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Quality of Employment in Canada

Flexible work schedules, 2022

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Flexible work schedules, 2022

Flexible work hours, also known as “flextime”, is an arrangement whereby workers can adjust the start and/or end times of their workday. Having the flexibility to choose when one’s workday begins and ends can enhance worker autonomy and promote greater work-life balance. In April 2022, nearly one third (30.3%) of employees aged 15 to 69 had the flexibility to choose when they started and ended their workday. A supplement to the Labour Force Survey collected in August 2022 found that nearly two thirds of employees (64.7%) indicated that a flexible schedule was an important or essential job factor to them.

The UNECE Framework on Measuring Quality of Employment defines the indicator of flexible working hours as the flexibility to choose working times from the perspective of the employee rather than the employer. The Statistics Canada flexible hours indicator is the percentage of employed persons who can choose the start and end time of their workday.

Employers may offer flexible work hours for a variety of reasons, including to increase employee retention, to increase productivity, and to improve morale. A 2018 study exploring the association between job flexibility and job satisfaction of those aged 18 to 64 found that among a variety of job flexibility factors, control over hours of work was most strongly associated with job satisfaction for both men and women.¹

Data and analyses presented in the following article are —unless otherwise noted— restricted to employees and are based on a supplement to the Labour Force Survey collected in April 2022 among workers aged 15 to 69. Data refer to the main job and are not seasonally adjusted.

Historical trends

Statistics Canada data from the Labour Force Survey Supplement on flexible hours are currently only available for April 2022.

A recent snapshot

In April 2022, among the 30.3% of employees aged 15 to 69 who had the flexibility to choose when their workday begins and ends, 83.8% usually worked regular daytime hours or a regular daytime shift. Close to three quarters (73.9%) of self-employed workers aged 15 to 69 could choose their work schedule, with the majority working regular daytime hours or a regular daytime shift (61.0%) followed by irregular hours or on-call work (33.0%).

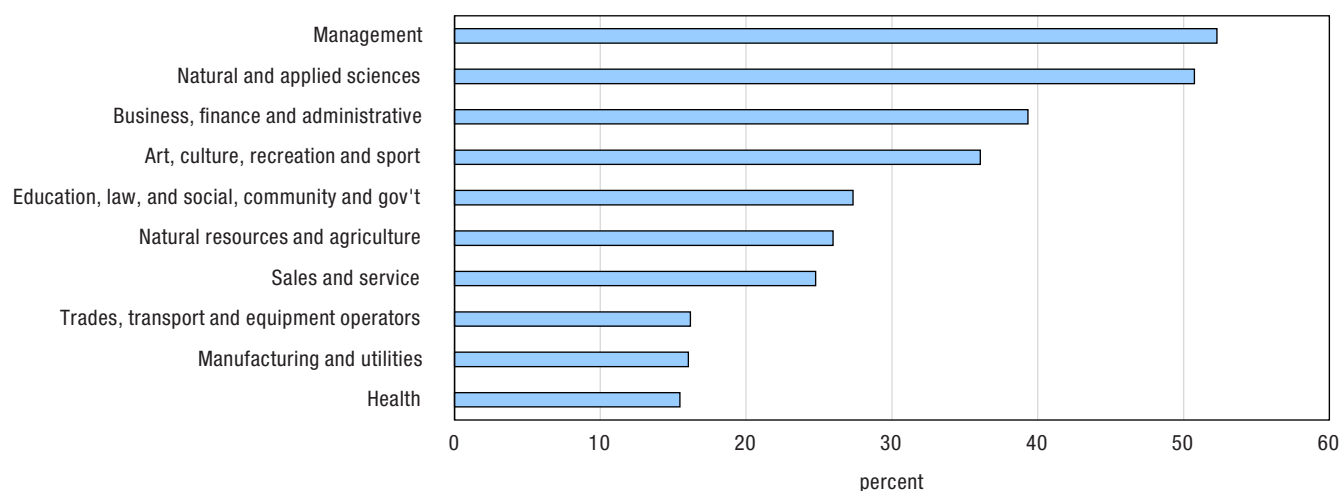
The proportion of employees with a flexible schedule was lower among young employees aged 15 to 24 (23.2%) compared with employees aged 25 to 54 (32.0%) and 55 to 69 (29.7%). This may reflect the larger share of younger employees working in sales and service occupations which typically offer fixed work hours. Flexible work hours also varied by educational attainment and 39.5% of employees aged 25 to 69 with a bachelor’s degree or higher had flexible hours compared to 27.7% among those with post-secondary education below the bachelor’s and 23.9% among employees with a high school diploma or less.

Access to a schedule that offers flexibility in choosing when to start and end the workday was more prevalent among employees working from home and in certain occupations. In April 2022, close to 6 in 10 employees who worked exclusively at home (58.5%) or had a hybrid² work arrangement (59.8%) reported having the ability to choose the start and end times of their workday, compared to 22.1% of employees who usually worked exclusively at locations other than home. This could be attributed to the higher level of independence and greater flexibility afforded to workers in some occupations. In April 2022, employees working in management (52.3%) as well as natural and applied sciences occupations (50.7%) were most likely to report having a flexible schedule. Conversely, occupations in health (15.5%), manufacturing and utilities (16.0%) as well as trades, transport and equipment operation (16.2%) had the lowest proportions of employees with a flexible schedule.

1. Martin, Steve. 2018. “The association between job flexibility and job satisfaction.” *Insights on Canadian Society*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 75-006-X. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2018001/article/54980-eng.htm>
2. Workers who usually work some of their hours at home and some of their hours at locations other than home.

Chart 1

Proportion of employees (%) aged 15 to 69 who can choose when they start and end their workday, by occupation, April 2022



Note: Due to rounding, estimates and percentages may differ slightly between different Statistics Canada products, such as analytical documents and data tables.

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Supplement, custom tabulation.

Employees with higher wages were more likely to have access to a flexible schedule. In April 2022, 43.9% of employees with an hourly wage in the top 20% of the wage distribution had the flexibility to choose when they started and finished their workday, compared with 23.9% among employees with wages in the bottom 20%, and 23.1% among those with hourly earnings between the 20th and 40th percentile.

Having the ability to choose one's work hours was associated with a greater ability to balance personal and family responsibilities during the workday. For example, in April 2022, 9 in 10 (91.4%) full-time³ employees with a flexible schedule found it easy or very easy to take time off work as needed for personal or family reasons compared to 59.8% of full-time employees without a flexible schedule. However, full-time employees with a flexible schedule were only slightly less likely (27.9%) than employees without a flexible schedule (33.6%) to indicate that they had sometimes, often, or always found it difficult to fulfill their family responsibilities because of the amount of time they spent working. This may reflect situations where flexible schedules could result in working longer or irregular hours.

For parents with young children, a flexible work schedule can mitigate some of the challenges in balancing work and family life. However, in April 2022, only slightly more employees aged 25 to 54 with a child under the age of 6 (34.7%) and a child between the ages of 6 to 17 (34.0%) had flexible hours compared with other employees (30.3%). These proportions were similar between men and women.

3. Workers who usually work 30 or more hours per week.

Information on the indicator

Description or definition

The **flexible work schedules** indicator is the number of employed persons who can choose the start and end time of their workday, expressed as a percentage of all employed persons.

Source

Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, April 2022.

Statistics Canada, Labour Market Indicators Supplement, April 2022.

Information for interpretation

For more information on the Labour Force Survey (LFS) methodology and population coverage, please consult the [Guide to the Labour Force Survey, 2020](#).

The April 2022 LFS Supplement was collected as part of the labour market indicators program. The sample consists of households in their 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th month of participation in the LFS and the survey population is limited to those aged 15 to 69 living in the provinces. For more information see: [Labour Market Indicators](#).

The LFS estimates are based on a sample and are therefore subject to sampling variability. The analysis focuses on differences between estimates that are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Due to rounding, estimates and percentages may differ slightly between different Statistics Canada products, such as analytical documents and data tables.

Occupations are coded according to the National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2016.

Other related information

Additional Statistics Canada data are available on the following subjects:

[Hours of work and work arrangements](#)