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Labour Statistics at a Glance

Job mismatch among core working age immigrants with postsecondary education

by Marton Lovei

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Job mismatch among core working age immigrants with postsecondary education

by **Marton Lovei**

Introduction

Job or skills mismatch—when a worker’s skills, experience, education, or other characteristics do not align with the tasks or requirements of their position—impacts workers, employers, and the overall economy. For workers, this can lead to underemployment, lower wages, reduced job and life satisfaction, and hindered career progression.¹ For employers, skills mismatches can increase turnover and elevate training costs.² On a macroeconomic level, job mismatch is also associated with lower productivity.³ Immigrants are particularly vulnerable to some forms of jobs mismatch—including having to work in a job unrelated to their field of study, and overqualification—due to factors such as language barriers or difficulty transferring credentials.⁴

Using data from the monthly supplement to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), the present article analyzes various measures of job mismatch, focusing particularly on the experiences of recent immigrants—that is, those who had been admitted as permanent residents in the previous five years at the time the data was collected.

What is job mismatch, and how is it measured?

This article uses survey data from the LFS and the monthly supplement to the LFS for September 2024 and September 2025, focusing on core-aged workers (aged 25 to 54) with a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree. The analysis draws on combined data for both periods, and estimates reflect the average of September 2024 and 2025.

In both years, the September supplement to the LFS⁵ asked workers to self-assess their job match with respect to their skills, experience and field of study as well as their overall sense of being over- or under-qualified (Table 1).

Table 1
Job mismatch concepts and survey questions

Concept	Question
Skills match	In your opinion, do you have all the skills you need to perform your duties at your main job or business?
Experience match	How does the work experience usually required to work at your current main job or business compare to the years of work experience you have?
Field of study match	To what extent is your main job or business related to your field of education or training?
Overqualification overall	Overall , considering your education, training and experience, are you over-qualified, adequately qualified or under-qualified for your main job or business?

Source: Labour Market Indicators (5375), September 2024 and 2025.

Based on responses to these questions, four measures were derived, reflecting different self-reported dimensions of overqualification and job mismatch: 1) the proportion of workers with more skills than required for their job; 2) the proportion of workers whose job usually requires less experience; 3) the proportion of workers in jobs not related to their field of study; and 4) the proportion who report being overqualified for their job.

In addition to measures based on respondents’ self-assessment, a fifth measure was derived based on data from the LFS for September 2024 and September 2025: 5) the proportion of workers with a postsecondary diploma or degree who were working in a job that only required a high school diploma or less. This corresponds to a measure

1. Ng (2003), Larochelle-Côté & Hango (2016).
2. Summerfield (2014), International Labour Organization (ILO), 2014.
3. World Economic Forum (2014), McGowan and Andrews (2015).
4. Cornelissen & Turcotte (2020).
5. [Archived - Labour Market Indicators – September 2024](#)

of overeducation used in other studies,⁶ which contrasts workers' highest level of education with the level of education typically required for their current job. Jobs requiring only a high school diploma or less were identified using the NOC TEER (Training, Education, Experience and Responsibility)⁷ taxonomy, a variant of the National Occupational Classification (NOC).

Taken together, these five measures help provide a more comprehensive picture of experiences of job mismatch among recent immigrants with a postsecondary qualification.

Recent immigrants more likely than established immigrants and persons born in Canada to experience job mismatch

In September 2024 and September 2025, among core-aged workers with a postsecondary diploma or degree, immigrants (25.2%) were more likely to report being overqualified for their job overall compared with persons born in Canada (19.1%).

The longer an immigrant had lived in Canada after becoming a permanent resident, the less likely they were to report being overqualified, and recent immigrants were most likely to indicate being overqualified for their job (32.6%). Among established immigrants—persons who had become permanent residents more than 10 years earlier—this proportion was 22.4%, much closer to the share observed among persons born in Canada (19.1%).

Across almost all measures, recent immigrants had higher rates of job mismatch than both established immigrants and persons born in Canada. The only exception was the proportion of workers who reported having more skills than needed in their jobs, which was fairly similar among those born in Canada (29.1%), recent immigrants (30.7%) and established immigrants (28.7%).

The pattern of decreasing levels of job mismatch as landed immigrants spend more time in Canada aligns with previous research showing that the labour market outcomes of immigrants tend to improve as they integrate the Canadian labour market over time or pursue additional studies in Canada.⁸

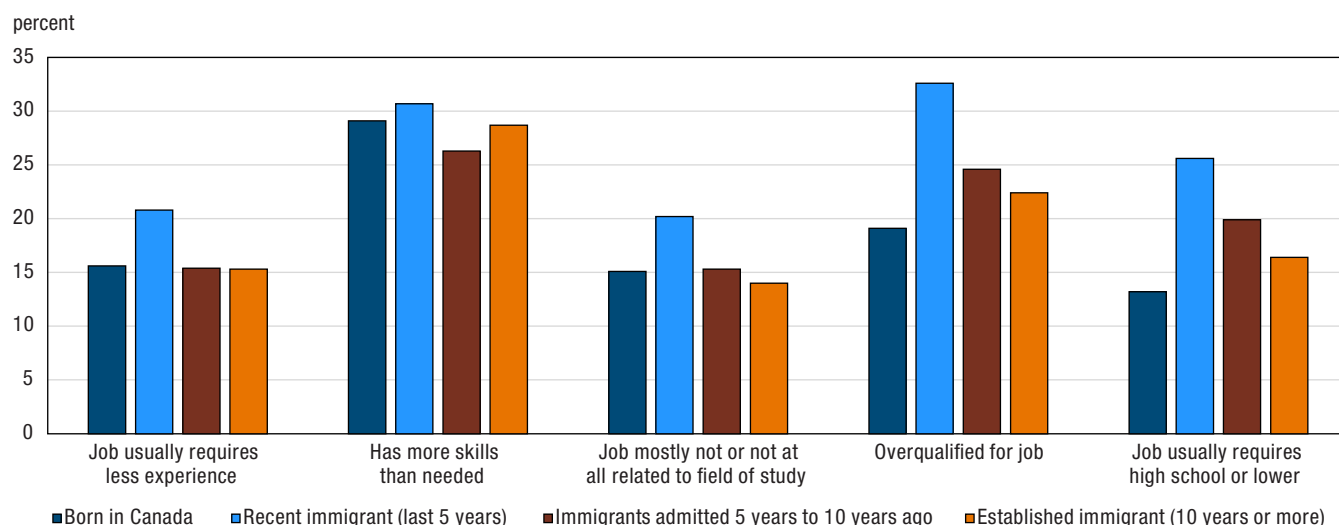
LFS data show that the share of workers with a postsecondary diploma or degree working in a job requiring a high school diploma or less has been higher among recent immigrants compared with persons born in Canada and established immigrants since the beginning of the data series in 2006. This pattern persisted in September 2024 and 2025, but it should be noted that the share of recent immigrants who faced this type of job mismatch was at its lowest level from 2020 to 2025,⁹ coinciding in part with the tight labour market conditions of the post-COVID recovery. For more information on the recent labour market experiences of immigrants see: [Labour market experiences of recent working-age immigrants and non-permanent residents, 2019 to 2024](#).

6. This is the most common measure of job mismatch in the literature, used in articles such as Cornelissen & Turcotte (2020), Frank & Hou (2016) and Galarneau (2021). There are, however, slight variations in its application. For instance, sometimes this measure is focused on only those with a bachelor's degree or higher while in other cases, management occupations are excluded.

7. [Variant of the National Occupational Classification \(NOC\) 2021 Version 1.0 for Analysis by TEER \(Training, Education, Experience and Responsibility\) categories](#)

8. Yssaad & Fields (2018).

9. For example, among recent immigrants, the share of workers with a postsecondary diploma or degree working in a job requiring a high school diploma or less was 23.7% in September 2022-2023, compared with 40.1% in September 2012-2013.

Chart 1**Types of job mismatch among core-aged workers with a postsecondary diploma or degree by immigrant status**

Note: Employed persons aged 25 to 54 with a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree.

Sources: Labour Force Survey (3701), and Labour Market Indicators (5375), September 2024 and 2025, custom tabulation.

Recent immigrants more likely to experience job mismatch than persons born in Canada, even when comparing workers with the same level of education

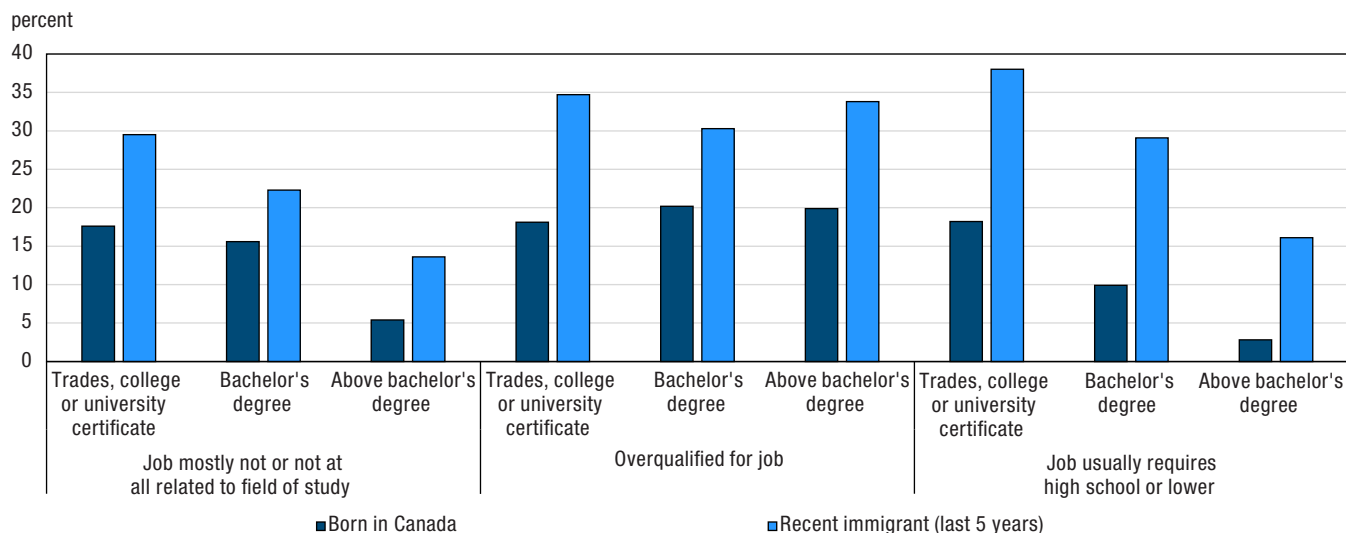
An important factor that shapes the distinct circumstances of recent immigrants relative to the risk of job mismatch is that they are much more likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher compared with persons born in Canada.¹⁰ Among core-aged workers, a higher level of educational attainment was generally associated with an increased likelihood of self-reported overqualification.¹¹

Yet differences between recent immigrants and persons born in Canada persisted when comparing rates of job mismatch among workers with the same level of education. In September 2024 and September 2025, the proportion of core-aged workers with a postsecondary diploma or degree who reported being overqualified for their job was higher for recent immigrants compared to persons born in Canada among those with a university degree above the bachelor's (33.8% vs. 19.9%), with a bachelor's degree (30.3% vs. 20.2%) and with a trades certificate, college diploma or university certificate below the bachelor's (34.7% vs. 18.1%).¹²

10. According to data from the September 2024 and September 2025 LFS, among workers aged 25 to 54 with a postsecondary diploma or degree, 78.9% of recent immigrants had a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 47.7% of those born in Canada. In particular, recent immigrants were much more likely to have a master's or a doctorate than Canadian-born workers (39.1% vs 14.8%). The pattern of higher education among recent immigrants aligns with results from the 2021 Census of Population.

11. For more details, see [Appendix A. Measures of job mismatch among core-aged workers with a postsecondary diploma or degree by educational attainment](#).

12. This pattern holds true when tested with a multivariate model. When looking at the probability of being overqualified overall, recent immigrants were more likely than those born in Canada to report being overqualified, even when controlling for educational attainment and total work experience.

Chart 2**Higher job mismatch rates for recent immigrants across all levels of postsecondary education**

Note: Employed persons aged 25 to 54 with a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree.

Sources: Labour Force Survey (3701), and Labour Market Indicators (5375), September 2024 and 2025, custom tabulation.

Further, while having a bachelor's degree or higher is generally associated with a lower likelihood of working in a job that requires a high school diploma or less, recent immigrants were more likely than their Canadian-born counterparts to be working in such jobs overall, and across all levels of educational attainment. Notably, recent immigrants with a university degree above a bachelor's were about 6 times more likely than those born in Canada to be working in a job requiring only a high school diploma or less (16.1% vs. 2.8%).

Recent immigrants with university degrees from OECD countries less likely to experience education-related job mismatch

Previous research has shown that the country in which immigrants receive their highest postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree has an influence on the likelihood of experiencing job mismatch.^{13, 14} In September 2024 and 2025, among immigrants with a bachelor's degree or higher who completed their highest level of education outside Canada, those who had obtained their degree in countries that were members of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) were less likely to experience education-related job mismatch compared with immigrants who obtained their highest level of education elsewhere. These results suggest that recent immigrants may be facing different barriers related to foreign credential recognition based on where they obtained them.

In September 2024 and 2025, core-aged recent immigrants who had obtained their bachelor's degree or higher in an OECD country were 13.6 percentage points less likely to work in a job that required a high school diploma or less than their counterparts with a bachelor's degree or higher from another country (14.0% vs. 27.6%).

Furthermore, recent immigrants who obtained a bachelor's degree or higher in an OECD country were about as likely as those born in Canada (11.8% vs. 12.4%) to indicate that their job was mostly not, or not at all related to their field of study. In comparison, the figure was higher among recent immigrants whose highest degree was from a non-OECD country (21.3%).

13. Cornelissen & Turcotte (2020).

14. [The Daily — Canada leads the G7 for the most educated workforce, thanks to immigrants, young adults and a strong college sector, but is experiencing significant losses in apprenticeship certificate holders in key trades](#)

Workers with a postsecondary diploma or degree in jobs that only require a high school diploma have lower job satisfaction and are more likely to plan to leave their jobs

In line with previous research,¹⁵ data from the LFS supplements show that among core-aged workers with a postsecondary diploma or degree, working in a job that only requires a high school diploma or less is associated with lower job satisfaction and a higher likelihood of intending to leave one's job.

In October 2025, among core-aged workers with a postsecondary diploma or degree, the proportion who were very satisfied with their main job or business (i.e., who rated their job satisfaction 8, 9 or 10 out of 10) was 52.8% among those working in a job that only required a high school diploma or less, 7.6 percentage points lower than the figure for all core-aged workers with a postsecondary diploma or degree (60.4%).

Furthermore, in January 2025, the proportion of core-aged permanent employees with a postsecondary diploma or degree who were planning to leave their job in the next 12 months was 4.0 percentage points higher among workers in a job that only required a high school diploma or less compared to all workers with a postsecondary diploma or degree (8.6% vs. 4.6%). While planning to leave one's job can be due to personal reasons, such as retirement or returning to school, core-aged employees [tend to be particularly likely to leave for career change or advancement](#).

Among workers with less than 10 years of work experience, recent immigrants are more likely to have more skills than needed for their job than persons born in Canada

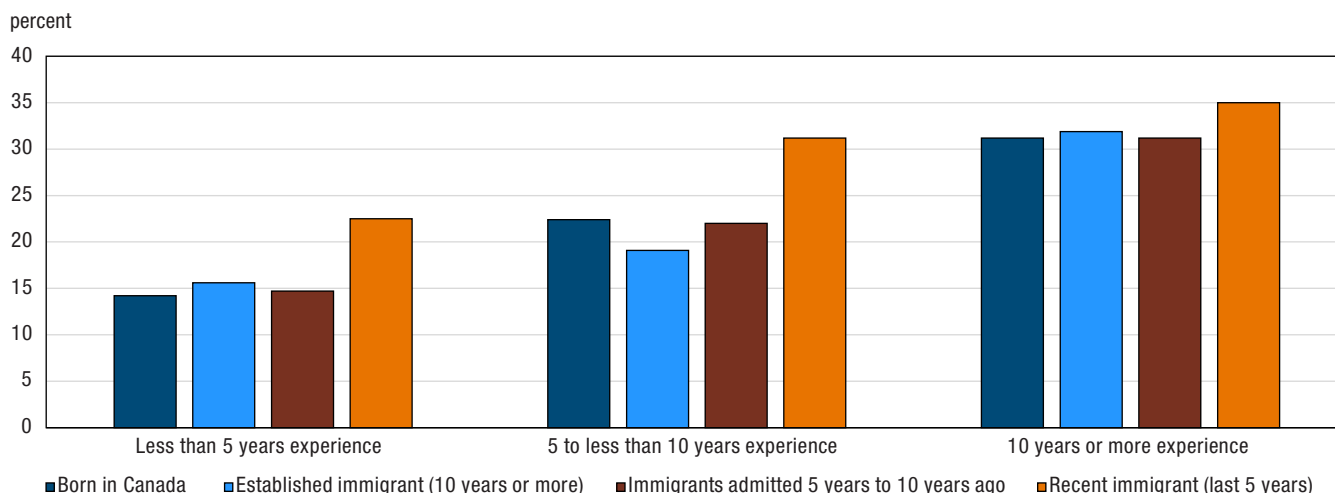
Skills mismatch—having more skills than needed for one's job—was unique among the various measures of job mismatch since recent immigrants were about as likely to report experiencing it as those born in Canada overall. However, this was partially due to lower levels of professional experience among recent immigrants.

Restricting the analysis to workers with less than 10 years of total work experience revealed notable gaps between recent immigrants and those born in Canada. In particular, among core-aged workers with a postsecondary diploma or degree with less than 5 years of work experience, recent immigrants were more likely to report having more skills than needed for their job compared with their Canadian-born counterparts (22.5% vs. 14.2%).

15. See Larochelle-Côté & Hango (2016) and Frank & Hou (2016).

Chart 3

Percentage of core-aged workers with a postsecondary diploma or degree working in a job for which they have more skills than needed, by total work experience and immigration status



Note: Employed persons aged 25 to 54 with a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree.

Sources: Labour Force Survey (3701), and Labour Market Indicators (5375), September 2024 and 2025, custom tabulation.

Conclusion

This article examined job mismatches in the Canadian labour market with a focus on the experiences of recent immigrants. Recent immigrants are uniquely vulnerable to job mismatch, and this remains an important challenge for their economic integration and the efficient utilization of their human capital. Nevertheless, it is important to note that rates of job mismatch decline over time as immigrants become more established in the labour market, even after just five years following their admission as permanent residents.

In September 2024 and September 2025, recent immigrants were more likely to experience job mismatch than persons born in Canada across nearly all measures. This disparity was greater still when looking at recent immigrants with a university degree from a country outside the OECD.

Notably, despite their higher attainment of university education, recent immigrants were much more likely to be in jobs that usually require a high school diploma or less, and a higher proportion of recent immigrants with less than 10 years of work experience were in jobs for which they indicated having more skills than needed.

Appendix A

Table A.1
Measures of job mismatch among core-aged workers with a postsecondary diploma or degree by educational attainment

	Job usually requires less experience	Has more skills than needed	Job mostly not or not at all related to field of study	Overqualified for job	Job usually requires high school or lower
	percent				
Trades certificate or diploma	15.4	28.8	15.1	17.3	18.5
Community college, CEGEP, or equivalent	16.1	28.8	20.1	19.2	23.0
University certificate below bachelor's	17.8	28.1	17.9	23.9	20.5
Bachelor's degree	17.3	28.5	16.6	23.2	14.6
Above bachelor's degree	16.5	31.3	9.7	26.2	8.7

Sources: Labour Force Survey (3701), and Labour Market Indicators (5375), September 2024 and 2025.

Appendix B

Table B.1
Measures of job mismatch among core-aged workers with a postsecondary diploma or degree by total work experience

	Job usually requires less experience	Has more skills than needed	Job mostly not or not at all related to field of study	Overqualified for job	Job usually requires high school or lower
	percent				
Less than 1 year	18.5	17.3	22.6	23.0	30.8
At least 1 year, but less than 5 years	14.7	18.7	19.6	24.6	26.8
At least 5 years, but less than 10 years	14.1	24.4	16.5	21.5	18.7
More than 10 years	17.4	31.7	15.2	21.9	14.3

Sources: Labour Force Survey (3701), and Labour Market Indicators (5375), September 2024 and 2025.

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