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# Public Service Employee Survey

## Summary Report

Public Service

February 2015

**Notice of Correction and Addition (March 5, 2015)**

Page 4: Data presented in Tables 1 and 2 have been revised.

Page 20: Results pertaining to duty to accommodate (questions 81, 82, 83), which were not available at the time of publication, have been added to the report.

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# 2014 Public Service Employee Survey – Overall Public Service

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# 2014 Public Service Employee Survey – Overall Public Service

## Executive Summary

The 2014 Public Service Employee Survey (PSES), the sixth survey of federal public servants, was conducted from August 25 to October 3, 2014. The survey was sent to over 250,000 public service employees. The response rate was 71.4%.

## Employee Engagement

The 2014 PSES results show that the majority of public service employees are engaged in their work and their organization. In particular, 93% of employees agreed that they are willing to put in the extra effort to get the job done. However, other indicators of engagement have decreased over time. In 2014, 79% of employees felt that they like their job, down 3 percentage points from 2011. Almost three quarters of employees (74%) reported that they get a sense of satisfaction from their work, a decrease of 2 percentage points from 2011. A smaller proportion of employees indicated that they would prefer to remain with their organization even if a comparable job was available elsewhere in the public service in 2014 (57%) than in 2011 (59%).

## Leadership

Generally, employees were more positive about their immediate supervisor than about their senior management, and this gap has grown over time. In 2014, roughly three quarters of employees expressed favourable views of their immediate supervisor, but only about half did so with regard to their senior managers. Seventy-five percent of employees felt that their supervisor keeps them informed about issues affecting their work, up 2 percentage points from 2011. Less than half of employees (47%) reported that essential information flows effectively from senior management to staff, down 1 percentage point from 2011 (48%) and down 4 percentage points from 2008 (51%).

## Workforce

At the time the 2014 PSES was conducted, the new *Directive on Performance Management* had been in effect across the core public administration for over five months. Consistent with the intent of that directive, in 2014, employees were more likely than in 2011 to indicate that their work is assessed against identified goals and objectives (79% versus 75%) and that they receive useful feedback about their job performance (72% versus 70%). Almost four in ten employees (38%) agreed that unsatisfactory employee performance is managed effectively in their work unit.

The 2014 results show that employees feel less positive about the training they receive and about support and opportunities for career development in their organization. For example, 63% indicated that they get the training they need to do their job, a decrease of 6 percentage points from 2011. In 2014, 52% felt that their organization supports career development, down 3 percentage points from 2011. Forty-two percent of employees indicated they have opportunities for promotion in their organization, down from 44% in 2011 and 51% in 2008.

Based on the 2014 results, indicators of empowerment are not as high as in 2011. For example, in 2014, two thirds of employees (66%) believed that they have support to provide a high level of service, a

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decrease of 9 percentage points from 2011. Sixty-two percent of employees believed they have opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect their work, down from 68% in 2011.

In 2014, employees were more likely to indicate that their immediate supervisor supports the use of flexible work arrangements (78%) than in 2011 (75%). Similar proportions of employees in 2014 (70%) and 2011 (69%) reported that they can complete their assigned workload during their regular working hours. However, the results show a decline in the proportion of employees who have reported support for work-life balance (71%, down 4 percentage points from 2011)

### Workplace

In 2014, employees were more likely to feel that aspects of organizational performance negatively impacted their work than in 2011, particularly in relation to having to do more work with fewer resources (48% versus 44% in 2011), too many approval stages (48% versus 45% in 2011) and lack of stability in their organization (37% versus 34% in 2011).

According to the 2014 results, most public service employees believe they work in a respectful and ethical workplace. For example, 80% felt that their colleagues behave in a respectful manner and 94% indicated that they have positive working relationships with their colleagues. In 2014, employees were more inclined than in the past to feel that their organization respects them (79% versus 76% in 2011) and respects individual differences (78% versus 72% in 2011). Eighty-two percent of employees believed that employees in their organization carry out their duties in the public's interest, up 4 percentage points from 2011.

In 2014, 19% of employees indicated that they had been harassed in the past two years.<sup>1</sup> The most common types of harassment were offensive remarks, unfair treatment, and being excluded or ignored. Sexual harassment, which is described as a sexual comment or gesture, was cited by 9% of those who felt they had been harassed. Of those who felt they had been harassed, 7% indicated that they had filed a grievance or formal complaint, and one quarter (25%) reported that they had taken no action.

Eight percent of employees indicated that they had experienced discrimination in the past two years,<sup>2</sup> with 80% of these employees citing individuals with authority over them as one of the sources of the discrimination. Of those who indicated they had experienced discrimination, 7% reported that they had filed a grievance or formal complaint, and almost half (48%) indicated that they had taken no action.

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1. The 2014 PSES response categories for the harassment questions changed from those of previous surveys. Consequently, the results for these questions should not be compared over time.

2. The 2014 PSES response categories for the discrimination questions changed from those of previous surveys. Consequently, the results for these questions should not be compared over time.

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### Background

#### Purpose of Report

The intent of this report is to provide a summary of the results of the 2014 Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) for the overall public service. Comparisons of the 2014 PSES results with those from 2011 and 2008 allow for the observation of trends over time.

#### Survey History

The PSES is a survey of federal public servants that measures aspects of employee engagement, leadership, the workforce and the workplace. The PSES has been conducted every three years since 1999.

The 2014 PSES was led by the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, within the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, in collaboration with Statistics Canada and was conducted from August 25 to October 3, 2014.

#### Survey Content

Extensive consultations with policy centres, Employment Equity Champions and Chairs Committees, central agencies, departments and agencies, and bargaining agents led to content changes for the 2014 survey. Questions were added to examine duty to accommodate, types of harassment, and actions taken following experiences of harassment or discrimination. Questions were also added to explore performance management from different perspectives, given the launch of the *Directive on Performance Management* in April 2014.

The 2014 PSES consisted of 106 questions: 82 covered aspects of the four major themes of employee engagement, leadership, workforce and workplace; the remaining 24 were demographic questions.

The 2014 PSES included 76 questions that were repeated from the 2011 survey, and of these, 55 were repeated from the 2008 survey.

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### Respondent Profile

#### Response Rates

The invitation to complete the 2014 PSES was sent to over 250,000 employees in 93 participating organizations in the federal public service. A total of 182,165 employees participated in the survey, generating a response rate of 71.4%.<sup>3</sup>

For details on the survey methodology, see Appendix: Survey Methodology.

#### Selected Demographic Characteristics

This section describes some of the demographic characteristics of the 2014 PSES respondents.

##### Regional Distribution

The following table shows the breakdown of respondents by region.

**Table 1: Distribution of 2014 PSES respondents across regions.**

Region	Percentage
Atlantic	9.8%
Quebec (excluding National Capital Region)	10.7%
Ontario (excluding National Capital Region)	14.4%
National Capital Region	43.7%
Prairies, Nunavut and Northwest Territories	12.0%
British Columbia and Yukon	8.5%
Outside Canada	1.0%

##### Years of Tenure in Current Organization and in the Public Service

The following table shows the breakdown of respondents by years of service in their current department or agency and by years of service in the federal public service.

**Table 2: Distribution of 2014 PSES respondents by years of service in the current organization and in the federal public service.**

Years of Service	Current Organization	Federal Public Service
Less than 3 years	18.1%	8.1%
3 to 10 years	45.1%	38.6%
11 to 20 years	23.0%	30.4%
More than 20 years	13.8%	22.8%

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3. The response rate is calculated by dividing the total number of responses received (electronic, paper and alternate format questionnaires) by the total number of potential participants.

### Overview of Analytical Approach

This report presents the 2014 PSES results for the overall public service and comparisons with the results of the previous two surveys (2011 and 2008). Comparisons over time are only possible for questions that are identical to those in previous surveys.

The results are provided as percentages and reflect the level of agreement or affirmative responses to individual questions. Results represent the sum of “Strongly agree” and “Somewhat agree” responses for agreement scales; the sum of “Always / Almost always” and “Often” responses for frequency scales; the “Yes” response for yes/no questions; or the selected response for “Mark all that apply” lists. The totals used to calculate the percentages do not include the responses “Don’t know” and “Not applicable.”

For most PSES questions, affirmative responses mean positive results. For some questions, however, affirmative responses mean negative results. These questions include the seven sub-questions of Question 21, which relate to the sources of negative impact on work quality and all begin “I feel that the quality of my work suffers because of...,” and the questions about harassment and discrimination. Low percentages for these questions indicate good results, whereas high percentages indicate areas for improvement.



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### Employee Engagement

**Table 3: Affirmative results for questions related to employee engagement over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Employee Engagement	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
11	I get a sense of satisfaction from my work.	77	76	74
14	I am willing to put in the extra effort to get the job done.	n/a	94	93
15	I am proud of the work that I do.	n/a	89	88
19	Overall, I like my job.	84	82	79
58	I would recommend my department or agency as a great place to work.	n/a	64	63
59	I am satisfied with my department or agency.	68	65	64
60	I would prefer to remain with my department or agency, even if a comparable job was available elsewhere in the federal public service.	60	59	57

Employee engagement is widely regarded as an outcome of effective people management<sup>i</sup> and is linked to client satisfaction, productivity and employee retention.<sup>ii</sup> In the federal public service, employee engagement has been empirically linked to good leadership, values-based staffing, job fit, career development, empowerment, positive working relationships, and a respectful and ethical workplace.<sup>iii</sup>

In the PSES, employee engagement is assessed through questions that gauge job satisfaction, commitment, and satisfaction with one's organization. The 2014 PSES contains seven questions related to employee engagement.

Based on the 2014 survey results, most employees in the public service are engaged in their work and committed to their organization. However, indicators of engagement have decreased slightly over time.

The 2014 results show that 79% of employees like their job (Q19), a decrease from 2011 and 2008 (82% and 84%, respectively). Almost three quarters of employees (74%) indicated that they get a sense of satisfaction from their work (Q11), down from 2011 and 2008 (76% and 77%, respectively).

In 2014, 88% of employees agreed that they are proud of the work they do (Q15), similar to 2011 (89%). The vast majority of employees (93%) indicated that they are willing to put in the extra effort to get the job done (Q14), similar to 2011 (94%).

Nearly two thirds (64%) of employees agreed that they are satisfied with their organization (Q59), similar to 2011 (65%) but a decrease from 2008 (68%). In 2014, 63% of employees indicated that they would recommend their organization as a great place to work (Q58), which is similar to 2011 (64%). Lastly, 57% of employees felt that they would prefer to remain with their organization even if a comparable job was available elsewhere in the federal public service (Q60), a decrease from 2011 and 2008 (59% and 60%, respectively).

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### Leadership

Good leaders instill trust, communicate effectively and make good decisions. Strong, clear leadership is a key driver of employee engagement and organizational performance.<sup>iv</sup>

In the 2014 PSES, the questions about leadership were divided into two groups: questions pertaining to the respondent's immediate supervisor, and questions pertaining to senior management.

Generally, employees tended to provide more favourable responses to questions about their immediate supervisor than to those about their senior management.

### Immediate Supervisor

**Table 4: Affirmative results for questions related to immediate supervisor over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Immediate Supervisor	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
31	I can count on my immediate supervisor to keep his or her promises.	72	74	75
32	My immediate supervisor keeps me informed about the issues affecting my work.	71	73	75
36	I am satisfied with the quality of supervision I receive.	n/a	n/a	77

Overall, three quarters of employees expressed positive opinions about their immediate supervisor.

The 2014 PSES included a new question that asked respondents to indicate their overall assessment of their immediate supervisor. For this question, 77% of employees agreed that they were satisfied with the quality of supervision they receive (Q36).

Three quarters of employees (75%) believed they can count on their immediate supervisor to keep his or her promises (Q31), similar to 2011 (74%) and higher than in 2008 (72%). When asked whether their immediate supervisor keeps them informed about issues affecting their work (Q32), 75% of employees agreed, an improvement from both 2011 and 2008 (73% and 71%, respectively).

### Senior Management

**Table 5: Affirmative results for questions related to senior management over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Senior Management	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
39	Senior managers in my department or agency lead by example in ethical behaviour.	n/a	58	62
40	I have confidence in the senior management of my department or agency.	55	52	53
41	Senior management in my department or agency makes effective and timely decisions.	44	45	45
42	I believe that senior management will try to resolve concerns raised in this survey.	47	47	46
43	Essential information flows effectively from senior management to staff.	51	48	47
44	I have access to senior management in my department or agency.	n/a	n/a	58

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For the most part, employees were slightly less positive about senior management in 2014 than in 2011 and 2008. However, employees were more likely to view their senior managers as leading by example in ethical behaviour in 2014.

In 2014, more than half of employees (53%) reported that they have confidence in the senior management of their organization (Q40), similar to 2011 (52%), but slightly lower than in 2008 (55%). Additionally, 46% of employees believed that their senior management will try to resolve concerns raised in this survey (Q42), similar to 2011 and 2008 (47%). Further, 62% of employees felt that senior managers in their organization lead by example in terms of ethical behaviour (Q39), an improvement from 2011 (58%).

In 2014, 45% of employees indicated that their senior management makes effective and timely decisions (Q41), unchanged since 2011 (45%) and similar to 2008 (44%). In terms of communication, 47% of employees agreed that essential information flows effectively from senior management to staff (Q43), similar to 2011 (48%), but down from 2008 (51%). Lastly, 58% of employees felt that they have access to senior management in their organization (Q44).

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### Workforce

Good people management practices lead to a motivated, enabled workforce. Training, career development<sup>v</sup> and empowerment have all been linked to employee engagement.<sup>vi</sup>

For the most part, the 2014 PSES workforce questions focused on the respondent's experience as part of the workforce in the organization, with the exceptions of the questions about staffing, which related to the respondent's impressions of the workforce in his or her work unit.

Respondents were asked 21 questions about the workforce. The questions covered six sub-themes: performance management, staffing, job fit and development, empowerment, work-life balance and workload, and retention.

### Performance Management

**Table 6: Affirmative results for questions related to performance management over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Performance Management	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
12	I receive meaningful recognition for work well done.	n/a	59	57
28	In my work unit, unsatisfactory employee performance is managed effectively.	n/a	n/a	38
30	I receive useful feedback from my immediate supervisor on my job performance.	67	70	72
34	My immediate supervisor assesses my work against identified goals and objectives.	73	75	79
38	I receive the support I need from senior management to address unsatisfactory performance issues in my work unit. (for supervisors)	n/a	n/a	66

Two aspects of performance management—evaluation against identified objectives and receiving feedback and recognition—have been examined through past surveys. The 2014 PSES included two new questions that assess performance management in the work unit more directly.

Coinciding with the implementation of the *Directive on Performance Management* across the core public administration in 2014, employees were more likely to be positive about feedback and work assessments than they were in the past.

The 2014 results show that 79% of employees felt that their immediate supervisor assesses their work against identified goals and objectives (Q34), up from 2011 (75%) and much higher than in 2008 (73%). In 2014, 72% of employees reported that they receive useful feedback from their immediate supervisor on job performance (Q30), a slight increase from 2011 (70%) and an improvement from 2008 (67%). When asked whether they receive meaningful recognition for work well done (Q12), 57% of employees agreed in 2014, slightly lower than in 2011 (59%).

In 2014, 38% of employees felt that unsatisfactory employee performance is managed effectively in their work unit (Q28). It is worth noting that 13% of employees responded “Don’t know” to Q28. When asked of supervisors only, 66% of supervisors believed that they receive the support they need from senior management to address unsatisfactory performance issues in their work unit (Q38).

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### Staffing

**Table 7: Affirmative results for questions related to staffing over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey – Staffing	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
26	In my work unit, I believe that we hire people who can do the job.	65	65	66
27	In my work unit, the process of selecting a person for a position is done fairly.	59	58	57

Two thirds of employees (66%) indicated that they believe their work unit hires people who can do the job (Q26), similar to 2011 and 2008 (65%). In 2014, 57% of employees believed that the process of selecting a person for a position is done fairly in their work unit (Q27), similar to 2011 (58%) and slightly lower than in 2008 (59%).

### Job Fit and Development

**Table 8: Affirmative results for questions related to job fit and development over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Job Fit and Development	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
5	I get the training I need to do my job.	68	69	63
6	My job is a good fit with my interests.	79	79	78
7	My job is a good fit with my skills.	85	84	82
53	My department or agency does a good job of supporting employee career development.	56	55	52
54	I believe I have opportunities for promotion within my department or agency, given my education, skills and experience.	51	44	42

The questions in this section pertain to job fit, training and career development. Both job fit and career development are positively related to employee engagement.<sup>vii</sup>

In 2014, public service employees were less likely to be positive about training, and support and opportunities for career development in their organization than they were in the past.

In 2014, 78% of employees indicated that their job is a good fit with their interests (Q6), similar to 2011 and 2008 (79%). When asked whether their job is a good fit with their skills (Q7), 82% of employees agreed in 2014, a decrease from 2011 and 2008 (84% and 85%, respectively).

Nearly two thirds of employees (63%) believed they get the training they need to do their job (Q5), a large decrease from 2011 and 2008 (69% and 68%, respectively).

In terms of career development, 52% of employees felt that their organization does a good job of supporting career development (Q53), lower than in 2011 and 2008 (55% and 56%, respectively). When asked whether they believe they have opportunities for promotion within their organization, given their education, skills and experience (Q54), 42% of employees agreed in 2014, a slight decrease from 2011 (44%) and a large decrease from 2008 (51%).

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### Empowerment

**Table 9: Affirmative results for questions related to empowerment over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Empowerment	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
16	I have opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect my work.	n/a	68	62
17	I am encouraged to be innovative or to take initiative in my work.	n/a	n/a	63
18	I have support at work to provide a high level of service.	n/a	75	66

A sense of empowerment is associated with a high level of employee engagement.<sup>viii</sup>

The 2014 survey results for indicators of empowerment are lower than in 2011.

In 2014, 62% of employees felt that they have opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect their work (Q16), much lower than in 2011 (68%). Additionally, 63% of employees agreed that they are encouraged to be innovative or to take initiative in their work (Q17). Lastly, two thirds of employees (66%) believed there is support at work to provide a high level of service (Q18), a large decrease from 2011 (75%).

### Work-Life Balance and Workload

**Table 10: Affirmative results for questions related to work-life balance and workload over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Work-Life Balance and Workload	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
9	I have support at work to balance my work and personal life.	n/a	75	71
10	I feel I can claim overtime compensation (in money or in leave) for the overtime hours that I work.	65	62	61
20	I can complete my assigned workload during my regular working hours.	64	69	70
35	Subject to operational requirements, my immediate supervisor supports the use of flexible work arrangements (e.g., flexible hours, compressed workweeks, telework).	n/a	75	78

Heavier workloads and increasing strains on work-life balance, which have been observed over the last decade throughout Canada's labour force, have been shown to negatively impact employee engagement.<sup>ix</sup>

Employees were more likely to report support for the use of flexible work arrangements in 2014 than in 2011. A similar proportion of employees reported in 2014 and 2011 that they can complete their workload during their regular working hours. However, employees were less inclined to indicate that they have support for work-life balance.

The 2014 results show that 70% of employees can complete their assigned workload during their regular working hours (Q20), similar to 2011 (69%) and much higher than in 2008 (64%). In terms of work-life balance, 71% of employees reported that they have support at work to balance their work and personal life (Q9), a decrease from 2011 (75%). When asked whether their immediate supervisor supports the use of flexible work arrangements (Q35), 78% of employees agreed, up from 2011 (75%). The majority of employees (61%) felt that they can claim overtime compensation for the overtime hours that they work

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(Q10), similar to 2011 (62%) and lower than in 2008 (65%). It is also worth noting that 10% of employees responded “Not applicable” to Q10.

### Retention

**Table 11: Affirmative results for questions related to retention over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Retention	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
<b>61</b>	Do you intend to leave your current position in the next two years?	n/a	27	<b>26</b>
<b>62. Please indicate your reason for leaving:</b>				
<b>a</b>	To retire	n/a	19	<b>18</b>
<b>b</b>	To pursue another position within my department or agency	n/a	32	<b>32</b>
<b>c</b>	To pursue a position in another department or agency	n/a	31	<b>30</b>
<b>d</b>	To pursue a position outside the federal public service	n/a	8	<b>10</b>
<b>e</b>	Other	n/a	10	<b>11</b>

Retention rates tend to be higher among highly engaged employees.<sup>x</sup> Factors that also influence retention include economic cycles, fluctuations in the job market, and organizational restructuring. Retention rates may act as a gauge of the organizational health of the overall public service.

In 2014, 26% of employees indicated that they intend to leave their current position in the next two years (Q61), similar to 2011 (27%). Employees who indicated that they intend to leave in the next two years gave the following reasons for leaving (Q62):

- To retire: 18%, similar to 2011 (19%)
- To pursue another position within their organization: 32%, unchanged from 2011 (32%)
- To pursue a position in another department or agency: 30%, similar to 2011 (31%)
- To pursue a position outside the federal public service: 10%, up from 2011 (8%)

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### Workplace

Examining aspects of the workplace helps identify issues related to people management practices in a specific work unit and in a department or agency as a whole. One of the fundamental drivers of employee engagement is perceived respect in the workplace.<sup>xi</sup> Other aspects of the workplace are more tangible, such as physical environment and use of official languages. The 43 questions related to workplace practices are grouped into 10 sub-themes: organizational goals, organizational performance, respectful workplace, ethical workplace, physical environment and equipment, use of official languages, harassment, discrimination, duty to accommodate and collective agreements and labour relations.

### Organizational Goals

**Table 12: Affirmative results for questions related to organizational goals over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Organizational Goals	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
13	I know how my work contributes to the achievement of my department's or agency's goals.	82	80	79
45	My department or agency does a good job of communicating its vision, mission and goals.	n/a	67	65
46	My department or agency reviews and evaluates the progress towards meeting its goals and objectives.	n/a	65	62

In 2014, employees were less inclined to indicate that their department communicates and reviews its goals than they were in 2011.

In 2014, 79% of employees reported that they know how their work contributes to the achievement of their organization (Q13), similar to 2011 (80%) and lower than in 2008 (82%). Nearly two thirds of employees (65%) indicated that their organization does a good job of communicating its vision, mission and goals (Q45), slightly lower than in 2011 (67%). Lastly, 62% of employees believed that their organization reviews and evaluates the progress toward meeting its goals and objectives (Q46), down from 2011 (65%).

### Organizational Performance

**Table 13: Affirmative results for questions related to organizational performance over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Organizational Performance	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
<b>21. I feel that the quality of my work suffers because of...</b>				
a.	constantly changing priorities.	41	40	40
b.	lack of stability in my department or agency.	35	34	37
c.	too many approval stages.	43	45	48
d.	unreasonable deadlines.	28	28	27
e.	having to do the same or more work, but with fewer resources.	42	44	48
f.	high staff turnover.	38	31	31
g.	overly complicated or unnecessary business processes.	n/a	n/a	44



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The questions related to organizational performance, which begin with “I feel that the quality of my work suffers because of ...,” are framed in such a way that responding in the affirmative indicates a negative situation. The higher the level of affirmative responses, the more negative the results. Obstacles to organizational performance have been found to negatively impact employee engagement and retention rates.<sup>xii</sup>

In 2014, employees were more likely to express negative views about aspects of organizational performance than they were in previous years, particularly with respect to having more work but fewer resources, too many approval stages, and lack of stability.

The survey asked employees whether the quality of their work suffers as a result of certain factors. In 2014, employees cited the following factors as occurring “Always/Almost always” or “Often”:

- Constantly changing priorities (Q21a): 40%, unchanged from 2011 (40%) and similar to 2008 (41%)
- Lack of stability in their organization (Q21b): 37%, up from 2011 and 2008 (34% and 35%, respectively)
- Too many approval stages (Q21c): 48%, up from 2011 and 2008 (45% and 43%, respectively)
- Unreasonable deadlines (Q21d): 27%, similar to 2011 and 2008 (28%)
- Having to do the same or more work but with fewer resources (Q21e): 48%, up from 2011 and 2008 (44% and 42%, respectively)
- High staff turnover (Q21f): 31%, unchanged from 2011 (31%) and much lower than in 2008 (38%)
- Overly complicated or unnecessary business processes (Q21g): 44%

### Respectful Workplace

**Table 14: Affirmative results for questions related to a respectful workplace over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Respectful Workplace	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
22	I have positive working relationships with my co-workers.	n/a	94	94
25	In my work unit, every individual is accepted as an equal member of the team.	n/a	n/a	73
29	In my work unit, individuals behave in a respectful manner.	n/a	n/a	80
55	My department or agency implements activities and practices that support a diverse workplace.	n/a	n/a	79
56	I think that my department or agency respects individual differences (e.g., culture, work styles, ideas).	n/a	72	78
57	Overall, my department or agency treats me with respect.	74	76	79

Respect for the individual and a respectful workplace have been found to be important drivers of employee engagement.<sup>xiii</sup>

Based on the 2014 survey results, most public service employees feel that they work in a respectful workplace. Employees were more inclined to feel that their organization respects them and respects individual differences in 2014 than in the past.

In 2014, 79% of employees felt that their organization treats them with respect (Q57), an increase from 2011 and 2008 (76% and 74%, respectively). Eight of ten employees (80%) believed that individuals

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behave in a respectful manner in their work unit (Q29). When asked whether they have positive working relationships with their co-workers (Q22), 94% of employees agreed, unchanged from 2011 (94%).

In terms of equality and diversity, 73% of employees believed that every individual in their work unit is accepted as an equal member of the team (Q25). In 2014, 78% of employees felt that their organization respects individual differences (Q56), much higher than in 2011 (72%). As well, 79% of employees indicated that their organization implements activities and practices that support a diverse workplace (Q55).

### Ethical Workplace

**Table 15: Affirmative results for questions related to an ethical workplace over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Ethical Workplace	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
24	I am satisfied with how interpersonal issues are resolved in my work unit.	n/a	n/a	64
47	Employees in my department or agency carry out their duties in the public's interest.	n/a	78	82
48	If I am faced with an ethical dilemma or a conflict between values in the workplace, I know where I can go for help in resolving the situation.	70	74	77
49	Discussions about values and ethics occur in my workplace.	n/a	57	62
50	I feel I can initiate a formal recourse process (e.g., grievance, complaint, appeal) without fear of reprisal.	n/a	44	45

In 2014, employees tended to be more positive than in 2011 about ethical aspects of their workplace, particularly with respect to discussions about values and ethics and carrying out duties in the public's interest.

When asked whether discussions about values and ethics occur in their workplace (Q49), 62% of employees agreed, an increase from 2011 (57%). In 2014, 82% of employees felt that employees in their organization carry out their duties in the public's interest (Q47), higher than in 2011 (78%).

The 2014 results show that 64% of employees are satisfied with how interpersonal issues are resolved in their work unit (Q24).

More than three quarters of employees (77%) reported that, if faced with an ethical dilemma or a conflict between values in the workplace, they know where to go for help in resolving the situation (Q48), higher than in 2011 (74%) and much higher than in 2008 (70%). When asked whether they feel they can initiate a formal recourse process without fear of reprisal (Q50), 45% of employees agreed, similar to 2011 (44%).

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### Physical Environment and Equipment

**Table 16: Affirmative results for questions related to physical environment and equipment over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Physical Environment and Equipment	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
1	I have the materials and equipment I need to do my job.	82	82	78
4	My physical environment (e.g., office, workspace) is suitable for my job requirements.	n/a	77	75
8	I have the information, training and equipment I need to ensure my health and safety at work.	n/a	n/a	80

The majority of employees (78%) reported that they have the materials and equipment they need to do their job (Q1), down from 2011 and 2008 (82%). In 2014, 80% of employees indicated that they have the information, training and equipment they need to ensure their health and safety at work (Q8). Lastly, 75% of employees felt that their physical environment is suitable for their job requirements (Q4), slightly lower than in 2011 (77%).

### Use of Official Languages

**Table 17: Affirmative results for questions related to use of official languages over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Use of Official Languages	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
2	The material and tools provided for my work, including software and other automated tools, are available in the official language of my choice.	92	92	91
3	When I prepare written materials, including email, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	86	86	85
23	During meetings in my work unit, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	86	87	88
33	When I communicate with my immediate supervisor, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	92	92	93
51	During meetings in my department or agency, the chairpersons create an environment where I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	n/a	n/a	85
52	The training offered by my department or agency is available in the official language of my choice.	89	90	90

Questions about the use of official languages in the workplace have been an integral part of the PSES since its inception in 1999. The results for these questions have remained stable over the three survey cycles.

According to the 2014 survey results, employees feel free to use the official language of their choice in the following situations:

- When preparing written materials (Q3): 85%, similar to 2011 and 2008 (86%)
- When communicating with their immediate supervisor (Q33): 93%, similar to 2011 and 2008 (92%)
- During meetings in their work unit (Q23): 88%, similar to 2011 (87%) and slightly higher than in 2008 (86%)

In addition, 85% of employees agreed that during meetings in their organization, chairpersons create an environment where they feel free to use the official language of their choice (Q51).

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According to employees, the following are available in the official language of their choice:

- The material and tools for their work (Q2): 91%, similar to 2011 and 2008 (92%)
- Training offered by their organization (Q52): 90%, the same as in 2011 (90%) and similar to 2008 (89%)

### Harassment

In 2014, questions were added to the survey to more fully examine harassment in the workplace. The additional questions dealt with the nature of the harassment, the actions taken to address the issue, and the reasons for not reporting the harassment through more official means (i.e., making a complaint or filing a grievance).

The 2014 PSES harassment questions were modified from those of the previous surveys, which means that comparisons over time are not possible. Modifications to the questions included an update to the definition of harassment (<https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=26041&section=text>) and changes to the response options.

According to the results of the 2014 survey, in the overall public service, 19% of employees indicated that they have been the victim of harassment on the job in the past two years (Q63).

#### Sources of Harassment

Among the 19% of employees who indicated they have been the victim of harassment, the following sources of harassment were reported (Q64):

- Individuals with authority over them: 63%
- Co-workers: 50%
- Members of the public: 9%
- Individuals working for them: 7%
- Individuals from other departments or agencies: 5%
- Individuals for whom they have custodial responsibility: 4%

#### Nature of Harassment

When asked about the nature of the harassment (Q65), the 19% of employees who indicated they have been the victim of harassment provided the following the types of harassment (Q65):

- Offensive remark: 57%
- Unfair treatment: 46%
- Being excluded or ignored: 43%
- Aggressive behaviour: 40%
- Excessive control: 40%
- Humiliation: 40%
- Personal attack: 36%
- Interferences with work or withholding resources: 29%
- Yelling or shouting: 29%
- Threat: 13%
- Sexual comment or gesture: 9%
- Physical violence: 2%

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### Actions

Among the 19% of employees who indicated in 2014 that they have been harassed, 7% reported that they filed a grievance or formal complaint and 25% reported that they took no action. The following other actions taken to address harassment (Q66) were also cited:

- Discussed the matter with my supervisor or senior manager: 51%
- Discussed the matter with the person from whom I experienced harassment: 30%
- Contacted my union representative: 21%,
- Resolved the matter informally on my own: 16%
- Used an informal conflict resolution process: 12%
- Contacted an HR advisor in my organization: 10%

### Reasons for not Filing a Grievance or Formal Complaint

Employees who indicated that they did not file a grievance or formal complaint were asked to provide their reason(s) for not doing so. The following are the five most frequently selected reasons for not reporting the harassment through the grievance or formal complaint process (Q67):

- Did not believe it would make a difference: 54%
- Afraid of reprisal: 45%
- Concerns about the formal complaint process: 25%
- Did not think the incident was serious enough: 16%
- Issue was resolved: 13%

As with the previous employee surveys, the 2014 PSES examined organizations' responses to resolving harassment, as well as proactive efforts to prevent workplace harassment. The following table shows the results for these questions over time for and the overall public service.

**Table 18: Affirmative results for questions related to satisfaction with the organization's response to harassment in the workplace over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Harassment – Satisfaction with Organization	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
68	I am satisfied with how matters related to harassment are resolved in my department or agency.	n/a	n/a	50
69	My department or agency works hard to create a workplace that prevents harassment.	n/a	72	64

The 2014 results show that half of all employees (50%) are satisfied with how matters related to harassment are resolved in their organization (Q68). It is worth noting that 24% of employees responded "Don't know" to Q68.

Almost two thirds of employees (64% ) felt that their organization works hard to create a workplace that prevents harassment (Q69), much lower than in 2011 (72%). It is worth noting that 11% of employees responded "Don't know" to Q69.

### Discrimination

Questions were added to the 2014 PSES to obtain more information about discrimination, such as actions taken to address the issue, and the reasons for not making a complaint or filing a grievance. As with the harassment questions, the 2014 PSES discrimination questions were modified from those of the previous surveys, which means that comparisons over time are not possible.

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In 2014, 8% of employees indicated that they have been the victim of discrimination on the job in the past two years (Q74).

### Sources of Discrimination

Among the 8% of employees who indicated they have been the victim of discrimination, the following sources of discrimination were given (Q75):

- Individuals with authority over them: 80%
- Co-workers: 36%
- Members of the public: 8%
- Individuals from other departments or agencies: 7%
- Individuals working for them: 3%
- Individuals for whom they have custodial responsibility: 3%

### Types of Discrimination

Among the 8% of employees who indicated that they have been the victim of discrimination, the following types of discrimination were cited (Q76):

- Sex: 24%
- Age: 23%
- Race: 20%
- National or ethnic origin: 17%
- Disability: 16%
- Family status: 16%
- Colour: 12%
- Marital status: 7%
- Religion: 5%
- Sexual orientation: 3%
- Pardoned conviction: 1%

### Actions

Of the 8% of employees who indicated they have experienced discrimination, 7% filed a grievance or formal complaint and almost half (48%) indicated that they took no action. The following other actions taken to address the discrimination (Q77) were cited:

- Discussed the matter with my supervisor or senior manager: 29%
- Contacted my union representative: 19%,
- Discussed the matter with the person from whom I experienced discrimination: 16%
- Resolved the matter informally on my own: 9%
- Contacted an HR advisor in my organization: 6%
- Used an informal conflict resolution process: 6%

### Reasons for Not Filing a Grievance or Formal Complaint

Employees who indicated that they did not file a grievance or formal complaint were asked to provide their reason(s) for not doing so. The following are the top five reasons for not reporting the discrimination through the grievance or formal complaint process (Q78):

- Did not believe it would make a difference: 65%
- Afraid of reprisal: 44%

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- Concerns about the formal complaint process: 23%
- Did not think the incident was serious enough: 11%
- Too distraught: 10%

The 2014 PSES asked employees to indicate their impression of their organization's response to discrimination and its efforts to prevent discrimination. The table below shows the results for these questions over time for the overall public service.

**Table 19: Affirmative results for questions related to satisfaction with the organization's response to discrimination in the workplace over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Discrimination – Satisfaction with Organization	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
79	I am satisfied with how matters related to discrimination are resolved in my department or agency.	n/a	n/a	55
80	My department or agency works hard to create a workplace that prevents discrimination.	n/a	77	70

In 2014, 55% of all respondents agreed that they are satisfied with how matters related to discrimination are resolved in their organization (Q79). It is worth noting that 31% of employees responded "Don't know" to Q79.

As with the similar question relating to harassment, employees were less likely to agree that their organization works hard to create a workplace that prevents discrimination (Q80) in 2014 (70%) than in 2011 (77%). It is worth noting that 15% of employees responded "Don't know" to Q80.

### Duty to Accommodate

**Table 20: Affirmative results for questions related to duty to accommodate over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Duty to Accommodate	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
81	Having carefully read the definition above, have you requested measures to accommodate your needs in the workplace in the last two years?	n/a	n/a	15
82	<i>Of those who indicated that they had requested measures to accommodate their needs:</i> Were any measures taken to accommodate your needs?	n/a	n/a	78
83	<i>Of those who indicated that measures were taken to accommodate their needs:</i> I am satisfied with the measures that were taken to accommodate my needs.	n/a	n/a	83

The 2014 PSES contained a new section on the duty to accommodate.

In 2014, 15% of employees reported that they had requested measures to accommodate their needs in the workplace in the last two years (Q81). Among the 15% of employees who indicated that they had requested accommodation, 78% noted that measures were taken to accommodate their needs (Q82). Of those employees who reported that measures had been taken, the majority (83%) felt that they were satisfied with those measures (Q83).

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### Collective Agreements and Labour Relations

**Table 21: Affirmative results for questions related to collective agreements and labour relations over time (2008, 2011 and 2014).**

Question Number	2014 Public Service Employee Survey Questions – Collective Agreements and Labour Relations	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)
70	I am familiar with the provisions of my collective agreement.	79	81	81
71	The union-management consultation process has been effective in addressing issues in my workplace.	n/a	48	46
72	My immediate supervisor understands and respects the provisions of my collective agreement.	79	79	79
73	Senior managers respect the provisions of my collective agreement.	71	71	70

Questions pertaining to collective agreements and labour relations have been a part of the PSES since 2002. For the most part, the results have been stable over the last three survey cycles.

In 2014, 81% of employees reported that they are familiar with the provisions of their collective agreement (Q70), unchanged from 2011 (81%) and slightly higher than in 2008 (79%). When asked whether the union-management consultation process has been effective in addressing issues in their workplace (Q71), less than half of employees (46%) agreed, slightly lower than in 2011 (48%). It is also worth noting that 19% of employees responded “Don’t know” to Q71.

In 2014, 79% of employees believed that their immediate supervisor understands and respects the provisions of their collective agreement (Q72), the same as in 2011 and 2008 (79%). Lastly, 70% of employees felt that senior managers respect the provisions of their collective agreement (Q73), similar to 2011 and 2008 (71%). It is also worth noting that 11% of employees responded “Don’t know” to Q73.



### Appendix: Survey Methodology

#### Target population

The survey targeted active employees of organizations in the core public administration and of participating separate agencies listed in Schedules I, IV and V of the *Financial Administration Act*. Indeterminate, term, seasonal, casual and student employees, as well as Governor in Council appointees were eligible to participate in the survey. Minister's exempt staff, contracted individuals and employees on leave without pay were not eligible to participate. This survey was conducted as a voluntary census of the target population.

A total of 93 departments and agencies participated in the 2014 survey, representing over 250,000 federal public servants.

#### Questionnaire design

The 2014 questionnaire contained 106 questions: 17 new questions, 13 modified questions, and 76 questions repeated from the 2011 survey (55 of the repeated questions were also used in the 2008 survey). To test the content of the 2014 questionnaire, focus group sessions were held in the National Capital Region, Winnipeg and Montréal. Participants were from various departments and agencies, and various occupational groups and levels.

Participating departments and agencies had an opportunity to add up to five supplementary questions for their employees to answer; 13 departments did so. The supplementary questions were tested in a series of focus groups in each of these departments.

The 2014 questionnaire was formatted as an electronic survey (to be completed online), as a paper survey, and in several alternate formats (large print, Braille and audio CD).

#### Data Collection

The 2014 PSES was conducted from August 25 to October 3, 2014.

The collection was primarily done using an electronic questionnaire. Departments and agencies were responsible for providing a complete list of email addresses for their employees. As respondents submitted their completed questionnaires, the data were transferred through Statistics Canada's internal network and then decrypted for processing. Respondents could save their partially completed questionnaire and finish it later.

Employees who did not have email addresses or access to the Internet received paper questionnaires, which were distributed through the human resources service of their department or agency. Paper questionnaires were returned directly to Statistics Canada in a postage-paid return envelope.

Alternate format questionnaires were made available upon request.

## 2014 Public Service Employee Survey – Overall Public Service

### Respondents

Of the 255,263 employees eligible to participate in the 2014 PSES, 182,165 employees responded to the survey, yielding an overall response rate of 71.4%. Of all respondents, 98.2% participated online and 1.8% submitted paper questionnaires.

As with the previous surveys, the results were adjusted for non-response and calibrated to known departmental sizes to better represent the target population. The non-response adjustment was done by taking into account disparities between the distributions of respondents and the population across occupational groups within each organization. Adjustment for non-response at the occupational group level was limited to departments and agencies with 50 or more responses. Those with less than 50 responses were grouped together. For departments and agencies represented on the Incumbent file, the responses were calibrated to align with department size and, response size warranting, to align with occupational group sizes within department.

### Results

For ease of reporting and interpretation, the results in this report are presented as a percentage of affirmative responses, which represent the following:

- The sum of the “Strongly agree” and “Somewhat agree” response categories (applicable to most questions)
- The sum of the “Always / Almost Always” and “Often” response categories (Q20 and Q21)
- The “Yes” response category (Q61, Q63, Q74, Q81, Q82)
- The response selected from a list of choices (Q62, Q64-Q67, Q75-Q78)

The affirmative results were calculated by removing the “Don’t know” and “Not applicable” responses, and therefore, may not match the raw percentages across the full response scale. For most questions, affirmative responses mean positive results. However, for some questions that ask about a negative situation (such as harassment, discrimination, and situations in which work quality suffers), an affirmative response means a negative result. Low percentages for these questions indicate good results, whereas high percentages may indicate areas for improvement.

### Data Confidentiality

Under the *Statistics Act*, Statistics Canada must protect the confidentiality of responses to the PSES. Only results at aggregated levels were published or shared in datasets. As well, aggregated data were suppressed for groups with low respondent counts. For the 2014 PSES, the criteria for the suppression of results were more conservative than for past surveys. For all questions, results were suppressed for groups with fewer than 10 respondents. For questions related to harassment, discrimination and duty to accommodate, an additional suppression rule was applied for groups with fewer than 5 responses for any response category.

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