



# **2017 Public Service Employee Survey: Summary report of results for the overall public service**

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# 2017 Public Service Employee Survey: Summary report of results for the overall public service

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From Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

This report contains a summary of the overall results for the 2017 Public Service Employee Survey. The results provide insight into federal public service employees' engagement and into their opinions about their leadership, the workforce, their workplace, workplace well-being, and compensation.

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## Background

Conducted every 3 years since 1999, the survey measures federal public servants' opinions on various aspects of their workplace.

The 2017 survey 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 over a 6-week period from August 21 to September 29, 2017.

# Survey content

Extensive consultations with policy centres, employment equity group chairs and champions committees, central agencies, departments and agencies, and bargaining agents led to some content changes from the previous survey, which was conducted in 2014.

The main change was the addition of questions about workplace well-being and compensation issues.

The 2017 survey contained 119 questions:

- 94 opinion questions, which consisted of:
  - 17 new questions
  - 77 questions repeated from previous iterations of the survey (77 from 2014, 53 from 2011 and 34 from 2008)
- 25 demographic questions

## Overview of analytical approach

This report presents the 2017 survey results for the overall public service and, when possible, compares them with the overall results for the previous 3 triennial surveys. Comparisons are possible only for questions that are identical to questions asked in previous surveys.

Throughout this report, question numbers are abbreviated as Q1, Q2, Q3, and so on.

Results are provided as percentages. The totals used to calculate the percentages are based on the following and do not include the responses “Don’t know” and “Not applicable”:

- the sum of “Strongly agree” and “Somewhat agree” responses
- the sum of “Always / Almost always” and “Often” responses
- the sum of “Very high” and “High” responses
- the sum of “To a large extent” and “To a very large extent”
- “Yes” response to yes-or-no questions
- the selected responses in lists where more than one response could be selected

For most questions, high percentages indicate good results and low percentages indicate poor results. For several questions, however, the opposite is the case. For the questions about the following, high percentages indicate poor results, and low percentages indicate good results:

- organizational performance (Q22)
- work-related stress (Q83, Q84, Q85)
- harassment (Q63, Q64, Q65)
- discrimination (Q75, Q76, Q77)
- pay or other compensation issues (Q91, Q92, Q93)

To protect the confidentiality of individuals' responses, results are aggregated and are suppressed for groups of fewer than 10 respondents.

## Response rate

The invitation to complete the 2017 survey was sent to 284,845 employees in 86 participating organizations in the federal public service.

A total of 174,544 employees participated in the survey, for an overall response rate of 61.3%, <sup>1</sup> which is lower than the 2014 response rate (71.4%).

For details on the survey methodology, see Methodology.

## Respondent demographics

### ► In this section

This section provides information on some of the demographic characteristics of respondents.

### Regional distribution

Table 1 shows the breakdown of 2017 PSES respondents by region

**Table 1: 2017 PSES respondents by region**

Region	Percentage
Atlantic	10.0%
Quebec (excluding National Capital Region)	10.9%
Ontario (excluding National Capital Region)	14.0%

Region	Percentage
National Capital Region	43.8%
Prairies, Nunavut and Northwest Territories	12.2%
British Columbia and Yukon	8.4%
Outside Canada	0.7%

## Occupational distribution

Table 2 shows the top 10 occupational groups among 2017 survey respondents.

**Table 2: Top 10 occupational group**

Ranking	Occupational group	Percentage
1	AS	12.6%
2	PM	10.1%
3	SP (CRA)	9.9%
4	CR	7.9%
5	CS	6.8%
6	EC	6.4%
7	EG	3.4%
8	FB	2.8%
9	AU	2.7%
10	EX	2.6%

## Years of service

Table 3 shows the breakdown of respondents by years of service in the federal public service and in their current organization.

**Table 3: Respondents by years of service in the federal public service and in their current organization (2017)**

<b>Years of service</b>	<b>In federal public service</b>	<b>In current organization</b>
<b>Less than 3 years</b>	15.3%	26.1%
<b>3 to 10 years</b>	32.5%	37.3%
<b>11 to 20 years</b>	33.6%	24.8%
<b>More than 20 years</b>	18.7%	11.8%

## **Supervisors**

22.3% of respondents indicated that they are supervisors.

## **Results**

### **► In this section**

This section presents the results for each survey question, organized by theme.

## **Employee engagement**

Engagement is assessed through questions that gauge employees' job satisfaction, commitment and satisfaction with their organization. The 2017 survey contained 7 questions related to employee engagement.

Table 4 shows the 2017 results for the questions related to employee engagement. It also shows the results for these questions over time, when applicable.

**Table 4: Results for questions about employee engagement (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017)**

<b>Question number</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>2008 (%)</b>	<b>2011 (%)</b>	<b>2014 (%)</b>	<b>2017 (%)</b>
<b>11</b>	I get a sense of satisfaction from my work.	77	76	74	<b>77</b>
<b>15</b>	Overall, I feel valued at work.	-	-	-	<b>65</b>
<b>16</b>	I am proud of the work that I do.	-	89	88	<b>87</b>
<b>20</b>	Overall, I like my job.	84	82	79	<b>80</b>
<b>58</b>	I would recommend my department or agency as a great place to work.	-	64	63	<b>66</b>
<b>59</b>	I am satisfied with my department or agency.	68	65	64	<b>68</b>
<b>60</b>	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	<b>59</b>
<hr/> * -      Question was not asked <hr/>					

- 77% of employees felt that they get a sense of satisfaction from their work (Q11), an improvement from 2014 (74%) and similar to 2011 (76%).
- 65% of employees felt valued at work (Q15).
- 87% of employees agreed that they are proud of the work they do (Q16), similar to 2014 (88%) and a slight decrease from 2011 (89%).
- 80% of employees agreed that they like their job (Q20), similar to 2014 (79%) and a slight decrease from 2011 (82%).
- 66% of employees would recommend their organization as a great place to work (Q58), an improvement from 2014 (63%) and from 2011 (64%).
- 68% of employees agreed that they are satisfied with their organization (Q59), an improvement from 2014 (64%) and from 2011 (65%).
- 59% of employees would prefer to remain with their organization even if a comparable job was available elsewhere in the federal public service (Q60), a slight increase from 2014 (57%) and the same as in 2011 (59%).

## Leadership

The questions about leadership were divided into 2 groups:

- questions pertaining to the respondent's immediate supervisor
- questions pertaining to senior management

### Immediate supervisor

Table 5 shows the 2017 results for the questions related to the immediate supervisor. It also shows the results for these questions over time, when applicable.

**Table 5: Results for questions about immediate supervisor (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017)**

Question number	Question	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
31	I can count on my immediate supervisor to keep his or her promises.	72	74	75	77
32	My immediate supervisor keeps me informed about the issues affecting my work.	71	73	75	76
37	I am satisfied with the quality of supervision I receive.	*	*	77	77
<hr/>					
* —	Question was not asked				
<hr/>					

- 77% of employees believed they could count on their immediate supervisor to keep his or her promises (Q31), a slight increase from 2014 (75%) and an increase from 2011 (74%).
- 76% of employees indicated that their immediate supervisor keeps them informed about the issues affecting their work (Q32), similar to 2014 (75%) and an improvement from 2011 (73%).
- 77% of employees agreed that they are satisfied with the quality of supervision they receive (Q37), unchanged from 2014 (77%).

## Senior management

Table 6 shows the 2017 results for the questions related to senior management. It also shows the results for these questions over time, when applicable.

**Table 6: Results for questions about senior management (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017)**

Question number	Question	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
<b>40</b>	Senior managers in my department or agency lead by example in ethical behaviour.	58	58	62	<b>64</b>
<b>41</b>	I have confidence in the senior management of my department or agency.	55	52	53	<b>57</b>
<b>42</b>	Senior management in my department or agency makes effective and timely decisions.	44	45	45	<b>49</b>
<b>43</b>	I believe that senior management will try to resolve concerns raised in this survey.	47	47	46	<b>50</b>
<b>44</b>	Essential information flows effectively from senior management to staff.	51	48	47	<b>50</b>
<hr/> <p>*      Question was not asked</p> <hr/>					

- 64% of employees felt that senior managers in their organization lead by example in terms of ethical behaviour (Q40), a slight increase from 2014 (62%) and a large increase from 2011 (58%).
- 57% of employees had confidence in the senior management of their organization (Q41), an improvement from 2014 (53%) and from 2011 (52%).
- 49% of employees indicated that their senior management makes effective and timely decisions (Q42), an improvement 2014 (45%) and from 2011 (45%).
- 50% of employees believed that their senior management will try to resolve concerns raised in this survey (Q43), an improvement from 2014 (46%) and from 2011 (47%).

- 50% of employees agreed that essential information flows effectively from senior management to staff (Q44), an increase from 2014 (47%) and a slight increase from 2011 (48%).

## Workforce

The 2017 survey asked employees 22 questions about the workforce. The questions covered 6 sub-themes:

- performance management
- staffing
- job fit and development
- empowerment
- work-life balance and workload
- retention

### Performance management

Survey questions covered 2 aspects of performance management:

- performance management of the respondent (setting objectives, providing feedback and recognition)
- the management of unsatisfactory employee performance

Table 7 shows the 2017 results for the questions related to performance management. It also shows the results for these questions over time, when applicable.

**Table 7: Results for questions about performance management (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017)**

Question number	Question	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
12	I receive meaningful recognition for work well done.	-	59	57	61
13	I have clear work objectives.	-	-	-	72
<hr/> <div> <div>*</div> <div>-</div> <div>Question was not asked</div> </div> <hr/>					

Question number	Question	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
28	In my work unit, unsatisfactory employee performance is managed effectively.	-	-	38	40
30	I receive useful feedback from my immediate supervisor on my job performance.	67	70	72	73
39	I receive the support I need from senior management to address unsatisfactory performance issues in my work unit. (for supervisors)	-	-	66	66
<hr/> *      Question was not asked <hr/>					

- 61% of employees agreed that they receive meaningful recognition for work well done (Q12), an increase from 2014 (57%) and a slight increase from 2011 (59%).
- 72% of employees indicated that they have clear work objectives (Q13).
- 40% of employees felt that unsatisfactory employee performance is managed effectively in their work unit (Q28), a slight increase from 2014 (38%). It is also worth noting that 16% of employees responded “Don’t know” to Q28.
- 73% of employees reported that they receive useful feedback from their immediate supervisor on their job performance (Q30), similar to 2014 (72%) and an increase from 2011 (70%).
- 66% of supervisors believed that they receive the support they need from senior management to address unsatisfactory performance issues in their work unit (Q39), unchanged from 2014 (66%).

## Staffing

Table 8 shows the 2017 results for the questions related to staffing. It also shows the results for these questions over time.

**Table 8: Results for questions about staffing (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017)**

<b>Question number</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>2008 (%)</b>	<b>2011 (%)</b>	<b>2014 (%)</b>	<b>2017 (%)</b>
<b>26</b>	In my work unit, I believe that we hire people who can do the job.	65	65	66	<b>65</b>
<b>27</b>	In my work unit, the process of selecting a person for a position is done fairly.	59	58	57	<b>58</b>

- 65% of employees believed that their work unit hires people who can do the job (Q26), similar to 2014 (66%) and the same as in 2011 (65%).
- 58% of employees believed that the process of selecting a person for a position is done fairly in their work unit (Q27), similar to 2014 (57%) and the same as in 2011 (58%).

## **Job fit and development**

Table 9 shows the 2017 results for the questions related to job fit and development. It also shows the results for these questions over time.

**Table 9: Results for questions about job fit and development (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017)**

<b>Question number</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>2008 (%)</b>	<b>2011 (%)</b>	<b>2014 (%)</b>	<b>2017 (%)</b>
<b>5</b>	I get the training I need to do my job.	68	69	63	<b>66</b>
<b>6</b>	My job is a good fit with my interests.	79	79	78	<b>80</b>
<b>7</b>	My job is a good fit with my skills.	85	84	82	<b>84</b>
<b>52</b>	My department or agency does a good job of supporting employee career development.	56	55	52	<b>57</b>
<b>53</b>	I believe I have opportunities for promotion within my department or agency, given my education, skills and experience.	51	44	42	<b>48</b>

- 66% of employees believed that they get the training they need to do their job (Q5), an increase from 2014 (63%) and a decrease from 2011 (69%).

- 80% of employees agreed that their job is a good fit with their interests (Q6), a slight increase from 2014 (78%) and similar to 2011 (79%).
- 84% of employees felt that their job is a good fit with their skills (Q7), a slight increase from 2014 (82%) and unchanged from 2011 (84%).
- 57% of employees felt that their organization does a good job of supporting employee career development (Q52), an increase from 2014 (52%) and a slight increase from 2011 (55%).
- 48% of employees believed that they have opportunities for promotion within their organization, given their education, skills and experience (Q53), a great improvement from 2014 (42%) and an improvement from 2011 (44%).

## Empowerment

Table 10 shows the 2017 results for the questions related to empowerment. It also shows the results for these questions over time, when applicable.

**Table 10: Results for questions about empowerment (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017)**

Question number	Question	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
<b>17</b>	I have opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect my work.	*	68	62	<b>67</b>
<b>18</b>	I am encouraged to be innovative or to take initiative in my work.	*	*	63	<b>67</b>
<b>19</b>	I have support at work to provide a high level of service.	*	75	66	<b>69</b>
<b>54</b>	I feel I would be supported by my department or agency if I proposed a new idea.	*	*	*	<b>58</b>
<hr/> *      Question was not asked <hr/>					

- 67% of employees felt that they have opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect their work (Q17), an improvement from 2014 (62%) and similar to 2011 (68%).
- 67% of employees agreed that they are encouraged to be innovative or to take initiative in their work (Q18), an improvement from 2014 (63%).
- 69% of employees believed they have support at work to provide a high level of service (Q19), an increase from 2014 (66%) but a large decrease from 2011 (75%).
- 58% of employees agreed that they would be supported by their organization if they proposed a new idea (Q54).

## Work-life balance and workload

Table 11 shows the 2017 results for the questions related to work-life balance and workload. It also shows the results for these questions over time, when applicable.

**Table 11: Results for questions about work-life balance and workload (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017)**

Question number	Question	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
<b>9</b>	I have support at work to balance my work and personal life.	*	75	71	<b>74</b>
<b>10</b>	I feel I can claim overtime compensation (in money or in leave) for the overtime hours that I work.	65	62	61	<b>63</b>
<b>21</b>	I can complete my assigned workload during my regular working hours.	64	69	70	<b>73</b>
<b>34</b>	Subject to operational requirements, my immediate supervisor supports the use of flexible work arrangements (e.g., flexible hours, compressed workweeks, telework).	*	75	78	<b>80</b>
<hr/> <p>*      Question was not asked</p> <hr/>					

- 74% of employees reported that they have support at work to balance their work and personal life (Q9), an improvement from 2014 (71%) and similar to 2011 (75%).
- 63% of employees felt that they can claim overtime compensation for the overtime hours they work (Q10), a slight increase from 2014 (61%) and similar to 2011 (62%).
- 73% of employees felt that they can complete their assigned workload during their regular working hours (Q21), an improvement from 2014 (70%) and from 2011 (69%).
- 80% of employees agreed that their immediate supervisor supports the use of flexible work arrangements (Q34), a slight increase from 2014 (78%) and an increase from 2011 (75%).

## Retention

Table 12 shows the 2017 results for the questions related to retention. It also shows the results for these questions over time, when applicable.

**Table 12: Results for questions about retention (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017)**

Question number	Question	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
<b>61</b>	<b>Do you intend to leave your current position in the next two years?</b>	*	27	26	<b>26</b>
<b>62</b>	<b>Please indicate your reason for leaving:</b>				
<b>a)</b>	To retire	*	19	18	<b>18</b>
<b>b)</b>	To pursue another position within my department or agency	*	32	30	<b>30</b>
<b>c)</b>	To pursue a position in another department or agency	*	31	30	<b>29</b>
<b>d)</b>	To pursue a position outside the federal public service	*	8	10	<b>6</b>

\* Question was not asked

Question number	Question	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
e)	End of my term, casual or student employment	-	-	-	10
f)	Other	-	10	11	6
<hr/> * - Question was not asked <hr/>					

- 26% of employees indicated that they intend to leave their current position in the next 2 years (Q61), unchanged from 2014 (26%) and similar to 2011 (27%).

Employees who indicated that they intend to leave their current position in the next 2 years (Q62) reported the following as their reasons for leaving:

- To retire: 18%, unchanged from 2014 (18%) and similar to 2011 (19%)
- To pursue another position within their organization: 30%, a slight decrease from 2014 (32%) and from 2011 (32%)
- To pursue a position in another department or agency: 29%, similar to 2014 (30%) and a slight decrease from 2011 (31%)
- To pursue a position outside the federal public service: 6%, a decrease from 2014 (10%) and a slight decrease from 2011 (8%)
- End of term, casual or student employment: 10%

## Workplace

The PSES contained 45 questions related to workplace practices, which can be 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
- labour relations

## Organizational goals

Table 13 shows the 2017 results for the questions related to organizational goals. It also shows the results for these questions over time, when applicable.

**Table 13: Results for questions about organizational goals (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017)**

Question number	Question	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
<b>14</b>	I know how my work contributes to the achievement of my department's or agency's goals.	82	80	79	<b>81</b>
<b>45</b>	My department or agency does a good job of communicating its vision, mission and goals.	*	67	65	<b>67</b>
<hr/> *      Question was not asked <hr/>					

- 81% of employees reported that they know how their work contributes to the achievement of their organization's goals (Q14), a slight increase from 2014 (79%) and similar to 2011 (80%).
- 67% of employees indicated that their organization does a good job of communicating its vision, mission and goals (Q45), a slight increase from 2014 (65%) and the same as in 2011 (67%).

## Organizational performance

Table 14 shows the 2017 results for the questions related to organizational performance. It also shows the results for these questions over time, when applicable.

**Table 14: Results for questions about organizational performance (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017)**

Question number	Question	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
<b>22</b>	<b>I feel that the quality of my work suffers because of...</b>				
<b>a.</b>	constantly changing priorities.	41	40	40	37
<b>b.</b>	lack of stability in my department or agency.	35	34	37	33
<b>c.</b>	too many approval stages.	43	45	48	43
<b>d.</b>	unreasonable deadlines.	28	28	27	25
<b>e.</b>	having to do the same or more work, but with fewer resources.	42	44	48	41
<b>f.</b>	high staff turnover.	38	31	31	33
<b>g.</b>	overly complicated or unnecessary business processes.	-	-	44	41
<hr/> <p>* -      Question was not asked</p> <hr/>					

Employees indicated that the quality of their work “Always/Almost always” or “Often” suffers for the following reasons:

- constantly changing priorities (Q22a): 37%, an improvement from 2014 (40%) and from 2011 (40%)
- lack of stability in their organization (Q22b): 33%, an improvement from 2014 (37%) and similar to 2011 (34%)
- too many approval stages (Q22c): 43%, an improvement from 2014 (48%) and a slight improvement from 2011 (45%)
- unreasonable deadlines (Q22d): 25%, a slight improvement from 2014 (27%) and an improvement from 2011 (28%)

- having to do the same or more work but with fewer resources (Q22e): 41%, a great improvement from 2014 (48%) and an improvement from 2011 (44%)
- high staff turnover (Q22f): 33%, a slight increase from 2014 (31%) and from 2011 (31%)
- overly complicated or unnecessary business processes (Q22g): 41%, an improvement from 2014 (44%)

## Respectful workplace

Table 15 shows the 2017 results for the questions related to a respectful workplace. It also shows the results for these questions over time, when applicable.

**Table 15: Results for questions about a respectful workplace (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017)**

Question number	Question	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
25	In my work unit, every individual is accepted as an equal member of the team.	-	-	73	73
29	In my work unit, individuals behave in a respectful manner.	-	-	80	80
55	My department or agency implements activities and practices that support a diverse workplace.	-	-	79	76
56	I think that my department or agency respects individual differences (e.g., culture, work styles, ideas).	-	72	78	78
57	Overall, my department or agency treats me with respect.	74	76	79	80
<hr/>					
* -	Question was not asked				
<hr/>					

- 73% of employees believed that every individual in their work unit is accepted as an equal member of the team (Q25), unchanged from 2014 (73%).
- 80% of employees believed that individuals behave in a respectful manner in their work unit (Q29), unchanged from 2014 (80%).
- 76% of employees indicated that their organization implements activities and practices that support a diverse workplace (Q55), a decrease from 2014 (79%).
- 78% of employees felt that their organization respects individual differences (Q56), unchanged from 2014 (78%) and a great improvement from 2011 (72%).
- 80% of employees felt that their organization treats them with respect (Q57), similar to 2014 (79%) and an improvement from 2011 (76%).

## Ethical workplace

Table 16 shows the 2017 results for the questions related to an ethical workplace. It also shows the results for these questions over time, when applicable.

**Table 16: Results for questions about an ethical workplace (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017)**

Question number	Question	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
<b>24</b>	I am satisfied with how interpersonal issues are resolved in my work unit.	*	*	64	<b>62</b>
<b>46</b>	Employees in my department or agency carry out their duties in the public's interest.	*	78	82	<b>81</b>
<b>47</b>	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	<b>74</b>
<b>48</b>	Discussions about values and ethics occur in my workplace.	*	57	62	<b>61</b>

\*  
- Question was not asked

Question number	Question	2008 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
49	I feel I can initiate a formal recourse process (e.g., grievance, complaint, appeal) without fear of reprisal.	*	44	45	48
<p>* — Question was not asked</p>					

- 62% of employees indicated that they are satisfied with how interpersonal issues are resolved in their work unit (Q24), a slight decrease from 2014 (64%).
- 81% of employees felt that employees in their organization carry out their duties in the public's interest (Q46), similar to 2014 (82%) and an increase from 2011 (78%).
- 74% of employees 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 (Q47), a decrease from 2014 (77%) and the same as in 2011 (74%).
- 61% of employees agreed that discussions about values and ethics occur in their workplace (Q48), similar to 2014 (62%) and an increase from 2011 (57%).
- 48% of employees felt that they could initiate a formal recourse process without fear of reprisal (Q49), an improvement from 2014 (45%) and from 2011 (44%). It is also worth noting that 9% of employees responded "Don't know" to Q49.

## Physical environment and equipment

Table 17 shows the 2017 results for the questions related to physical environment and equipment. It also shows the results for these questions over time, when applicable.

**Table 17: Results for questions about physical environment (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017 PSES**

<b>Question number</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>2008 (%)</b>	<b>2011 (%)</b>	<b>2014 (%)</b>	<b>2017 (%)</b>
<b>1</b>	I have the materials and equipment I need to do my job.	82	82	78	<b>79</b>
<b>4</b>	My physical environment (e.g., office, workspace) is suitable for my job requirements.	*	77	75	<b>75</b>
<b>8</b>	I have the information, training and equipment I need to ensure my health and safety at work.	*	*	80	<b>82</b>
<hr/> *      Question was not asked <hr/>					

- 79% of employees reported having the materials and equipment they need to do their job (Q1), similar to 2014 (78%) and a decrease from 2011 (82%).
- 75% of employees felt that their physical environment is suitable for their job requirements (Q4), unchanged from 2014 (75%) and a slight decrease from 2011 (77%).
- 82% of employees indicated that they have the information, training and equipment needed to ensure their health and safety at work (Q8), a slight increase from 2014 (80%).

## Use of official languages

Table 18 shows the 2017 results for the questions related to the use of official languages. It also shows the results for these questions over time, when applicable.

**Table 18: Results for questions about the use of official languages (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017)**

<b>Question number</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>2008 (%)</b>	<b>2011 (%)</b>	<b>2014 (%)</b>	<b>2017 (%)</b>
<b>2</b>	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	<b>92</b>
<b>3</b>	When I prepare written materials, including emails, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	86	86	85	<b>86</b>
<b>23</b>	During meetings in my work unit, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	86	87	88	<b>88</b>
<b>33</b>	When I communicate with my immediate supervisor, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	92	92	93	<b>93</b>
<b>50</b>	During meetings in my department or agency, the chairpersons create an environment where I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	-	-	85	<b>85</b>
<b>51</b>	The training offered by my department or agency is available in the official language of my choice.	89	90	90	<b>90</b>
<hr/> * - Question was not asked <hr/>					

Employees indicated that they felt free to use the official language of their choice in these situations:

- when preparing written materials (Q3): 86%, similar to 2014 (85%) and the same as in 2011 (86%)
- during meetings in their work unit (Q23): 88%, unchanged from 2014 (88%) and similar to 2011 (87%)

- when communicating with their immediate supervisor (Q33): 93%, unchanged from 2014 (93%) and similar to 2011 (92%)

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 (Q50), unchanged from 2014 (85%).

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

- the materials and tools provided for their work (Q2): 92%, similar to 2014 (91%) and unchanged from 2011 (92%)
- the training offered by their organization (Q51): 90%, unchanged from 2014 (90%) and from 2011 (90%)

## **Harassment**

18% of employees indicated that they had been the victim of harassment on the job in the past 2 years (Q63), similar to 2014 (19%).

### **Sources of harassment**

Employees who indicated that they had been harassed on the job in the past 2 years reported the following as the source(s) of the harassment (Q64):

- co-workers: 51%, similar to 2014 (50%)
- individuals with authority over them: 63%, unchanged from 2014 (63%)
- individuals working for them: 8%, similar to 2014 (7%)
- individuals for whom they have custodial responsibility: 5%, similar to 2014 (4%)
- individuals from other departments or agencies: 6%, similar to 2014 (5%)
- members of the public: 9%, unchanged from 2014 (9%)

### **Nature of harassment**

Employees who indicated that they had been harassed on the job in the past 2 years were asked to indicate the nature of the harassment they experienced (Q65). The following are the most prevalent types:

- offensive remark: 57%, unchanged from 2014 (57%)
- unfair treatment: 48%, a slight increase from 2014 (46%)
- being excluded or being ignored: 45%, a slight increase from 2014 (43%)
- aggressive behaviour: 41%, unchanged from 2014 (41%)
- humiliation: 41%, similar to 2014 (40%)

- excessive control: 40%, unchanged from 2014 (40%)

## **Actions taken to address the harassment**

Of the 18% of employees who indicated that they had been the victim of harassment on the job in the past 2 years, 8% indicated that they filed a grievance or formal complaint, similar to 2014 (7%). 25% of employees took no action, unchanged from 2014 (25%).

The following were the most frequently cited other actions taken to address the harassment (Q66):

- discussed the matter with a supervisor or a senior manager: 52%, similar to 2014 (51%)
- discussed the matter with the person(s) from whom they experienced the harassment: 29%, similar to 2014 (30%)
- contacted a union representative: 22%, similar to 2014 (21%)
- resolved the matter informally on their own: 14%, a slight decrease from 2014 (16%)
- used an informal conflict resolution process: 11%, similar to 2014 (12%)
- contacted a human resources advisor in their department or agency: 9%, similar to 2014 (10%)

## **Reasons for not filing a grievance or formal complaint**

Employees who indicated that they had been harassed on the job in the past 2 years but did not file a grievance or formal complaint about the harassment were asked to indicate the reason(s) for not doing so (Q67). The following are the most frequently cited reasons:

- did not believe it would make a difference: 53%, similar to 2014 (54%)
- afraid of reprisal: 45%, unchanged from 2014 (45%)
- concerns about the formal complaint process: 26%, similar to 2014 (25%)
- did not think the incident was serious enough: 17%, similar to 2014 (16%)
- issue was resolved: 12%, similar to 2014 (13%)
- changed jobs: 12%, similar to 2014 (11%)
- too distraught: 12%, similar to 2014 (11%)

## **Harassment in current organization**

A question was added to the 2017 survey to find out whether the harassment referred to in Q63 occurred in the employee's current organization (Q68). Of the 18% of employees who indicated that they have been the victim of harassment, 93% indicated that it occurred while they were an employee of their current organization.

## Satisfaction with organization's response to harassment and efforts to prevent it

Table 19 shows the 2017 results for the questions about employees' opinions of how their organization responds to and prevents harassment in the workplace. It also shows the results for these questions over time, when applicable.

**Table 19: Results for questions about satisfaction with organization's response to harassment and efforts to prevent it (2011, 2014 and 2017)**

Question number	Question	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
69	I am satisfied with how matters related to harassment are resolved in my department or agency.	-	50	50
70	My department or agency works hard to create a workplace that prevents harassment.	72	64	66
<hr/> * - Question was not asked <hr/>				

- 50% of employees agreed that they are satisfied with how matters related to harassment are resolved in their organization (Q69), unchanged from 2014 (50%). It is also worth noting that 24% of employees responded "Don't know" to Q69.
- 66% of employees felt that their organization works hard to create a workplace that prevents harassment (Q70), a slight increase from 2014 (64%) and a large decrease from 2011 (72%). It is also worth noting that 9% of employees responded "Don't know" to Q70.

## Discrimination

8% of employees indicated that they have been the victim of discrimination on the job in the past 2 years (Q75), unchanged from 2014 (8%).

### Sources of discrimination

Employees who indicated that they had been discriminated against on the job in the past 2 years reported the following as the source(s) of the discrimination (Q76):

- co-workers: 38%, a slight increase from 2014 (36%)
- individuals with authority over them: 79%, similar to 2014 (80%)
- individuals working for them: 4%, similar to 2014 (3%)
- individuals for whom they have custodial responsibility: 4%, similar to 2014 (3%)
- individuals from other departments or agencies: 7%, unchanged from 2014 (7%)
- members of the public: 9%, similar to 2014 (8%)

## **Types of discrimination**

Employees who indicated that they had been discriminated against on the job in the past 2 years were asked to indicate the type of discrimination they experienced (Q77). The following are the most prevalent types:

- sex: 30%, an large increase from 2014 (24%)
- age: 25%, a slight increase from 2014 (23%)
- race: 24%, an increase from 2014 (20%)
- national or ethnic origin: 19%, a slight increase from 2014 (17%)
- disability: 16%, unchanged from 2014 (16%)
- family status: 16%, unchanged from 2014 (16%)

## **Actions taken to address discrimination**

Of the 8% of employees who indicated that they had been the victim of discrimination, 7% filed a grievance or formal complaint, unchanged from 2014 (7%). 48% of employees took no action, unchanged from 2014 (48%).

The following were the most frequently cited other actions taken to address the discrimination (Q78):

- discussed the matter with a supervisor or a senior manager: 31%, a slight increase from 2014 (29%)
- contacted a union representative: 19%, unchanged from 2014 (19%)
- discussed the matter with the person(s) from whom they experienced the harassment: 16%, unchanged from 2014 (16%)
- resolved the matter informally on their own: 9%, unchanged from 2014 (9%)
- used an informal conflict resolution process: 6%, unchanged from 2014 (6%)
- contacted a human resources advisor in their department or agency: 6%, unchanged from 2014 (6%)

## **Reasons for not filing a grievance or formal complaint**

Employees who indicated that they had been discriminated against on the job in the past 2 years but did not file a grievance or formal complaint about the discrimination were asked to indicate the reason(s) for not doing so (Q79). The following are the most frequently cited reasons:

- did not believe it would make a difference: 61%, a decrease from 2014 (65%)
- afraid of reprisal: 44%, unchanged from 2014 (44%)
- concerns about the formal complaint process: 24%, similar to 2014 (23%)
- did not think the incident was serious enough: 13%, a slight increase from 2014 (11%)
- too distraught: 10%, unchanged from 2014 (10%)
- advised against filing a complaint: 10%, similar to 2014 (9%)
- did not know what to do, where to go or whom to ask: 10%, similar to 2014 (9%)

## Discrimination in current organization

A question was added to the 2017 survey to find out whether the discrimination referred to in Q75 occurred in the employee's current organization (Q80). Of the 8% of employees who indicated that they have been the victim of discrimination, 93% indicated that it occurred while they were an employee of their current organization.

## Satisfaction with organization's response to discrimination and efforts to prevent it

Table 20 shows the 2017 results for the questions about employees' opinions of how their organization responds to and prevents discrimination in the workplace. It also shows the results for these questions over time, when applicable.

**Table 20: Results for questions about satisfaction with organization's response to discrimination and efforts to prevent it (2011, 2014 and 2017)**

Question number	Question	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
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\*  
– Question was not asked

Question number	Question	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
81	I am satisfied with how matters related to discrimination are resolved in my department or agency.	-	55	56
82	My department or agency works hard to create a workplace that prevents discrimination.	77	70	72
<p>* - Question was not asked</p>				

- 56% of employees agreed that they are satisfied with how matters related to discrimination are resolved in their organization (Q81), similar to 2014 (55%). It is also worth noting that 30% of employees responded “Don’t know” to Q81.
- 72% of employees felt that their organization works hard to create a workplace that prevents discrimination (Q82), a slight increase from 2014 (70%) and a decrease from 2011 (77%). It is also worth noting that 12% of employees responded “Don’t know” to Q82.

## Duty to accommodate

17% of employees indicated that they had requested measures to accommodate their needs in the workplace in the last 2 years (Q88), a slight increase from 2014 (15%).

Table 21 shows the 2014 and 2017 results for the questions related to duty to accommodate for employees who indicated that they requested accommodation measures in the past 2 years (Q64).

**Table 21: Results for questions about duty to accommodate (2014 and 2017)**

Question number	Question	2014 (%)	2017 (%)
89	Were any measures taken to accommodate your needs?	78	78

<b>Question number</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>2014 (%)</b>	<b>2017 (%)</b>
<b>90</b>	I am satisfied with the measures that were taken to accommodate my needs.	83	<b>82</b>

Of the 17% of employees who requested measures to accommodate their needs:

- 78% indicated that measures were taken (Q89), unchanged from 2014 (78%)
- 82% were satisfied with the measures taken (Q90), similar to 2014 (83%)

## **Collective agreements and labour relations**

Table 22 shows the 2017 results for the questions related to collective agreements and labour relations. It also shows the results for these questions over time, when applicable.

**Table 22: Results for questions about collective agreements and labour relations (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017)**

<b>Question number</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>2008 (%)</b>	<b>2011 (%)</b>	<b>2014 (%)</b>	<b>2017 (%)</b>
<b>71</b>	I am familiar with the provisions of my collective agreement.	79	81	81	<b>81</b>
<b>72</b>	The union-management consultation process has been effective in addressing issues in my workplace.	*	48	46	<b>49</b>
<b>73</b>	My immediate supervisor understands and respects the provisions of my collective agreement.	79	79	79	<b>81</b>
<b>74</b>	Senior managers respect the provisions of my collective agreement.	71	71	70	<b>72</b>
<hr/> <p>* -      Question was not asked</p> <hr/>					

- 81% of employees reported that they are familiar with the provisions of their collective agreement (Q71), unchanged from 2014 (81%) and from 2011 (81%).
- 49% of employees agreed that the union-management consultation process has been effective in addressing issues in their workplace (Q72), an improvement from 2014 (46%) and similar to 2011 (48%).
- 81% of employees believed that their immediate supervisor understands and respects the provisions of their collective agreement (Q73), a slight increase from 2014 (79%) and from 2011 (79%).
- 72% of employees felt that senior managers respect the provisions of their collective agreement (Q74), a slight increase from 2014 (70%) and similar to 2011 (71%).

In the past, sizeable proportions of employees have responded “Don’t know” to the questions about collective agreements and labour relations. The proportions of “Don’t know” responses to these questions in the 2017 survey were as follows:

- I am familiar with the provisions of my collective agreement (Q71): 2%
- The union-management consultation process has been effective in addressing issues in my workplace (Q72): 20%
- My immediate supervisor understands and respects the provisions of my collective agreement (Q73): 8%
- Senior managers respect the provisions of my collective agreement (Q74): 11%

## Workplace well-being

For Canada’s federal public service employees to be engaged and productive, they need to have a workplace that is healthy. According to the Federal Public Service Workplace Mental Health Strategy, “A healthy workplace is essential to the physical and psychological health of all public service employees, as it enables them to bring the best of their diverse talents, skills and energy as they deliver services to Canadians.”

## Psychologically healthy workplace

Table 23 shows the results for the questions related to a psychologically healthy workplace. These questions were asked for the first time in 2017.

**Table 23: Results for questions about psychologically healthy workplace (2017)**

Question number	Question	2017 (%)
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Question number	Question	2017 (%)
35	My immediate supervisor creates an environment where I feel free to discuss with him or her matters that affect my well-being at work.	81
36	My immediate supervisor seems to care about me as a person.	80
86	My department or agency does a good job of raising awareness of mental health in the workplace.	67
87	I would describe my workplace as being psychologically healthy.	56

- 81% of employees felt that their immediate supervisor creates an environment where they feel free to discuss matters that affect their well-being at work (Q35).
- 80% of employees indicated that their immediate supervisor seems to care about them as a person (Q36).
- 67% of employees agreed that their organization does a good job of raising awareness of mental health in the workplace (Q86).
- 56% of employees agreed that they would describe their workplace as being psychologically healthy (Q87).

### Level of work-related stress and emotional exhaustion

Table 24 shows the results for the questions related to work-related stress and emotional exhaustion. These questions were asked for the first time in 2017.

**Table 24: Results for questions about the level of work-related stress and emotional exhaustion (2017)**

Question number	Question	2017 %
84	Overall, my level of work-related stress is... (High/Very high)	20
85	After my workday, I feel emotionally drained.	29

- 20% of employees indicated that, overall, their level of work-related stress is “High” or “Very high” (Q84).

- 29% of employees indicated that they “Always/Almost always” or “Often” feel emotionally drained after their workday (Q85).

## Causes of work-related stress

Table 25 shows the results for the question about the causes of stress at work. This question was asked for the first time in 2017.

**Table 25: Results for question about causes of stress at work (2017)**

Question number	Question	2017 %
<b>83</b>	<b>Overall, to what extent do the following factors cause you stress at work?</b>	
<b>a.</b>	Pay or other compensation-related issues	34
<b>b.</b>	Heavy workload	26
<b>c.</b>	Unreasonable deadlines	21
<b>d.</b>	Not enough employees to do the work	32
<b>e.</b>	Overtime or long hours	11
<b>f.</b>	Balancing work and personal life	19
<b>g.</b>	Lack of control or input in decision-making	18
<b>h.</b>	Competing or constantly changing priorities	22
<b>i.</b>	Lack of clear expectations	19
<b>j.</b>	Information overload	18
<b>k.</b>	Physical work environment	9
<b>l.</b>	Harassment or discrimination	8
<b>m.</b>	Issue(s) with my co-worker(s)	7
<b>n.</b>	Issue(s) with individual(s) with authority over me	11

<b>Question number</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>2017 %</b>
<b>o.</b>	Issue(s) with individual(s) working for me	4
<b>p.</b>	Issue(s) with other individual(s) (e.g., members of the public, individuals from other departments or agencies)	4
<b>q.</b>	Lack of job security	10
<b>r.</b>	Personal issues	6

The following causes of stress at work were the most prevalent (Q83):

- pay or other compensation-related issues: 34%
- not enough employees to do the work: 32%
- heavy workload: 26%
- competing or constantly changing priorities: 22%
- unreasonable deadlines: 21%

## **Compensation**

The 2017 PSES included 5 new questions about issues related to compensation and the Phoenix pay system.

### **Types of issues**

69% of employees indicated that their pay or other compensation has been affected by issues with Phoenix (Q91).

Those employees reported the following issues (Q92):

- missing regular pay: 22%
- underpayment of regular pay: 34%
- overpayment of regular pay: 18%
- incorrect or missing pay, overtime pay or other related extra duty pay: 47%
- incorrect or missing pay relating to a disability, maternity or parental leave: 6%
- other: 40%

### **Time spent resolving issues**

The following provides a breakdown of the estimated time spent, at work or outside of work, by the 69% of employees who indicated that they had experienced pay or other compensation issues, trying to resolve the issues (Q93).

- 0 hours: 7%
- 1 to 9: 48%
- 10 to 19: 18%
- 20 to 29: 10%
- 30 to 39: 4%
- 40 or more: 14%

## Support to resolve pay or other compensation issues

Table 26 shows the 2017 PSES results for the questions related to support to resolve pay or other compensation issues.

**Table 26: Results for questions about support to resolve pay or other compensation issues (2017)**

Question number	Question	%
<b>94</b>	I am satisfied with the support (e.g., regular information, follow-up, making enquiries on my behalf, offering emergency or priority pay) I received from my department or agency to help resolve my pay or other compensation issues.	36
<b>95</b>	I am satisfied with the support I received from the Pay Centre to help resolve my pay or other compensation issues.	16

Of the 69% of employees who indicated that their pay or other compensation has been affected by issues with the Phoenix pay system:

- 36% were satisfied with the support they received from their organization to help resolve these issues (Q94)
- 16% were satisfied with the support they received from the Pay Centre to help resolve these issues (Q95)

## Methodology

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### **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 86 departments and agencies participated in the 2017 PSES survey. Of the 284,845 employees eligible to participate in the 2017 survey, 174,544 responded to the survey, for an overall response rate of 61.3%.

### **Questionnaire design**

The 2017 survey questionnaire contained 119 questions.

To test the content of the 2017 PSES questionnaire, focus group sessions were held in the National Capital Region, Winnipeg and Montréal in October and November 2016. Participants were from various departments and agencies, and various occupational groups and levels.

The 2017 PSES questionnaire was designed as an electronic survey that respondents could complete online. It was also made available as a paper questionnaire and via a telephone interview.

### **Data collection**

The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer contracted Statistics Canada to administer the survey. The 2017 PSES was conducted over 6 weeks from August 21 to September 29, 2017. Paper questionnaires were accepted up until October 31, 2017.

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.

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.

Employees who wanted to complete the survey by telephone contacted the Statistics Canada PSES Help Line.

## **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.

Aggregated results were suppressed for groups with low respondent counts. For all questions, results were suppressed for questions with fewer than 10 respondents. For the questions about harassment and discrimination, an additional suppression rule was applied when there were fewer than 5 responses for any response category.

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## **Footnotes**

- 1** 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.

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**Date modified:**

2018-03-29