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Labour Statistics at a Glance

Job vacancies after the peak: A look at the changing educational composition since 2022

by Maxime Boulanger, Jonathan Bridekirk, and Min Jeong Kim

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Job vacancies after the peak: A look at the changing educational composition since 2022

by **Maxime Boulanger, Jonathan Bridekirk, and Min Jeong Kim**

In 2022, the number of job vacancies in Canada averaged 942,600, a record high since comparable data became available in 2015. During this period, the job vacancy rate—which corresponds to the number of vacant positions as a proportion of total labour demand—reached a peak of 5.4% while the unemployment rate dropped to an all-time low of 5.3%. This combination of rising job vacancies and falling unemployment reflected the particularly tight labour market conditions in the post-pandemic period.

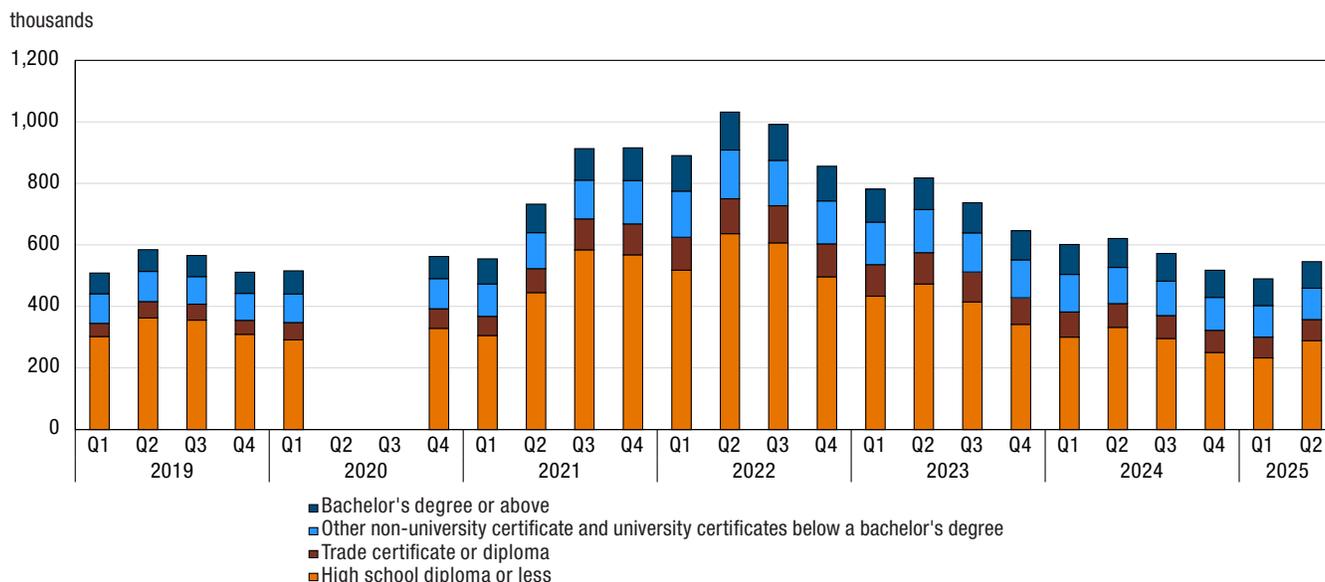
The increase in job vacancies from 2019 to 2022 was primarily driven by positions requiring lower levels of educational attainment (Morissette, 2023). At the peak in the second quarter of 2022, vacancies for positions requiring a high school diploma or less accounted for over 60% of the total vacancies. Following this peak, vacancies dropped by nearly half (-47.1%) to 545,900 in the second quarter of 2025, coinciding with many socio-economic changes such as strong population growth, variation in interest rates, global economic shocks and, more recently, trade uncertainty with the United States. Job vacancies for positions requiring a high school diploma or less declined the most over the period (-347,900; -54.7%).

Using data from the [Job Vacancy and Wage Survey \(JVWS\)](#) from 2019 to 2025, this article analyzes changing composition of job vacancies over the three years from the second quarter of 2022 to the second quarter of 2025, with a focus on educational levels required for the vacant positions. More specifically, this article examines:

1. The sectors that have driven the observed changes in job vacancies across different educational levels.
2. The shift in the composition of vacancies by educational level within individual sectors.
3. Whether comparable changes have occurred in the composition of the unemployed population by educational attainment.

This analysis examines the extent to which the decline in vacancies over the past three years has been driven by changes in employer demand for high-skilled or low-skilled workers across and within sectors. It also examines whether changes in labour demand were accompanied by corresponding changes in the composition of the unemployed population, helping to assess potential mismatches between labour supply and demand across education levels.

Chart 1
Job vacancies by level of education in Canada, from the first quarter of 2019 to the second quarter of 2025



Notes: Job Vacancy and Wage Survey data collection was suspended for the second and third quarters of 2020. Therefore, data for these reference periods are not available. Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Source: Job Vacancy and Wage Survey (5217), table 14-10-0443-01.

Number of vacancies for positions requiring a high school diploma or less falls below pre-pandemic levels

Job vacancies followed an upward trend over the three years from 2019 to 2022. From the second quarter of 2019 to the second quarter of 2022, the number of job vacancies increased across all educational levels. However, the majority of the overall increase were accounted for by vacant positions requiring a high school diploma or less, which increased by 274,000 (+75.6%).¹

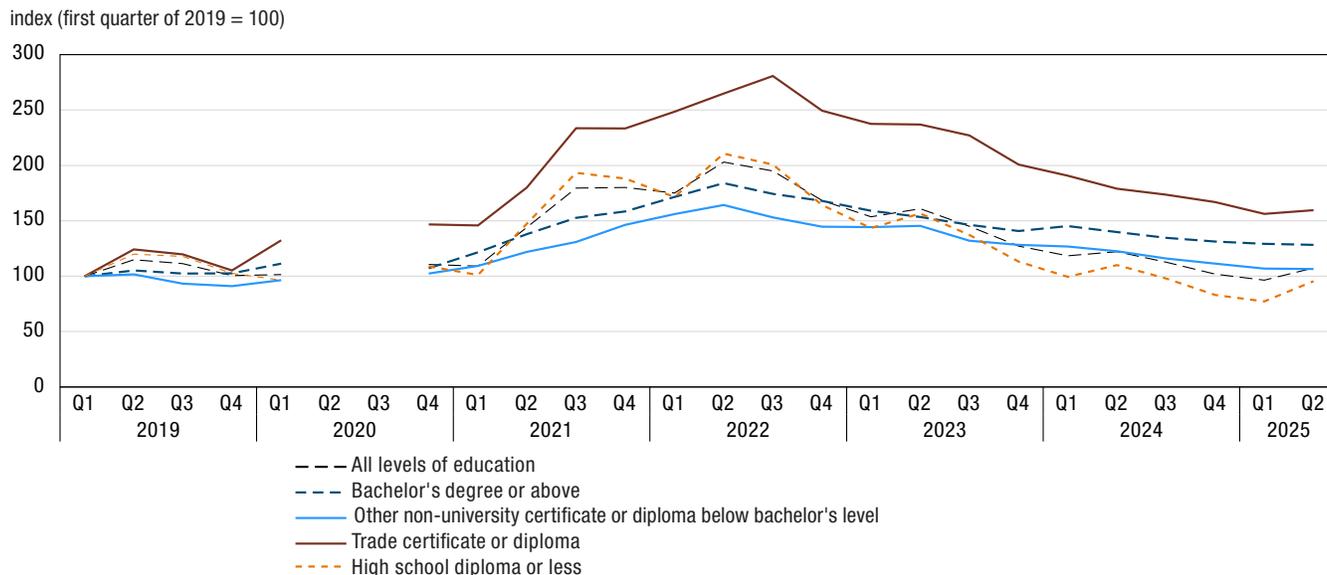
After 2022, job vacancies declined sharply for positions requiring a high school diploma or less, dropping by more than half (-54.7%) from 636,400 in the second quarter of 2022 to 291,700 in the second quarter of 2025. This brought the number of vacancies for this level of educational requirements below pre-pandemic averages (332,500 in 2019). In comparison, downward trends for vacant positions requiring higher levels of education were less pronounced ([Table 1](#) & [Chart 2](#)).

For example, job vacancies requiring a trade certificate or diploma more than doubled (+113.3%) from the second quarter of 2019 to the second quarter of 2022, before declining by 39.8% over the following three years. Vacancies requiring a bachelor's degree or above rose by 74.9% over the same period, before declining by 30.3% over the following three years ([Table 1](#)).

Taken together, in the second quarter of 2025, vacancies requiring educational attainment above a high school diploma remained higher than before the pandemic.

1. While variations in job vacancies are often driven by positions requiring a high school diploma or less, the 2019-to-2022 increase in overall vacancies was unprecedented in magnitude and the concentration of this growth in positions requiring lower levels of education was stronger than in previous years.

Chart 2
Job vacancies by education level in Canada, from the first quarter of 2019 to the second quarter of 2025



Notes: Job Vacancy and Wage Survey data collection was suspended for the second and third quarters of 2020. Therefore, data for these reference periods are not available. Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Source: Job Vacancy and Wage Survey (5217), table 14-10-0443-01.

Sectoral composition of vacant positions changes

Three sectors contributed the most to the decline in job vacancies requiring a high school diploma or less over the three-year period ending in the second quarter of 2025. These were accommodation and food services (-90,400; -58.9%), retail trade (-56,800; -57.8%) and manufacturing (-37,500; -63.8%)—which together accounted for more the half (55.4%) of the overall drop in the number of vacancies for this educational group (Table 2).

Meanwhile, there was a shift in the sectoral composition of vacancies requiring a trade certificate or diploma, with vacancies in the construction sector falling at a faster pace (-46.5%) than vacancies in health care and social assistance (-29.2%). In second quarter of 2025, health care and social assistance held the largest share of vacancies requiring a trade certificate or diploma, at 21.8%, up from 18.6% in the second quarter of 2019. Vacancies requiring a trade certificate or diploma in the health care and social assistance sector were most often for nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates. In comparison, the construction sector accounted for 18.3% of vacancies requiring a trade certificate or diploma in the second quarter of 2025, down from 20.7% in the second quarter of 2022.

Over the same three-year period, vacancies requiring other non-university certificates or university certificates below a bachelor's fell from 158,000 to 102,400 (-35.2%). Within this education level, the largest declines were observed in health care and social assistance (-13,700; -23.7%), professional, scientific and technical services (-12,100; -55.5%) and finance and insurance (-6,500; -52.7%).

Positions requiring a bachelor's degree or above accounted for 12.0% of all vacancies in the second quarter of 2022—just above the share for trade certificate or diploma (11.1%). In the second quarter of 2025, this proportion had risen to 15.8%.

Despite this increase in its share of overall vacancies, the total number of vacancies requiring a bachelor's degree or above declined from 123,700 to 86,200 over the three-year period ending in the second quarter of 2025. Nearly half (46.7%) of this decrease was accounted for by vacancies in the professional, scientific and technical services sector, which fell by 17,500 (-48.0%). In comparison, vacancies in health care and social assistance requiring this level of education fell at a slower rate (-4.9%). In the second quarter of 2025, health care and social assistance represented the largest share of vacancies requiring a bachelor's degree or above (27.7%).

Demand for more specialized workers increases, particularly in manufacturing, retail trade, as well as health care and social assistance

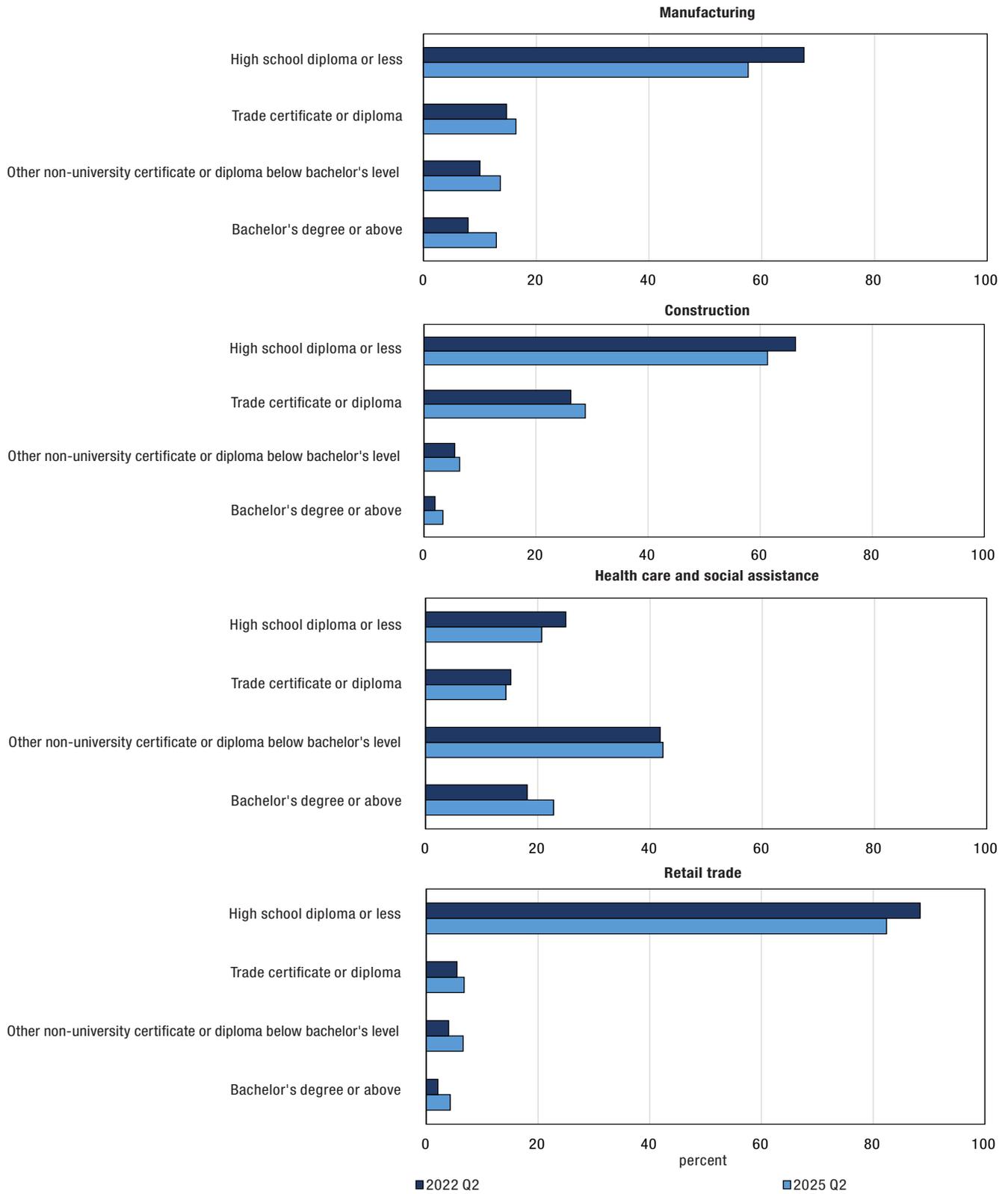
From the second quarter of 2022 to the second quarter of 2025, job vacancies across many major economic sectors shifted toward higher educational requirements, with notable decreases in positions requiring a high school diploma or less. This trend reflects growing demand for more specialized workers, including in sectors like manufacturing, retail trade, and health care and social assistance.

This shift in educational requirements was particularly evident in manufacturing. From the second quarter of 2022 to the second quarter of 2025, the proportion of vacancies in manufacturing requiring a high school diploma or less decreased from 67.5% to 57.1%. Across manufacturing and utilities occupations, the largest decreases in vacancies requiring a high school diploma or less were observed for labourers in processing, manufacturing and utilities as well as machine operators, assemblers and inspectors in processing, manufacturing and printing. At the same time, the proportions of vacancies in manufacturing requiring a trade certificate or diploma (+1.8 percentage points to 16.4%), other non-university certificates or university certificates below a bachelor's (+3.6 percentage points to 13.6%), and a bachelor's degree or above (+5.0 percentage points to 12.9%) all increased.

A similar shift also took place in construction where vacancies requiring a high school diploma or less decreased from 66.3% to 61.3%. The most notable drops occurred among helpers and labourers, as well as transport drivers, operators, and general trades workers. At the same time, there were increases in the proportion of vacancies for positions requiring a trade certificate or diploma (from 26.2% to 28.8%), other non-university certificate or diploma below bachelor's level (from 5.5% to 6.4%), and bachelor's degree or above (from 2.0% to 3.4%).

In health care and social assistance, the share of vacant positions requiring a high school diploma or less decreased from 25.0% to 20.7% from the second quarter of 2022 to the second quarter of 2025, while the share of vacant positions requiring bachelor's degree or above increased from 18.1% to 22.8%. Job vacancies requiring other non-university university certificates or university certificates below a bachelor's continued posting the highest share of vacancies in the sector, at 42.3%.

Chart 3
Proportion of job vacancies by level of education across major sectors in Canada, in the second quarter of 2022 and 2025



Note: Data are not seasonally adjusted.
Source: Job Vacancy and Wage Survey (5217), table 14-10-0443-01.

Decline in the number of job vacancies coincides with rising unemployment

While job vacancies declined from the second quarter of 2022 to the second quarter of 2025, the number of unemployed people increased across all educational levels. According to the [Labour Force Survey](#),² the largest percentage increase in unemployment was among individuals with a bachelor's degree or above (+66.1%; +168,100), followed by those with a high school diploma or less (+40.2%; +209,600) ([Table 3](#)).

A combination of fewer job vacancies and rising unemployment signals a softening in overall labour demand. This trend appeared to have affected both high- and low-skilled workers.

Since the second quarter of 2022, the unemployment-to-job vacancy ratio increased for all levels of education. The biggest increase was recorded for bachelor's degree or above, with the ratio rising from 2.1 to 4.9 unemployed persons with a bachelor's degree or above for each vacancy requiring this level of education. This was followed by high school diploma or less, with the ratio rising from 0.8 to 2.5 unemployed persons with a high school diploma or less for each vacancy requiring this level of education in the second quarter of 2025.

Across all levels of education, the highest unemployment-to-job vacancy ratio in the second quarter of 2025 was recorded for positions requiring a bachelor's degree or above (4.9), while the lowest was for positions requiring a trades certificate or diploma (1.8). This suggests that unemployed people with a bachelor's degree or higher face greater competition in the labour market, in comparison with those seeking a position requiring a trade certificate or diploma.

2. Labour Force Survey (3701), table 14-10-0019-01.

Conclusion

Since the number of job vacancies peaked at nearly one million (942,600) in 2022, the Canadian labour market has gone through significant structural shifts. While the overall number of job vacancies fell nearly by half (-47.1%) from the second quarter of 2022 to the second quarter of 2025, this decline was not evenly distributed across all educational levels. Positions requiring a high school diploma or less recorded the largest decrease, returning to levels below those seen before the COVID-19 pandemic. In comparison, while vacancies requiring higher education levels also declined, they remained above pre-pandemic levels.

Industries such as accommodation and food services, retail trade, and manufacturing were primary drivers behind the steep reduction in positions requiring a high school diploma or less. At the same time, many sectors, including manufacturing and construction, experienced a shift toward vacancies with higher educational requirements, suggesting higher skill demands in the labour market in these sectors.

However, parallel to the shift toward jobs that require a bachelor's degree or above, the number of job seekers with these qualifications has also increased.

Vacancies continue to decline for all education levels in the third quarter of 2025

The analysis presented in this article focuses on the period from the second quarter of 2022, when vacancies reached a record high, to the second quarter of 2025. Focusing on data from corresponding quarters over this three-year period facilitates meaningful comparisons of data over time, of which are not seasonally adjusted. Data for the third quarter of 2025 were released on [December 16, 2025](#). While they are not directly comparable to data for the second quarter of 2022, they offer insights into the most recent trends in vacancies by educational attainment.

In the third quarter of 2025, job vacancies fell by 14,000 (-2.8%) to 492,500, continuing the decline recorded in the second quarter of 2025 (-18,300; -3.5%). Compared with a year earlier, job vacancies were down for all educational levels. Vacancies requiring a high school diploma or less fell the most (-27,300; -9.0%) and accounted for nearly half (-49.4%) of the overall year-over-year decline in job vacancies. (data in this section are seasonally adjusted)

For more information, see: [Job vacancies, third quarter 2025](#).

Appendix

Table 1

Level and percentage change of job vacancies during the three years before and after the peak by level of education

	Second quarter of 2019 to second quarter of 2022		Second quarter of 2022 to second quarter of 2025	
	level	percent	level	percent
All levels of education	447,770	76.6	-486,305	-47.1
High school diploma or less	274,005	75.6	-347,850	-54.7
Trade certificate or diploma	60,590	113.3	-45,350	-39.8
Other non-university certificates or university certificates below a bachelor's	60,200	61.6	-55,610	-35.2
Bachelor's degree or above	52,980	74.9	-37,495	-30.3

Source: Job Vacancy and Wage Survey (5217), table 14-10-0443-01.

Table 2
Level and proportional change across the sectors for each educational level since the second quarter of 2022

Sectors	Minimum required education level			
	High school diploma or less		Trade certificate or diploma	
	Job vacancies second quarter of 2025	Percent change since the second quarter of 2022	Job vacancies second quarter of 2025	Percent change since the second quarter of 2022
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	7,360	-54.5	420	-51.2
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	2,510	-54.8	1,165	-24.1
Utilities	300	-60.0	380	-28.3
Construction	26,855	-54.9	12,615	-46.5
Manufacturing	21,325	-63.8	6,135	-52.0
Wholesale trade	11,245	-49.5	3,050	-44.3
Retail trade	41,445	-57.8	3,430	-43.8
Transportation and warehousing	16,335	-57.9	3,635	-33.0
Information and cultural industries	2,250	-66.7	275	-73.7
Finance and insurance	5,435	F	915	F
Real estate and rental and leasing	4,125	-48.7	1,120	-10.8
Professional, scientific and technical services	6,590	-48.0	1,730	-50.7
Management of companies and enterprises	635	-60.3	200	-69.0
Administration and support, waste management and remediation services	23,250	-51.5	2,625	-55.4
Educational services	5,525	-26.6	1,595	1.9
Health care and social assistance	21,700	-37.3	14,995	-29.2
Arts, entertainment and recreation	8,960	-50.6	920	-35.2
Accommodation and food services	63,085	-58.9	2,995	-32.8
Other services (except public administration)	11,870	-44.3	8640	-36.9
Public administration	7,780	-19.9	1,885	5.9

Sectors	Minimum required education level			
	Other non-university certificates or university certificates below a bachelor's		Bachelor's degree or above	
	Job vacancies second quarter of 2025	Percent change since the second quarter of 2022	Job vacancies second quarter of 2025	Percent change since the second quarter of 2022
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	340	F	F	F
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	535	-34.8	665	-39.5
Utilities	670	27.6	1,050	13.5
Construction	2,805	-43.7	1,480	-15.7
Manufacturing	5,070	-41.8	4,815	-29.7
Wholesale trade	3,995	-35.5	3,475	-24.9
Retail trade	3,305	-26.3	2,140	-9.3
Transportation and warehousing	2960	-5.3	2,295	6.0
Information and cultural industries	1830	-67.3	2,445	-56.5
Finance and insurance	5,780	-52.7	8,080	F
Real estate and rental and leasing	1,355	-47.0	1,305	-24.8
Professional, scientific and technical services	9,705	-55.5	18,990	-48.0
Management of companies and enterprises	645	-59.6	820	-44.2
Administration and support, waste management and remediation services	3,275	-48.8	2,175	-17.0
Educational services	4,425	-24.2	7,480	-20.2
Health care and social assistance	44,350	-23.7	23,915	-4.9
Arts, entertainment and recreation	905	-43.1	550	F
Accommodation and food services	2,575	F	F	F
Other services (except public administration)	4,170	-33.5	2,505	-22.3
Public administration	41	27	40	21

F too unreliable to be published

Source: Job Vacancy and Wage Survey (5217).

Table 3
Unemployment, job vacancies, and unemployment-to-job vacancy ratio across all education levels, in the second quarter of 2019, 2022 and 2025

Education level	Unemployed persons	Job vacancies	Unemployment-to-job vacancy ratio
	thousands		
High school diploma or less			
Second quarter of 2019	566.8	360.7	1.6
Second quarter of 2022	521.6	634.0	0.8
Second quarter of 2025	731.2	287.3	2.5
Trades certificate or diploma			
Second quarter of 2019	104.1	53.3	2.0
Second quarter of 2022	79.3	113.7	0.7
Second quarter of 2025	125.1	68.4	1.8
Other non-university certificates and university certificates below a bachelor's degree			
Second quarter of 2019	220.2	97.5	2.3
Second quarter of 2022	211.7	157.6	1.3
Second quarter of 2025	273.3	102.0	2.7
Bachelor's degree or higher			
Second quarter of 2019	244.0	70.5	3.5
Second quarter of 2022	254.4	123.2	2.1
Second quarter of 2025	422.5	85.9	4.9

Sources: Job Vacancy and Wage Survey (5217), table 14-10-0443-01 and Labour Force Survey (3701), table 14-10-0019-01.

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Morissette, René. 2023. "[Unemployment and job vacancies by education, 2016 to 2022](#)". *Economic and Social Reports*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no 36-28-0001.