D_{6i} = 1$ if $NBIR_i = 6$ or more and	$D_{6i} = 0$ otherwise.

The β and δ s are parameters to be estimated. Each estimated parameter gives us the effect of a specific variable on the latent utility variable $CLAIM_i^*$. We can obtain the effect of a specific variable on the probability of having a claim by the appropriate computations.

The ordered probit specification for the latent variable, $NBIR_i^*$ (the utility of interest relief), is:

$$NBIR_i^* = X_i\gamma + \varepsilon_i,$$

where

X_i is a vector of exogenous variables defined below.

The observed variable corresponding to the latent variable is $NBIR_i$, the number of interest relief periods, and is defined according to five μ thresholds:

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{NBIR}_i &= 0 \text{ if } \text{NBIR}_i^* \leq 0 \\
&= 1 \text{ if } 0 < \text{NBIR}_i^* \leq \mu_1, \\
&= 2 \text{ if } \mu_1 < \text{NBIR}_i^* \leq \mu_2, \\
&= 3 \text{ if } \mu_2 < \text{NBIR}_i^* \leq \mu_3, \\
&= 4 \text{ if } \mu_3 < \text{NBIR}_i^* \leq \mu_4, \\
&= 5 \text{ if } \mu_4 < \text{NBIR}_i^* \leq \mu_5, \\
&= 6 + \text{if } \mu_5 < \text{NBIR}_i^*.
\end{aligned}$$

In words, for example, $\text{NBIR}_i = 0$ if $\text{NBIR}_i^* \leq 0$, simply means that individual i does not resort to a single period of interest relief if the utility of doing so is nonpositive. Note that $\mu_1 > \mu_2 > \dots > \mu_5$ is a vector of parameters to be estimated.

The errors for those equations follow a normal bivariate distribution:

$$\eta_i \varepsilon_i \sim \text{NB}(0,0,1,1, \rho)$$

with zero means, unit variances and a correlation coefficient ρ .

In Table 1, the vector of exogenous variables X is defined.

Table 1
The exogenous variables

Variable name	Definition
Weeks	Total number of accumulated weeks of study
Amount borrowed	Natural log of the total amount borrowed
Weeks of study * amount	Number of weeks times the amount borrowed
Age	Age as of September of the consolidation year
Years of study/ years required in program	Constructed variable, it is the ratio of the number of actual years of study in the last certificate of loan to the number of years normally required to complete the program. A ratio lower than one suggests that the student did not finish his program, hence did not graduate.
Female	Dummy = 1 if female, =0 if male
Private institution	Dummy =1 if private institution, =0 if public institution
Amount * private	Amount borrowed times the private institution dummy
Married	Dummy=1 if marital status is married, =0 if not married
Fields of study	Ten dummy variables, = 1 if it's the discipline of the final degree, =0 if it isn't. Possible fields: business/administration, agriculture, arts/science, community service/education, dentistry, engineering/technology, health sciences, law, medicine, trades and theology (used here as the reference variable)
Amount * dentistry	Amount borrowed times the dentistry dummy
Amount * health sciences	Amount borrowed times the health sciences dummy
Amount * law	Amount borrowed times the law dummy
Levels of study	Three dummy variables, =1 if it's the level of study of the student. Possible levels: non-degree, undergraduate, masters and doctoral (used here as reference)
Province of study	Nine dummy variables, =1 if it's the province of issue of the last loan certificate. Possible provinces: Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan and Yukon (used here as reference)

3.2 The estimation results

The joint “claim” - “interest relief period” model has been estimated by maximum likelihood programmed in Gauss (see the detailed likelihood function in the Appendix). The results are reported in Table 2. Coefficient estimates of the number of weeks of study are negative, while those associated with the amount borrowed and the interaction variable “weeks times amount” are positive. We can see that an increase in the number of weeks of study decreases the probability of claims and of resorting to large numbers (6+) of interest relief periods, owing to the impact of the direct coefficient, but that these probabilities increase with an increase in the “weeks*amount-borrowed” interaction variable.³ Thus, studying more helps ward off claims and interest relief, probably because of completion of the program or a more advanced degree; but at the same time, studying for a longer period may also mean borrowing more, and hence having more difficulty repaying.

³ A positive coefficient increases the probability of a claim with an increase in the value of the corresponding variable. In the case of an ordered probit (the interest relief equation) this one-to-one relation is only valid at the extremes: no interest relief period and 6+ interest relief periods. An increase in the value of a variable with a positive coefficient estimate increases (decreases) the probability of resorting to six or more interest relief periods (no interest relief period). Between these categories, the final effect has to be individually computed.

Table 2

Results of the "claim-interest relief period" joint estimation					
	Claims	Interest relief		Claims	Interest relief
Independent variables	beta estimates	gamma estimates	Independent variables	Beta estimates	Gamma estimates
Constant	-1,5197 (-6,406)	-1,4327 (-6,045)	Engineering/Technology	0,0546 (0,773)	0,0728 (1,053)
Number of weeks of study	-0,1666 (-9,808)	-0,1187 (-8,056)	Health Sciences	-0,0982 (-1,245)	-0,091 (-1,184)
Amount borrowed (ln)	0,4115 (31,600)	0,3965 (30,904)	Law	0,4431 (4,316)	0,3366 (3,398)
Weeks of study * amount	0,1767 (11,342)	0,1328 (9,781)	Medicine	-1,2072 (-10,158)	-1,2352 (-9,947)
Age	0,1504 (24,360)	0,1338 (23,447)	Trades	0,469 (6,494)	0,3661 (5,312)
Years of study/Years required in program	-0,4714 (-11,199)	-0,2935 (-10,083)	Theology	ref.	ref.
Male	ref.	ref.	Amount borrowed * Dentistry dummy	-0,0625 (-4,733)	-0,0617 (-5,972)
Female	0,0226 (1,598)	0,047 (3,588)	Amount * Health Sciences dummy	-0,0441 (-3,820)	-0,0491 (-4,426)
Private institution	0,2786 (9,553)	0,2521 (8,832)	Amount * Law dummy	-0,0703 (-5,944)	-0,0561 (-4,951)
Public institution	ref.	ref.			
Amount * private institution dummy	-0,0609 (-5,803)	-0,0544 (-5,236)			
Married	-0,0309 (-1,430)	-0,0379 (-1,788)	Level of study		
Not married	ref.	ref.	Non-degree	0,6924 (5,501)	0,5086 (4,085)
Fields of study			Undergraduate	0,3329 (2,718)	0,234 (1,897)
Business/Administration	0,3024 (4,379)	0,2694 (3,994)	Masters	0,0128 (0,102)	0,0106 (0,084)
Agriculture	0,033 (0,396)	0,0618 (0,760)	Doctorate	ref.	ref.
Arts/science	0,5436 (7,820)	0,47 (6,980)	Province of study		
Community Service/Education	0,0602 (0,858)	0,0452 (0,658)	Alberta	-0,0412 (-0,227)	-0,039 (-0,205)
Dentistry	0,1377 (0,938)	0,162 (1,283)	British Columbia	0,1627 (0,893)	0,1111 (0,583)
			Manitoba	0,0999	0,0899
Yukon	ref.	ref.			

Number of IR periods			ρ (correlation coefficient)	0,9637	
Zero	ref.	-		(53,236)	
One	-0,0863 (-1,227)	- -	μ_1	- -	0,2888 (63,487)
Two	-0,3501 (-4,954)	- -	μ_2	- -	0,5035 (81,832)
Three	-0,5392 (-7,211)	- -	μ_3	- -	0,6852 (92,523)
Four	-0,6838 (-8,012)	- -	μ_4	- -	0,8674 (99,933)
Five	-0,8403 (-8,377)	- -	μ_5	- -	1,1218 (104,821)
six or more	-1,3161 (-14,754)	- -			
Number of observations: 55648					
Log-likelihood: -58147,70816					
Mean log-likelihood: -1,04492					

The coefficient estimates for the years of study/years required ratios are highly significant and negative, which indicates that a greater ratio lowers the probability of going into claims or using the interest relief option. Assuming that a higher ratio is associated with completion of the program and graduation, we realize how crucial it is for students to pursue their studies until the end. Students who have completed their programs have a lower risk of experiencing difficulty in repayment of their loans. This is explained by the well-known fact that a degree holder has a much better chance of finding good employment than someone who hasn't finished his or her degree.

The coefficients of the private institution dummy are all positive, which implies that attending a private school increases the probability of defaulting and using more interest relief periods. An interesting result is the one regarding the interaction variable "amount borrowed*private institution." A negative estimate tells us that attending a private school actually decreases the probability of claims and interest relief in proportion of the amount borrowed. The effect of going to a private school then works in both directions. This mixed result may in fact capture the fact that a student from a private institution tends to borrow more

because of higher tuition fees, but might in return get a good technical degree that leads to a well-paid job.

Relative to the theology coefficient, the coefficients of the medicine dummy variable are all very significant and negative, so we can imagine going to medical school significantly lowers the risk of default and interest relief. Although the results for the coefficients of the field of study dummies are not very significant in general, the estimates for the cross-variables dummies of "amount and dentistry", "amount and health sciences" and "amount and law" are all negative and significant but one. We can conclude that studying in one of those fields actually reduces the probability of having a claim or using interest relief, in proportion with the amount borrowed.

To study how using the interest relief option affects the probability of default, we cannot simply consider the coefficients associated with the different numbers of periods of interest relief, owing to the joint estimation of our two-equation model. To obtain the probability of having a claim, conditional to the number of periods of interest relief, the following formula must be used:

$$\Pr(\text{CLAIM} = 1/\text{NBIR} = j) = \frac{\Pr(\text{CLAIM} = 1, \text{NBIR} = j)}{\Pr(\text{NBIR} = j)}; \quad j = 0, \dots, 6.$$

With the coefficients of Table 2 and with the exogenous variables taken at their mean values, the mean amount borrowed, the mean number of weeks, etc., Figure 3 shows the probabilities of having a claim, conditional on the number of periods of interest relief.

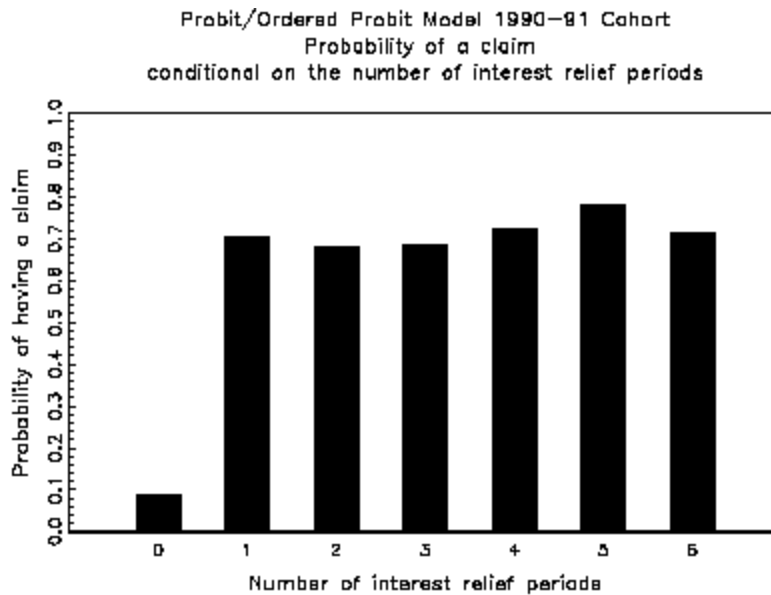


Figure 3

We see that the probability of claims is very low, less than 10 per cent, when the student never uses the interest relief option. That probability rises dramatically to around 70 per cent for students with one or more periods of interest relief. Interestingly enough, that probability doesn't vary much with the number of interest relief periods between one and six.

With other variables taken at their mean values, Figure 4 shows the probability of having a claim, expressed relative to the total amount borrowed. The solid one represents the probability for public institutions and the dotted one—private institutions. We observe that the probability of a claim is strictly monotonically increasing with the amount borrowed, and that the curve for private institutions is above the one for public institutions. This tells us that the more students borrow, the more likely they are to have difficulty repaying, and that attending a private institution raises the probability of defaulting.

Probit/Ordered Probit Model 1990-91 Cohort
 Probability of a claim relative to total amount borrowed
 by type of institution

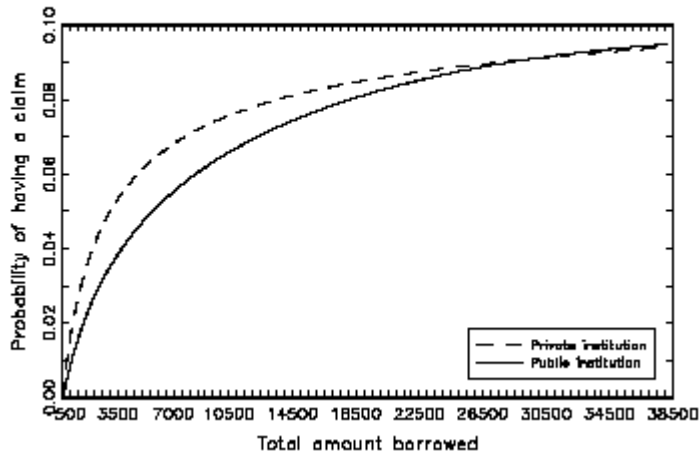


Figure 4

Figure 5 represents the probability of having a claim, this time plotted against the ratio of actual years of study to the expected time needed to complete the program. This probability is strictly decreasing from 5 per cent, when the ratio is zero, to around 2 per cent with a ratio of one, to almost zero as the ratio increases. Thus, the higher the ratio, and so hypothetically the higher the probability of graduating, the lower the probability of a student defaulting.

Probit/Ordered Probit Model
 1990-91 Cohort

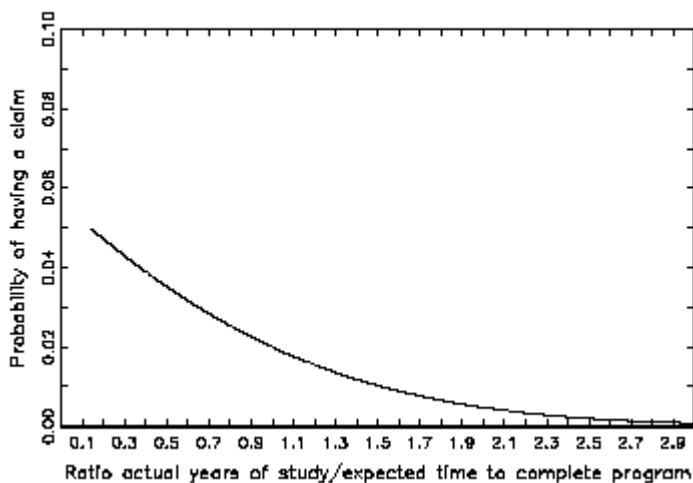


Figure 5

We turn next to the determinants of the probability of using the interest relief option a certain number of times. Table 3 presents some simulation results by sub-groups of the explanatory variables. Using the coefficient estimates of Table 2, these simulations were done by calculating the probability of using the interest relief option for each possible value of the variable NBIR from none to six or more, for each individual in the database. The sample was then separated into sub-groups according to the characteristics of the individuals. For example, the group was divided between males and females. The probabilities shown in the Tables are the means of the probabilities for the observations in that sub-group. The standard deviation is presented in italics. There are two ways to read these Tables. One is by line, from left to right. That way, we can observe how the probability varies for the different numbers of periods of interest relief within each sub-group. The other way is by column. By comparing two numbers in the same column, we see the difference in the probability of requiring interest relief a certain number of times for the different sub-groups. In Table 3 we can see that, for a married individual, the probability of never resorting to interest relief is 79 per cent, of resorting to it once, 7 per cent, twice, 4 per cent, and so on. If we look at the column “none“ for the different ranges of amount borrowed, we see that the probability of never using interest relief greatly diminishes with the amount borrowed, going from 90 per cent for amounts under \$2,500 to 69 per cent for amounts above \$12,500. As expected, students in the field of medicine have the highest probability of never using the interest relief option.

Table 3

Simulation of the probability of using interest relief							
Cohort 1990–91							
Number of interest relief periods	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six and more
Categories							
Married	0,78617	0,06877	0,04028	0,02720	0,02153	0,02185	0,03420
4709	<i>0,11880</i>	<i>0,02613</i>	<i>0,01881</i>	<i>0,01468</i>	<i>0,01315</i>	<i>0,01532</i>	<i>0,03423</i>
Single	0,79885	0,06605	0,03827	0,02562	0,02012	0,02023	0,03086
50939	<i>0,11373</i>	<i>0,02608</i>	<i>0,01841</i>	<i>0,01418</i>	<i>0,01256</i>	<i>0,01445</i>	<i>0,03141</i>
Weeks<35	0,84975	0,05442	0,02993	0,01919	0,01447	0,01385	0,01839
11600	<i>0,08323</i>	<i>0,02323</i>	<i>0,01505</i>	<i>0,01084</i>	<i>0,00903</i>	<i>0,00966</i>	<i>0,01669</i>
35<=Weeks<70	0,80679	0,06508	0,03732	0,02474	0,01924	0,01908	0,02774
14246	<i>0,10018</i>	<i>0,02497</i>	<i>0,01712</i>	<i>0,01285</i>	<i>0,01109</i>	<i>0,01234</i>	<i>0,02355</i>
Weeks>=70	0,77324	0,07147	0,04230	0,02879	0,02296	0,02352	0,03773
29802	<i>0,12319</i>	<i>0,02610</i>	<i>0,01908</i>	<i>0,01507</i>	<i>0,01363</i>	<i>0,01606</i>	<i>0,03725</i>
Amount borrowed <2500\$	0,89680	0,04047	0,02112	0,01301	0,00946	0,00868	0,01044
10250	<i>0,06794</i>	<i>0,02136</i>	<i>0,01298</i>	<i>0,00892</i>	<i>0,00712</i>	<i>0,00726</i>	<i>0,01113</i>
2500<=Amount<5000	0,81276	0,06464	0,03661	0,02401	0,01848	0,01810	0,02541
18189	<i>0,08626</i>	<i>0,02126</i>	<i>0,01475</i>	<i>0,01112</i>	<i>0,00961</i>	<i>0,01068</i>	<i>0,02011</i>
5000<=Amount<7500	0,78317	0,07162	0,04159	0,02782	0,02179	0,02179	0,03222
9729	<i>0,09298</i>	<i>0,02106</i>	<i>0,01525</i>	<i>0,01183</i>	<i>0,01047</i>	<i>0,01194</i>	<i>0,02377</i>
7500<=Amount<10000	0,76882	0,07426	0,04375	0,02961	0,02344	0,02375	0,03637
5859	<i>0,10211</i>	<i>0,02262</i>	<i>0,01642</i>	<i>0,01284</i>	<i>0,01146</i>	<i>0,01323</i>	<i>0,02739</i>
10000<=Amount<12500	0,74535	0,07930	0,04749	0,03255	0,02607	0,02677	0,04248
4429	<i>0,10427</i>	<i>0,02120</i>	<i>0,01603</i>	<i>0,01287</i>	<i>0,01175</i>	<i>0,01388</i>	<i>0,03074</i>
12500<=Amount	0,69440	0,08547	0,05362	0,03820	0,03175	0,03414	0,06243
7192	<i>0,14414</i>	<i>0,02577</i>	<i>0,02001</i>	<i>0,01661</i>	<i>0,01572</i>	<i>0,01955</i>	<i>0,05321</i>
Age<25	0,82287	0,06091	0,03448	0,02264	0,01745	0,01716	0,02450
33962	<i>0,09915</i>	<i>0,02501</i>	<i>0,01699</i>	<i>0,01269</i>	<i>0,01093</i>	<i>0,01214</i>	<i>0,02339</i>
Age>=25	0,75848	0,07470	0,04466	0,03064	0,02460	0,02540	0,04153
21686	<i>0,12470</i>	<i>0,02553</i>	<i>0,01894</i>	<i>0,01512</i>	<i>0,01380</i>	<i>0,01642</i>	<i>0,03925</i>

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Years in program/years required<1	0,80026	0,06526	0,03787	0,02539	0,01998	0,02015	0,03110
12714	<i>0,11848</i>	<i>0,02696</i>	<i>0,01905</i>	<i>0,01470</i>	<i>0,01305</i>	<i>0,01507</i>	<i>0,03352</i>
Years in program/years required>=1	0,79704	0,06658	0,03862	0,02586	0,02031	0,02043	0,03115
42934	<i>0,11292</i>	<i>0,02583</i>	<i>0,01827</i>	<i>0,01409</i>	<i>0,01249</i>	<i>0,01437</i>	<i>0,03111</i>
Female	0,79510	0,06693	0,03889	0,02609	0,02053	0,02069	0,03176
33359	<i>0,11456</i>	<i>0,02595</i>	<i>0,01843</i>	<i>0,01425</i>	<i>0,01266</i>	<i>0,01462</i>	<i>0,03212</i>
Male	0,80178	0,06531	0,03777	0,02525	0,01980	0,01988	0,03021
22289	<i>0,11359</i>	<i>0,02628</i>	<i>0,01848</i>	<i>0,01419</i>	<i>0,01254</i>	<i>0,01439</i>	<i>0,03098</i>
Private Institution	0,78705	0,06956	0,04055	0,02723	0,02143	0,02157	0,03262
25384	<i>0,10675</i>	<i>0,02475</i>	<i>0,01752</i>	<i>0,01348</i>	<i>0,01189</i>	<i>0,01357</i>	<i>0,02773</i>
Public Institution	0,80677	0,06353	0,03668	0,02451	0,01924	0,01936	0,02990
30264	<i>0,11939</i>	<i>0,02686</i>	<i>0,01903</i>	<i>0,01473</i>	<i>0,01311</i>	<i>0,01522</i>	<i>0,03459</i>
Fields of Study							
Business/Administration	0,78361	0,07077	0,04127	0,02771	0,02179	0,02191	0,03295
13112	<i>0,10225</i>	<i>0,02353</i>	<i>0,01678</i>	<i>0,01294</i>	<i>0,01143</i>	<i>0,01304</i>	<i>0,02644</i>
Agriculture	0,82727	0,05984	0,03373	0,02208	0,01697	0,01662	0,02350
931	<i>0,09723</i>	<i>0,02498</i>	<i>0,01680</i>	<i>0,01246</i>	<i>0,01067</i>	<i>0,01179</i>	<i>0,02272</i>
Arts/science	0,75447	0,07492	0,04501	0,03102	0,02503	0,02601	0,04355
14005	<i>0,13196</i>	<i>0,02605</i>	<i>0,01960</i>	<i>0,01580</i>	<i>0,01455</i>	<i>0,01751</i>	<i>0,04341</i>
Community Service/Education	0,82969	0,05881	0,03311	0,02168	0,01669	0,01640	0,02363
7539	<i>0,10291</i>	<i>0,02490</i>	<i>0,01720</i>	<i>0,01302</i>	<i>0,01135</i>	<i>0,01281</i>	<i>0,02620</i>
Dentistry	0,89682	0,04163	0,02139	0,01298	0,00930	0,00836	0,00951
493	<i>0,04927</i>	<i>0,01576</i>	<i>0,00959</i>	<i>0,00654</i>	<i>0,00517</i>	<i>0,00516</i>	<i>0,00726</i>
Engineering/Technology	0,82874	0,05962	0,03353	0,02190	0,01680	0,01641	0,02301
5181	<i>0,09484</i>	<i>0,02463</i>	<i>0,01654</i>	<i>0,01223</i>	<i>0,01042</i>	<i>0,01144</i>	<i>0,02128</i>
Health Sciences	0,87044	0,04909	0,02627	0,01648	0,01218	0,01137	0,01416
5862	<i>0,06879</i>	<i>0,02050</i>	<i>0,01288</i>	<i>0,00905</i>	<i>0,00736</i>	<i>0,00764</i>	<i>0,01207</i>
Law	0,82982	0,06127	0,03393	0,02183	0,01649	0,01579	0,02087
1441	<i>0,06665</i>	<i>0,01710</i>	<i>0,01159</i>	<i>0,00861</i>	<i>0,00736</i>	<i>0,00809</i>	<i>0,01534</i>
Medicine	0,97453	0,01209	0,00540	0,00296	0,00194	0,00158	0,00149
683	<i>0,02980</i>	<i>0,01146</i>	<i>0,00609</i>	<i>0,00381</i>	<i>0,00281</i>	<i>0,00264</i>	<i>0,00339</i>

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Trades	0,74752	0,07951	0,04741	0,03236	0,02580	0,02635	0,04105
5903	<i>0,09506</i>	<i>0,01957</i>	<i>0,01472</i>	<i>0,01178</i>	<i>0,01072</i>	<i>0,01263</i>	<i>0,02765</i>
Theology	0,83551	0,05824	0,03240	0,02098	0,01598	0,01549	0,02139
498	<i>0,08969</i>	<i>0,02209</i>	<i>0,01524</i>	<i>0,01149</i>	<i>0,00995</i>	<i>0,01111</i>	<i>0,02135</i>
Level of Study							
Non-degree	0,78780	0,06939	0,04040	0,02711	0,02132	0,02146	0,03253
31676	<i>0,10695</i>	<i>0,02434</i>	<i>0,01734</i>	<i>0,01341</i>	<i>0,01189</i>	<i>0,01367</i>	<i>0,02901</i>
Undergraduate	0,81077	0,06231	0,03594	0,02400	0,01883	0,01895	0,02920
21985	<i>0,12096</i>	<i>0,02774</i>	<i>0,01952</i>	<i>0,01502</i>	<i>0,01331</i>	<i>0,01534</i>	<i>0,03374</i>
Masters	0,81381	0,06104	0,03510	0,02343	0,01841	0,01859	0,02961
1855	<i>0,12726</i>	<i>0,02676</i>	<i>0,01940</i>	<i>0,01530</i>	<i>0,01387</i>	<i>0,01646</i>	<i>0,04090</i>
Ph.D.	0,80311	0,05619	0,03377	0,02355	0,01938	0,02088	0,04313
132	<i>0,18839</i>	<i>0,03489</i>	<i>0,02495</i>	<i>0,02003</i>	<i>0,01885</i>	<i>0,02390</i>	<i>0,08133</i>
Province of Study							
Alberta	0,80443	0,06555	0,03765	0,02500	0,01948	0,01938	0,02851
9606	<i>0,10274</i>	<i>0,02448</i>	<i>0,01711</i>	<i>0,01305</i>	<i>0,01142</i>	<i>0,01292</i>	<i>0,02571</i>
BC	0,76745	0,07365	0,04352	0,02956	0,02352	0,02402	0,03828
7010	<i>0,11443</i>	<i>0,02297</i>	<i>0,01716</i>	<i>0,01376</i>	<i>0,01261</i>	<i>0,01510</i>	<i>0,03763</i>
Manitoba	0,77428	0,07289	0,04278	0,02888	0,02282	0,02307	0,03528
3159	<i>0,10367</i>	<i>0,02292</i>	<i>0,01660</i>	<i>0,01297</i>	<i>0,01158</i>	<i>0,01340</i>	<i>0,02872</i>
New Brunswick	0,76386	0,07508	0,04443	0,03018	0,02399	0,02443	0,03803
2889	<i>0,10644</i>	<i>0,02280</i>	<i>0,01678</i>	<i>0,01324</i>	<i>0,01193</i>	<i>0,01392</i>	<i>0,03019</i>
Newfoundland	0,69128	0,08708	0,05450	0,03873	0,03211	0,03440	0,06189
2546	<i>0,13432</i>	<i>0,02305</i>	<i>0,01851</i>	<i>0,01557</i>	<i>0,01483</i>	<i>0,01846</i>	<i>0,04889</i>
Nova Scotia	0,71486	0,08432	0,05170	0,03612	0,02946	0,03095	0,05258
3071	<i>0,11798</i>	<i>0,02103</i>	<i>0,01673</i>	<i>0,01394</i>	<i>0,01314</i>	<i>0,01614</i>	<i>0,04103</i>
Ontario	0,84129	0,05578	0,03112	0,02022	0,01545	0,01504	0,02111
22520	<i>0,09855</i>	<i>0,02546</i>	<i>0,01701</i>	<i>0,01259</i>	<i>0,01077</i>	<i>0,01191</i>	<i>0,02326</i>
Prince Edward Island	0,80292	0,06656	0,03814	0,02525	0,01961	0,01942	0,02811
523	<i>0,09486</i>	<i>0,02275</i>	<i>0,01589</i>	<i>0,01210</i>	<i>0,01056</i>	<i>0,01191</i>	<i>0,02337</i>
Saskatchewan	0,76632	0,07487	0,04414	0,02989	0,02369	0,02403	0,03706
4269	<i>0,10219</i>	<i>0,02176</i>	<i>0,01606</i>	<i>0,01269</i>	<i>0,01145</i>	<i>0,01338</i>	<i>0,02941</i>

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Yukon	0,76563	0,07428	0,04402	0,02994	0,02383	0,02431	0,03799
55	<i>0,11191</i>	<i>0,02446</i>	<i>0,01786</i>	<i>0,01403</i>	<i>0,01257</i>	<i>0,01457</i>	<i>0,03027</i>
Total number of observations							
55648							
*The numbers below the category names are the number of observations in each category.							
*The probabilities in the columns are the mean probability of using interest relief for the observations in that category.							
*The numbers in italics are the standard deviations of the probabilities for that category.							

4. A duration model for the repayment of student loans

Now that we have looked at the determinants of having a claim or interest relief, we want to focus on the reimbursement itself. What characteristics make one individual repay in a shorter period of time than another? Do people tend to repay their loan quickly or slowly? How does the time spent in the reimbursement phase affect the probability of full remittance at any given time? Those are questions that can be answered through the use of an econometric duration model. A duration model provides us with a survival function, which characterizes the probability of survival in the repayment state, the time spent before total reimbursement. It is also associated with a hazard function, which gives us the rate at which a student exits the repayment phase, given that he has not already exited. Looking at the shape of the hazard rate function will tell us more about the pattern of loan repayment. A duration model can also include independent variables, which do not change the shape of the hazard but rather its vertical position. A variable that affects the duration negatively will make the hazard function shift upwards, leaving it more likely for an individual to exit the state at any given time.

The data we have for durations before students repay their loans consists of 53,574 observations for the 1990–91 cohort. The duration variable is defined as follows: the time in months before total loan repayment by the student starting at consolidation date. The variable is censored if, at the time the database was constructed, the student was still in repayment phase. There are 16,887 censored observations, or 32 per cent of the total.

A loan deemed in default is not considered repaid, except if it is recovered by a collection agency or the government. We include dummy variables for claims and interest relief in the regression, thus indicating a student who experiences financial difficulties. Thus, these variables are treated here as exogenous. Three reasons justify our choice. First, a ten-year period is relatively short for the repayment of student loans, therefore we consider this duration model an investigative exercise. Second, we do not have strong instruments to use for the claim and interest relief variables. Finally, a joint estimation of “claim-interest relief-duration of repayment of loans” will impose a lognormal hazard rate to form a trivariate normal distribution with the probit for claims and the ordered probit for interest relief.

4.1. The duration model

We estimate a duration model with a Weibull hazard and a Gamma correction for unobserved heterogeneity. The unobserved characteristics or variables such as the individual’s motivation to find a job, health status need particular attention in duration model. The log-likelihood function estimated for this model is:

$$\ln(L) = \sum_{uncensored} \delta_i \left[\ln(\lambda_i p(\lambda_i t_i)^{p-1}) - \ln(1 + \theta(\lambda_i t_i)^p) \right] + \sum_{all} \ln \left(1 + \theta(\lambda_i t_i)^p \right)^{\frac{-1}{\theta}},$$

where

$$\lambda_i = \exp(-\beta' x_i),$$

and $X_i =$ (one, correction dummy, weeks of study, amount borrowed, age, years of study/years required, interest relief dummy, claims dummy, sex, type of institution [private dummy], marital status, field of study dummies, level of study dummies, province dummies. See Table 1 for details).

The δ coefficient is equal to one for the observations on individuals who exited the repayment phase (the uncensored observations). About 10% of individuals repaid their loan immediately when the consolidation period started. Most likely, for these individuals the loan was not essential to their pursuit of studies. Since we take the natural log of the duration variable

t , we add 0.00001 to the observations for which $t = 0$. Those observations are then given a value of one for a correction dummy—zero otherwise.

The survival function of this model is:

$$S(t) = [1 + \theta(\lambda t)^p]^{-1/\theta}$$

and the hazard function is:

$$\lambda(t) = \lambda p (\lambda t)^{p-1} [S(t)]^\theta$$

We will see in the results that θ is larger than zero, and thus our correction for heterogeneity is necessary.

4.2. The empirical results

The coefficients for the duration model are estimated using maximum-likelihood optimization from Gauss. The results are presented in Table 4. The graphs of the hazard functions are presented in Figure 6. Interestingly enough, when a Weibull hazard is corrected for heterogeneity, the shape of the hazard changes and is no longer strictly increasing or decreasing. We can see in Figure 6 that the hazard rate is increasing up to a certain point, close to two years, and then decreasing as the duration goes up. This shape is what we expected: The probability of fully reimbursing a loan starts at a certain level at consolidation date, then this probability goes up with time as the ex-students find employment, then get experience, a better salary, and an overall improved financial situation. After a certain time, represented by the peak in the hazard function, the probability of exit goes down, due to the fact that those individuals still in the repayment phase at that point tend to have difficulty repaying because of an underpaid job or a heavy debt load. This leads to a lower hazard rate, and that rate continues decreasing as time goes by. What this shows us is that it becomes less likely for an individual to exit the repayment spell the longer it's been since the consolidation. While this general shape was the one expected for such a model, we would have thought that the return point in the hazard rate function, here at around two years, would be further to the right, after a longer period of time. Two years seems a short time to get rid of a student loan, especially when you consider the amounts borrowed and

the advantageous interest rates. What could explain that this curve is skewed to the left? First, it could be because of the number of ex-students who reimbursed their loan in one shot at the consolidation date, or right after. These people probably didn't really need a loan and borrowed only for a strategic reason. The second explanation for that early return point might be a phenomenon of debt aversion. Even if borrowers don't have to repay quickly, they prefer to do so because they feel uncomfortable with indebtedness.

Table 4

1990–91 Cohort									
with correction for heterogeneity									
Parameters	Estimates	St. Dev.	T-stat	Prob.	Parameters	Estimates	St. Dev.	T-stat	Prob.
Constant	3.7905283	0.2290	16.552	0.0000	Health Sciences	-0.15847428	0.0711	-2.229	0.0258
Correction for duration=0	-15.615480	0.0291	-536.017	0.0000	Law	-0.13359903	0.0766	-1.743	0.0813
Duration>0	ref.				Medicine	-0.54121276	0.0850	-6.368	0.0000
Number of weeks of study	0.00022733234	0.0001	1.713	0.0868	Trades	-	0.0709	-0.023	0.9813
Amount borrowed	3.5666063e-05	0.0000	16.235	0.0000	Theology	0.0016667082			
Age	0.0051419712	0.0011	4.693	0.0000		ref.			
Years of study/Years required	-0.057888623	0.0271	-2.138	0.0325	Level of study				
Interest Relief = 1	0.33129892	0.0174	19.055	0.0000	Non-degree	0.49476297	0.1178	4.199	0.0000
Interest Relief = 0	ref.				Undergraduate	0.31718823	0.1167	2.719	0.0066
Claims=1	0.80026831	0.0222	35.973	0.0000	Masters	0.091116601	0.1199	0.760	0.4474
Claims=0	ref.				Doctorate	ref.			
Female	0.022118518	0.0125	1.775	0.0759	Province of study				
Male	ref.				Alberta	-0.38911609	0.1764	-2.206	0.0274
Private Institution	-0.0071948043	0.0197	-0.364	0.7155	British Columbia	-0.081557594	0.1768	-0.461	0.6446
Public Institution	ref.				Manitoba	-0.27710862	0.1775	-1.561	0.1184
Married	0.093272073	0.0214	4.363	0.0000	New-Brunswick	-0.038512236	0.1775	-0.217	0.8283
Not married	ref.				Newfoundland	-0.14090652	0.1780	-0.792	0.4285
					Nova Scotia	-0.094239339	0.1777	-0.530	0.5959
Fields of study					Ontario	-0.33227864	0.1761	-1.887	0.0592
Business/Administration	-0.067283040	0.0691	-0.973	0.3304					
Agriculture	-0.046681196	0.0808	-0.578	0.5634	Prince Edward Island	0.0047342764	0.1814	0.026	0.9792
Arts/science	-0.013090346	0.0699	-0.187	0.8515	Saskatchewan	-0.25461185	0.1771	-1.438	0.1506
Community service/Education	-0.070939429	0.0705	-1.007	0.3141	Yukon	ref.			
Dentistry	-0.34771308	0.0905	-3.840	0.0001					
Engineering/Technology	-0.10850125	0.0703	-1.543	0.1227	P	1.1621213	0.0098	118.756	0.0000
					θ	0.50850829	0.0284	17.877	0.0000
Number of observations: 53574 Log-likelihood : -175430.20596 Mean log-likelihood : -3.27454									

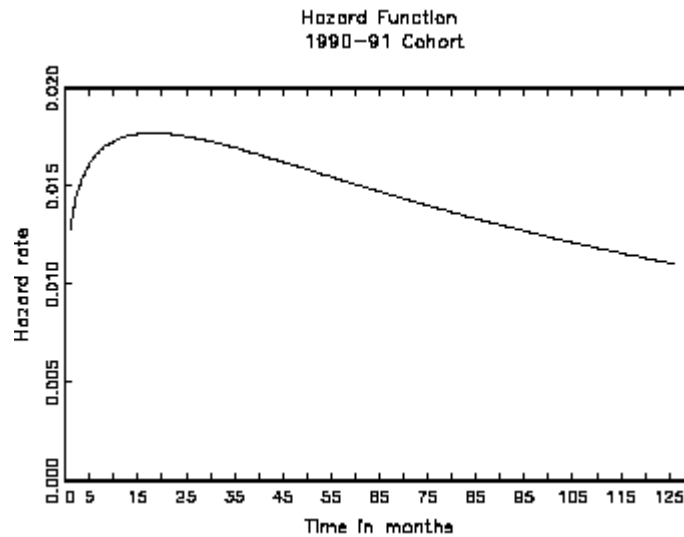


Figure 6

It is interesting to look at the signs of the estimated coefficients presented in Table 4. A negative (positive) sign means that the variable has a negative (positive) effect on the duration, and induces a shift upwards (downwards) in the hazard rate function.

The coefficient associated with the correction dummies for a duration equal to zero is very large, highly significant and negative. Of course, if an observation has a value of zero for a duration, this greatly lowers its duration. But this result is interesting mostly because it shows us that there are individuals who fully reimburse their loan the minute they get out of school. Clearly, they had a loan for a financially strategic reason and not because of insufficient funds to attend school. This is part of the reality of student loans: students who get financial aid but don't really need it.

Variables having a positive coefficient include: the amount borrowed, age, the interest relief dummy, and the married dummy. It comes as no surprise that the amount borrowed has a positive and significant effect on the time before repayment. Just like the amount borrowed increased the probability of defaulting or resorting to the interest relief measure, here it increases the time spent in the repayment phase. The age variable has a positive effect too, but quite small. It is significant, but perhaps doesn't play a major role. Same scenario for the married variable, but with a slightly larger effect. This result shows us that a married person is less likely to exit

the repayment phase than an unmarried one. This is consistent with the assumption that married individuals might need to support their partners and/or children, making it more difficult for them to reimburse their student loans. Another reality of student loans we have to keep in mind is the fact that those loans generally have very low interest rates. For those who have debt from different sources, like credit card bills, car payments or mortgage payments, it might be part of a financial strategy to repay the student loan last. To avoid paying high interest on the credit cards, for example, one might fully pay their credit card bills, thus postponing payment of the student loan. Since student loans present such advantageous rates, they are often at the bottom of the priority list when it comes to paying the bills.

The interest relief dummy coefficient is very significant, quite large and positive. It clearly indicates that a student who is on interest relief has a much lower hazard rate for exiting the repayment spell. Now, while the interest relief dummy is an indicator of a student in financial difficulty, there might be a simpler explanation for the strength of its impact on the hazard rate of exit. Using the interest relief option lengthens the repayment because that's what it precisely does: help students go through a difficult period, letting them defer payments until a later date.

For the claim dummy, the positive coefficient suggests that having a claim makes the duration before repayment longer, which is what we would normally expect: a student who defaults is one who has difficulty meeting his payments, and it will probably take a long time for a collection agency to collect the money owed.

Looking now at the fields of study coefficients, we see that only the ones for dentistry, health sciences and medicine are significant. They are all negative and relatively large, especially the one for medicine. This comes as no surprise at all: graduating as a medical doctor or a dentist greatly lowers the duration of the repayment period. Simple to understand: they make more money on their jobs, have fewer or no financial difficulties, and so repay much faster. The other significant variables we have are business, agriculture, art and science, education and trades, all of which are positive. Individuals graduating in those fields tend to take more time to reimburse their loans, and their hazard rate is lower, compared to the reference field which is theology.

If we turn now to the level of study dummies, we see that the non-degree and undergraduate variables are significant and positive. This implies that, compared to borrowers who study at the Ph.D. level, the ones with an undergraduate degree or no degree show a longer period of repayment.

Another measure we can look at while analysing the results of an econometric duration model is the median time. It is defined as the length of time after which half of the students have repaid their loan, or exited the repayment phase. It is the value of duration for which the survival function equals 0.5. The median time for the 1990–91 cohort is about 41 months, or 3½ years. This tells us that half the students fully repay their loan after 3½ years. This result is certainly affected by those individuals who repaid their loan immediately at the consolidation date.

Despite addressing several important questions, it would be interesting for further studies to have access to more extended databases. Other extensions could include a more complex model with time-varying covariates, such as unemployment, economic growth, or changing personal characteristics. With a longer time period, it will be worthy to address the endogeneity issue with regards to the claims and interest relief variables and to better account for those individuals repaying their loan at the consolidation date .

5. Conclusion and policy issues

This paper has benefited from access to a unique set of data for the study of patterns of student loans repayment in Canada. Billions of dollars are at stake and more than three hundred thousand students have been associated with the program in recent years. The justification for this program stems from a government policy aimed at facilitating access to higher education for all Canadians (the same applies to Québec, which has its own program) in the context of a knowledge based economy. Unlike real or financial investments, human capital investment has nothing tangible to offer to the lending institution in case of default. Thus, the capital market is an imperfect institution when it comes to offering loans to students. The Canada Student Loans Program (CSLP) is an answer and provides the necessary loans to students with demonstrated

need. But investment in human capital is like any other investment—a risky enterprise. A reality of the educational loan system is that close to one ex-student in five simply cannot repay his or her loan. Many more experience difficulties in paying back their loan. High levels of default are a threat to the viability of the system. Since the CSLP is constantly in deficit, it is actually giving subsidies to higher education, when in fact it was created to correct the imperfect capital market. With indebtedness and the number of students who require financial aid growing larger and larger, the health of the whole system is at stake. It is thus crucial to understand the determinants of loan repayment and default. This paper has studied those determinants, as well as the probability of using the interest relief option, a specific measure to ease repayment of the loan when a participant goes through a period of unemployment or partial employment.

Among the many results derived from our econometric models, a few are particularly interesting for policy issues. First, finishing the program supported by a loan is essential to avoiding default. Therefore, it may be worth considering policies that will reward anyone who completes his or her program. For example, by transforming part of the loan into a grant if this objective is met in due time. On the other hand, too much flexibility in access to loans might encourage experiments by students that could turn disastrous for the student and the national loan program. A loan program should also come with some information on the risk involved for the student before he or she invests in a particular field or program. Better information about the labour market is essential. One particular concern is the relatively high level of default for students attending private schools. Relatively easy access to loans could be an invitation for private institutions to capitalize on that fact with various educational programs having little bearing on the reality of the labour market. Eventually serious institutions will establish a reputation, but for some students it will be too late. The second result concerns the interest relief measure that seems not to have played its role of helping student pass through difficult times. This could explain why, recently, important modifications were brought to this program. It will be important to review this question with a new cohort. Finally, not all students needed the loan program to pursue higher education. With scarce resources, funding these windfall gains is a flaw in the program. Whether by chance, because of debt aversion, or out of a particular sense of civic duty, many participants repaid their student loans in a relatively short period of time. A

policy systematically reminding the beneficiary of his own commitment to the perpetuation of the collective loan program might be useful to consider, starting two years after the loan is consolidated.

More work needs to be done, however, to complete the study of patterns of loan repayment in Canada. In addition to some methodological issues raised earlier, our estimates need to be updated with new and revised data.

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The Canada Student Loan Program website

<http://www.canlearn.ca/English/csl/index.cfm>

Appendix

Individual contributions to the likelihood function of the claim-interest relief period (probit-ordered probit) model are calculated using a bivariate normal distribution of the residuals, $\eta_i \varepsilon_i \sim \text{NB}(0,0,1,1, \rho)$, with a correlation coefficient of ρ .

Specifically, the joint probabilities are defined as follows for all cases:

$$P(\text{CLAIMS}_i=1, \text{NBIR}_i=0) = \int_{-X_i\beta}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{-Z_i\gamma} \phi_2(\eta_i, \varepsilon_i) d\varepsilon_i, d\eta_i$$

$$P(\text{CLAIMS}_i=1, \text{NBIR}_i=1) = \int_{-X_i\beta-\delta_1}^{\infty} \int_{-Z_i\gamma}^{\mu_1-Z_i\gamma} \phi_2(\eta_i, \varepsilon_i) d\varepsilon_i, d\eta_i$$

$$P(\text{CLAIMS}_i=1, \text{NBIR}_i=2) = \int_{-X_i\beta-\delta_2}^{\infty} \int_{\mu_1-Z_i\gamma}^{\mu_2-Z_i\gamma} \phi_2(\eta_i, \varepsilon_i) d\varepsilon_i, d\eta_i$$

$$P(\text{CLAIMS}_i=1, \text{NBIR}_i=3) = \int_{-X_i\beta-\delta_3}^{\infty} \int_{\mu_2-Z_i\gamma}^{\mu_3-Z_i\gamma} \phi_2(\eta_i, \varepsilon_i) d\varepsilon_i, d\eta_i$$

$$P(\text{CLAIMS}_i=1, \text{NBIR}_i=4) = \int_{-X_i\beta-\delta_4}^{\infty} \int_{\mu_3-Z_i\gamma}^{\mu_4-Z_i\gamma} \phi_2(\eta_i, \varepsilon_i) d\varepsilon_i, d\eta_i$$

$$P(\text{CLAIMS}_i=1, \text{NBIR}_i=5) = \int_{-X_i\beta-\delta_5}^{\infty} \int_{\mu_4-Z_i\gamma}^{\mu_5-Z_i\gamma} \phi_2(\eta_i, \varepsilon_i) d\varepsilon_i, d\eta_i$$

$$P(\text{CLAIMS}_i=1, \text{NBIR}_i=6) = \int_{-X_i\beta-\delta_6}^{\infty} \int_{\mu_5-Z_i\gamma}^{\infty} \phi_2(\eta_i, \varepsilon_i) d\varepsilon_i, d\eta_i$$

$$P(\text{CLAIMS}_i=0, \text{NBIR}_i=0) = \int_{-\infty}^{-X_i\beta} \int_{-\infty}^{-Z_i\gamma} \phi_2(\eta_i, \varepsilon_i) d\varepsilon_i, d\eta_i$$

$$P(\text{CLAIMS}_i=0, \text{NBIR}_i=1) = \int_{-\infty}^{-X_i\beta-\delta_1} \int_{-Z_i\gamma}^{\mu_1-Z_i\gamma} \phi_2(\eta_i, \varepsilon_i) d\varepsilon_i, d\eta_i$$

$$P(\text{CLAIMS}_i=0, \text{NBIR}_i=2) = \int_{-\infty}^{-X_i\beta-\delta_2} \int_{\mu_1-Z_i\gamma}^{\mu_2-Z_i\gamma} \phi_2(\eta_i, \varepsilon_i) d\varepsilon_i, d\eta_i$$

$$P(\text{CLAIMS}_i=0, \text{NBIR}_i=3) = \int_{-\infty}^{-X_i\beta-\delta_3} \int_{\mu_2-Z_i\gamma}^{\mu_3-Z_i\gamma} \phi_2(\eta_i, \varepsilon_i) d\varepsilon_i, d\eta_i$$

$$P(\text{CLAIMS}_i=0, \text{NBIR}_i=4) = \int_{-\infty}^{-X_i\beta-\delta_4} \int_{\mu_3-Z_i\gamma}^{\mu_4-Z_i\gamma} \phi_2(\eta_i, \varepsilon_i) d\varepsilon_i, d\eta_i$$

$$P(\text{CLAIMS}_i=0, \text{NBIR}_i=5) = \int_{-\infty}^{-X_i\beta-\delta_5} \int_{\mu_4-Z_i\gamma}^{\mu_5-Z_i\gamma} \phi_2(\eta_i, \varepsilon_i) d\varepsilon_i, d\eta_i$$

$$P(\text{CLAIMS}_i=0, \text{NBIR}_i=6) = \int_{-\infty}^{-X_i\beta-\delta_6} \int_{\mu_5-Z_i\gamma}^{\infty} \phi_2(\eta_i, \varepsilon_i) d\varepsilon_i, d\eta_i .$$