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2017 Public Service Employee Survey

Summary report on employees at ISED working in occupational group EC

July 2018



Canada

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Background

Purpose of report

The intent of this report is to provide departments and agencies with the results of the 2017 Public Service Employee Survey (PSES). The report provides information on key people management issues and on current government priorities relating to various aspects of the workplace in your organization. The information will help your organization identify, address and monitor these issues and develop informed action plans for improving people management practices.

Survey history

The PSES is a survey of federal public servants that measures aspects of employee engagement, leadership, the workforce and the workplace. The PSES has been conducted every three years since 1999. In February and March 2017, OCHRO conducted the Public Service Employee Annual Survey (PSEAS), which consisted of a small subset of PSES questions [1].

The 2017 PSES was led by the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO), within the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, in collaboration with Statistics Canada and was conducted over a six 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 for the 2017 survey. Questions were added to examine workplace well-being and compensation-related issues. The 2017 PSES results will continue to support the Federal Public Service Mental Health Strategy and contribute to the Departmental Results Framework.

The 2017 PSES contains 119 questions: 94 opinion questions and 25 demographic questions. Of the 94 opinion questions, 11 questions were new, 6 questions were introduced in the Public Service Employee Annual Survey (PSEAS) that was conducted in February and March 2017, and 77 were repeated from previous iterations of the triennial PSES (77 from the 2014 PSES, 52 from the 2011 PSES and 34 from the 2008 PSES).

1. Results of the 2017 PSEAS are not presented in this report.

Respondent profile

Response rates

The invitation to complete the 2017 PSES 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% [2]. In 2017, 408 employees at ISED working in occupational group EC (hereafter referred to as EC), and 3,586 employees in ISED (hereafter referred to as ISED) responded to the PSES.

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

Overview of analytical approach

This report presents the 2017 PSES results for EC and compares them with those for ISED.

Results in this report are provided as percentages. The totals used to calculate the percentages do not include the responses “Don’t know” and “Not applicable.” The percentages that are provided in this report refer to the following:

- the sum of “Strongly agree” and “Somewhat agree” responses for questions using an agreement scale
- the sum of “Always / Almost always” and “Often” responses for questions using a frequency scale
- the sum of “Very high” and “High” responses for questions using a level scale
- the sum of “To a large extent” and “To a very large extent” using an extent scale
- “Yes” response for yes/no questions
- the selected response for “Mark all that apply” lists

For most questions, the percentages in this report reflect positive results. As such, for these questions high percentages indicate good results. However, for the questions that ask about the sources of negative impact on work quality (Q22) [3], work related stress (Q83 and Q84), the feeling of being emotionally drained (Q85), harassment (Q63) and discrimination (Q75), the percentages reflect negative results. Therefore, for these questions, low percentages indicate good results.

To protect the confidentiality of individuals’ responses, results are aggregated and are suppressed for groups of fewer than 10 respondents. Tables show blank when there are no historical comparisons, or when there is a low respondent count.

Results for questions with a low respondent count are not presented in the report (see the Appendix for details about data confidentiality). Consequently, sections of the report may not appear.

Highlights of results

Comparison with ISED results

This section presents the largest positive and negative differences for EC's results compared with the results for ISED.

In 2017, the largest positive differences between EC's results and the results for ISED are as follows:

- 69% of employees indicated that they have confidence in the senior management of their department or agency (Q41), which is a more positive result than the result for ISED (61%) by 8 percentage points;
- 61% of employees indicated that senior management in their department or agency makes effective and timely decisions (Q42), which is a more positive result than the result for ISED (53%) by 8 percentage points;
- 75% of employees indicated that they have opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect their work (Q17), which is a more positive result than the result for ISED (69%) by 6 percentage points;
- 73% of employees indicated that in their work unit, the process of selecting a person for a position is done fairly (Q27), which is a more positive result than the result for ISED (67%) by 6 percentage points;
- 79% of employees indicated that their department or agency does a good job of raising awareness of mental health in the workplace (Q86), which is a more positive result than the result for ISED (73%) by 6 percentage points.

The largest negative differences between EC and ISED in 2017 are as follows:

- 58% of employees indicated that they receive the support they need from senior management to address unsatisfactory performance issues in their work unit (Q39), which is a more negative result than the result for ISED (71%) by 13 percentage points;
- 36% of employees indicated that the quality of their work suffers because of unreasonable deadlines (Q22d), which is a more negative result than the result for ISED (24%) by 12 percentage points;
- 42% of employees indicated that they are satisfied with how matters related to harassment are resolved in their department or agency (Q69), which is a more negative result than the result for ISED (52%) by 10 percentage points;
- 38% of employees indicated that the union-management consultation process has been effective in addressing issues in their workplace (Q72), which is a more negative result than the result for ISED (48%) by 10 percentage points;
- 63% of employees indicated that they get the training they need to do their job (Q5), which is a more negative result than the result for ISED (72%) by 9 percentage points.

Results

Employee engagement

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
11. I get a sense of satisfaction from my work.	79	75
15. Overall, I feel valued at work.	70	68
16. I am proud of the work that I do.	84	83
20. Overall, I like my job.	78	79
58. I would recommend my department or agency as a great place to work.	72	72
59. I am satisfied with my department or agency.	77	73
60. I would prefer to remain with my department or agency, even if a comparable job was available elsewhere in the federal public service.	55	61

In the PSES, employee engagement is assessed through questions that gauge job satisfaction, commitment, and satisfaction with one's organization. The 2017 PSES contains seven questions related to employee engagement.

For EC, 78% of employees agreed that they like their job (Q20), which is similar to ISED (79%). In 2017, 79% of EC employees felt that they get a sense of satisfaction from their work (Q11), which is higher than in ISED (75%). The 2017 PSES results show that 84% of EC employees agreed that they are proud of the work they do (Q16), which is similar to ISED (83%). For EC, 70% of employees indicated that they feel valued at work (Q15), which is slightly higher compared with ISED (68%).

In addition, 77% of EC employees agreed that they are satisfied with their organization (Q59), which is higher than in ISED (73%). For EC, 72% of employees would recommend their organization as a great place to work (Q58), which is the same as in ISED (72%). Lastly, 55% of EC's employees felt that they would prefer to remain with their department even if a comparable job was available elsewhere in the federal public service (Q60), which is much lower compared with ISED (61%).

Leadership

In the 2017 PSES, the questions about leadership were divided into two groups: questions pertaining to the respondent's immediate supervisor, and questions pertaining to senior management.

Immediate supervisor

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	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
31. I can count on my immediate supervisor to keep his or her promises.	82	81
32. My immediate supervisor keeps me informed about the issues affecting my work.	77	80
37. I am satisfied with the quality of supervision I receive.	78	81

In 2017, 78% of EC employees agreed they are satisfied with the quality of supervision they receive (Q37), which is lower than in ISED (81%).

For EC, 82% of employees believed they could count on their immediate supervisor to keep his or her promises (Q31), which is similar to ISED (81%). In 2017, 77% of EC indicated that their immediate supervisor keeps them informed about the issues affecting their work (Q32), which is lower than in ISED (80%).

Senior management

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
40. Senior managers in my department or agency lead by example in ethical behaviour.	70	67
41. I have confidence in the senior management of my department or agency.	69	61
42. Senior management in my department or agency makes effective and timely decisions.	61	53
43. I believe that senior management will try to resolve concerns raised in this survey.	54	55
44. Essential information flows effectively from senior management to staff.	52	55

The survey shows that 69% of EC employees reported that they have confidence in the senior management of their organization (Q41), which is much higher compared with ISED (61%). Additionally, 54% of EC employees believed that their senior management will try to resolve concerns raised in this survey (Q43), which is similar to ISED (55%). Additionally, 70% of EC employees felt that senior managers in their organization lead by example in terms of ethical behaviour (Q40), which is higher than in ISED (67%).

In 2017, 61% of EC employees indicated that their senior management makes effective and timely decisions (Q42), which is much higher compared with ISED (53%). In terms of communication, 52% of EC employees agreed that essential information flows effectively from senior management to staff (Q44), which is lower than in ISED (55%).

Workforce

Employees were asked 22 questions about the workforce. The questions covered 6 sub-themes: performance management, staffing, job fit and development, empowerment, work-life balance and workload, and retention.

Performance management

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
12. I receive meaningful recognition for work well done.	71	66
13. I have clear work objectives.	67	73
28. In my work unit, unsatisfactory employee performance is managed effectively.	42	47
30. I receive useful feedback from my immediate supervisor on my job performance.	76	77
39. I receive the support I need from senior management to address unsatisfactory performance issues in my work unit.	58	71

Performance management is examined from two angles: performance management of the individual (setting objectives, providing feedback and recognition) and the management of unsatisfactory employee performance.

For EC, 67% of employees indicated that they have clear work objectives (Q13), which is much lower compared with ISED (73%). In 2017, 76% of EC employees reported that they receive useful feedback from their immediate supervisor on their job performance (Q30), which is similar to ISED (77%). When asked whether they receive meaningful recognition for work well done (Q12), 71% of EC employees agreed in 2017, which is higher than in ISED (66%).

In 2017, 42% of EC employees felt that unsatisfactory employee performance is managed effectively in their work unit (Q28), which is lower than in ISED (47%). It is also worth noting that 25% of EC employees responded “Don’t know” to Q28, compared with 19% of ISED.

Asked of supervisors only, 58% of EC supervisors believed that they receive the support they need from senior management to address unsatisfactory performance issues in their work unit (Q39), which is much lower compared with ISED (71%).

Staffing

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
26. In my work unit, I believe that we hire people who can do the job.	78	75
27. In my work unit, the process of selecting a person for a position is done fairly.	73	67

For EC, 78% of employees indicated that they believe their work unit hires people who can do the job (Q26), which is higher than in ISED (75%). In 2017, 73% of EC employees believed that the process of selecting a person for a position is done fairly in their work unit (Q27), which is much higher compared with ISED (67%).

Job fit and development

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
5. I get the training I need to do my job.	63	72
6. My job is a good fit with my interests.	82	78
7. My job is a good fit with my skills.	85	83
52. My department or agency does a good job of supporting employee career development.	64	65
53. I believe I have opportunities for promotion within my department or agency, given my education, skills and experience.	53	50

In 2017, 82% of EC employees agreed that their job is a good fit with their interests (Q6), which is higher than in ISED (78%). For EC, 85% of employees felt that their job is a good fit with their skills (Q7), which is slightly higher compared with ISED (83%).

Additionally, 63% of EC employees believed they get the training they need to do their job (Q5), which is much lower compared with ISED (72%).

In terms of career development, 64% of EC employees felt that their organization does a good job of supporting career development (Q52), which is similar to ISED (65%). When asked whether they believe they have opportunities for promotion within their organization, given their education, skills and experience (Q53), 53% of EC employees agreed in 2017, which is higher than in ISED (50%).

Empowerment

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
17. I have opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect my work.	75	69
18. I am encouraged to be innovative or to take initiative in my work.	67	68
19. I have support at work to provide a high level of service.	72	72
54. I feel I would be supported by my department or agency if I proposed a new idea.	62	61

For EC, 75% of employees felt that they have opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect their work (Q17), which is much higher compared with ISED (69%). In 2017, 67% of EC employees agreed that they are encouraged to be innovative or to take initiative in their work (Q18), which is similar to ISED (68%). When asked if they felt they would be supported by their organization if they proposed a new idea (Q54), 62% of EC employees agreed, which is similar to ISED (61%).

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Lastly, 72% of EC employees believed they have support at work to provide a high level of service (Q19), which is the same as in ISED (72%).

Work-life balance and workload

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
9. I have support at work to balance my work and personal life.	77	79
10. I feel I can claim overtime compensation (in money or in leave) for the overtime hours that I work.	50	58
21. I can complete my assigned workload during my regular working hours.	74	74
34. Subject to operational requirements, my immediate supervisor supports the use of flexible work arrangements (e.g., flexible hours, compressed workweeks, telework).	74	82

For EC, 74% of employees felt that they can complete their assigned workload during their regular working hours (Q21), which is the same as in ISED (74%). In terms of work-life balance, 77% of EC employees reported that they have support at work to balance their work and personal life (Q9), which is slightly lower compared with ISED (79%). When asked whether their immediate supervisor supports the use of flexible work arrangements (Q34), 74% of EC employees agreed, which is much lower compared with ISED (82%). For EC, 50% of employees felt that they can claim overtime compensation for the overtime hours that they work (Q10), which is much lower compared with ISED (58%).

Retention

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
61. Do you intend to leave your current position in the next two years?	40	28
62 Please indicate your reason for leaving.		
a. To retire	7	15
b. To pursue another position within my department or agency	25	23
c. To pursue a position in another department or agency	53	40
d. To pursue a position outside the federal public service	7	6
e. Due to end of term, casual or student employment	2	8
f. Other	5	8

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In 2017, 40% of EC employees indicated that they intend to leave their current position in the next two years (Q61), which is much higher compared with ISED (28%). Among employees indicating that they intend to leave in the next two years, the following are their reasons for leaving (Q62):

- To retire: 7%, which is much lower compared with ISED (15%).
- To pursue another position within their organization: 25%, which is slightly higher compared with ISED (23%).
- To pursue a position in another department or agency: 53%, which is much higher compared with ISED (40%).
- To pursue a position outside the federal public service: 7%, which is similar to ISED (6%).
- Due to end of term, casual or student employment: 2%, which is much lower compared with ISED (8%).

Workplace

The 2017 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, and labour relations.

Organizational goals

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
14. I know how my work contributes to the achievement of my department's or agency's goals.	79	82
45. My department or agency does a good job of communicating its vision, mission and goals.	74	73

In 2017, 79% of EC employees reported that they know how their work contributes to the achievement of their organization (Q14), which is lower than in ISED (82%). For EC, 74% of employees indicated that their organization does a good job of communicating its vision, mission and goals (Q45), which is similar to ISED (73%).

Organizational performance

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
22. I feel that the quality of my work suffers because of...		
a. constantly changing priorities.	32	32
b. lack of stability in my department or agency.	23	24
c. too many approval stages.	42	41
d. unreasonable deadlines.	36	24
e. having to do the same or more work, but with fewer resources.	33	36
f. high staff turnover.	26	28
g. overly complicated or unnecessary business processes.	33	34

The questions related to organizational performance, which begin “I feel that the quality of my work suffers because of ...,” are framed in such a way that responding in the affirmative indicates a negative situation. The higher the level of affirmative responses, the more negative the results.

When asked whether the quality of their work suffers, the following reasons were cited as occurring “Always/Almost always” or “Often”:

- Constantly changing priorities (Q22a): 32%, which is the same as in ISED (32%).
- Lack of stability in their organization (Q22b): 23%, which is similar to ISED (24%).
- Too many approval stages (Q22c): 42%, which is similar to ISED (41%).
- Unreasonable deadlines (Q22d): 36%, which is much higher compared with ISED (24%).
- Having to do the same or more work, but with fewer resources (Q22e): 33%, which is lower than in ISED (36%).
- High staff turnover (Q22f): 26%, which is slightly lower compared with ISED (28%).
- Overly complicated or unnecessary business processes (Q22g): 33%, which is similar to ISED (34%).

Respectful workplace

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
25. In my work unit, every individual is accepted as an equal member of the team.	76	78
29. In my work unit, individuals behave in a respectful manner.	86	84
55. My department or agency implements activities and practices that support a diverse workplace.	79	79

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	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
56. I think that my department or agency respects individual differences (e.g., culture, work styles, ideas).	78	81
57. Overall, my department or agency treats me with respect.	84	84

For EC, 84% of employees felt that their organization treats them with respect (Q57), which is the same as in ISED (84%). In 2017, 86% of EC employees believed that individuals behave in a respectful manner in their work unit (Q29), which is slightly higher compared with ISED (84%).

In terms of diversity and inclusion, 76% of EC employees believed that every individual in their work unit is accepted as an equal member of the team (Q25), which is slightly lower compared with ISED (78%). In 2017, 78% of EC employees felt that their organization respects individual differences (Q56), which is lower than in ISED (81%). Further, 79% of EC employees indicated that their organization implements activities and practices that support a diverse workplace (Q55), which is the same as in ISED (79%).

Ethical workplace

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
24. I am satisfied with how interpersonal issues are resolved in my work unit.	69	68
46. Employees in my department or agency carry out their duties in the public's interest.	85	83
47. 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.	69	71
48. Discussions about values and ethics occur in my workplace.	57	57
49. I feel I can initiate a formal recourse process (e.g., grievance, complaint, appeal) without fear of reprisal.	38	44

When asked whether discussions about values and ethics occur in their workplace (Q48), 57% of EC employees agreed, which is the same as in ISED (57%). For EC, 85% of employees felt that employees in their organization carry out their duties in the public's interest (Q46), which is slightly higher compared with ISED (83%).

In 2017, 69% of EC employees indicated that they are satisfied with how interpersonal issues are resolved in their work unit (Q24), which is similar to ISED (68%).

For EC, 69% 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), which is slightly lower compared with ISED (71%). When asked whether they feel they can initiate a formal recourse process without fear of reprisal (Q49), 38% of EC employees agreed, which is much lower compared with ISED (44%). It is also worth noting that 16% of EC employees responded "Don't know" to Q49, compared with 13% of ISED.

Physical environment and equipment

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
1. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my job.	82	84
4. My physical environment (e.g., office, workspace) is suitable for my job requirements.	73	79
8. I have the information, training and equipment I need to ensure my health and safety at work.	85	86

For EC, 82% of employees reported having the materials and equipment they need to do their job (Q1), which is slightly lower compared with ISED (84%). In 2017, 85% of EC employees indicated that they have the information, training and equipment needed to ensure their health and safety at work (Q8), which is similar to ISED (86%). Lastly, 73% of employees felt that their physical environment is suitable for their job requirements (Q4), which is much lower compared with ISED (79%).

Use of official languages

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
2. The material and tools provided for my work, including software and other automated tools, are available in the official language of my choice.	94	91
3. When I prepare written materials, including email, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	83	84
23. During meetings in my work unit, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	89	87
33. When I communicate with my immediate supervisor, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	91	94
50. During meetings in my department or agency, the chairpersons create an environment where I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	84	83
51. The training offered by my department or agency is available in the official language of my choice.	93	92

In the following situations, EC employees felt free to use the first official language of their choice:

- When preparing written materials (Q3): 83%, which is similar to ISED (84%).
- When communicating with their immediate supervisor (Q33): 91%, which is lower than in ISED (94%).
- During meetings in their work unit (Q23): 89%, which is slightly higher compared with ISED (87%).

Additionally, 84% of EC 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), which is similar to ISED (83%).

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

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- Materials and tools for their work (Q2): 94%, which is higher than in ISED (91%).
- Training offered by their organization (Q51): 93%, which is similar to ISED (92%).

Harassment

For EC, 20% of employees indicated that they have been the victim of harassment on the job in the past two years (Q63), which is higher than in ISED (16%).

Sources of harassment

Among the 20% of EC employees who indicated they have been the victim of harassment, the following were the most frequently reported sources of harassment (Q64):

- Individuals with authority over me: 75%, which is higher than in ISED (72%).
- Co-workers: 35%, which is lower than in ISED (40%).
- Individuals from other departments or agencies: 7%, which is higher than in ISED (3%).
- Individuals working for me: 6%, which is the same as in ISED (6%).

Nature of harassment

Among the 20% of EC employees who indicated that they have been the victim of harassment, the following types of harassment were the most prevalent (Q65):

- Offensive remark: 53%, which is similar to ISED (54%).
- Aggressive behaviour: 51%, which is much higher compared with ISED (41%).
- Excessive control: 51%, which is much higher compared with ISED (43%).
- Unfair treatment: 50%, which is the same as in ISED (50%).
- Being excluded or being ignored: 40%, which is lower than in ISED (43%).

Actions

Among the 20% of EC employees who indicated they have been harassed, the following are the most frequently cited actions (other than filing a grievance or formal complaint) taken to address the harassment (Q66):

- I discussed the matter with my supervisor or a senior manager: 54%, which is slightly higher compared with ISED (52%).
- I discussed the matter with the person(s) from whom I experienced the harassment: 29%, which is higher than in ISED (25%).
- I contacted a human resources advisor in my department or agency: 17%, which is much higher compared with ISED (10%).
- I contacted my union representative: 14%, which is lower than in ISED (17%).
- I used an informal conflict resolution process: 12%, which is the same as in ISED (12%).

Reasons for not filing a grievance or formal complaint

Of EC employees who indicated that they did not file a grievance or formal complaint, the following are the most frequently chosen reasons for not filing a grievance or formal complaint (Q67):

- I did not believe it would make a difference: 64%, which is much higher compared with ISED (55%).
- I was afraid of reprisal (e.g., having limited career advancement, being labelled a troublemaker): 59%, which is much higher compared with ISED (45%).
- I had concerns about the formal complaint process (e.g., confidentiality, how long it would take): 38%, which is much higher compared with ISED (27%).
- I did not think the incident was serious enough: 27%, which is much higher compared with ISED (19%).
- I changed jobs: 26%, which is much higher compared with ISED (15%).

Harassment in current organization

In 2017, a question was added to the PSES to assess the extent to which the incident(s) of harassment occurred in one's current organization.

Among the 20% of EC employees who indicated they have been a victim of harassment on the job in the past two years, 85% indicated that the harassment they have experienced occurred while they were an employee of their current department or agency (Q68).

Harassment - satisfaction with organization	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
69. I am satisfied with how matters related to harassment are resolved in my department or agency.	42	52
70. My department or agency works hard to create a workplace that prevents harassment.	62	66

For EC, 42% of employees agreed that they are satisfied with how matters related to harassment are resolved in their organization (Q69), which is much lower compared with ISED (52%). It is also worth noting that 38% of EC employees responded "Don't know" to Q69, compared with 31% for ISED.

For EC, 62% of employees felt that their organization works hard to create a workplace that prevents harassment (Q70), which is lower than in ISED (66%). It is also worth noting that 18% of EC employees responded "Don't know" to Q70, compared with 14% for ISED.

Discrimination

For EC, 10% of employees indicated that they have been the victim of discrimination on the job in the past two years (Q75), which is slightly higher compared with ISED (8%).

Sources of discrimination

Among the 10% of EC employees who indicated they have been the victim of discrimination, the following were the most frequently reported sources of discrimination (Q76):

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- Individuals with authority over me: 83%, which is the same as in ISED (83%).
- Co-workers: 37%, which is higher than in ISED (34%).

Types of discrimination

Among the 10% of EC employees who indicated that they have been the victim of discrimination, the following types of discrimination were the most prevalent (Q77):

- Age: 49%, which is much higher compared with ISED (35%).
- Sex: 39%, which is much higher compared with ISED (27%).
- Race: 29%, which is higher than in ISED (25%).
- Family status: 22%, which is much higher compared with ISED (15%).
- National or ethnic origin: 20%, which is lower than in ISED (23%).

Actions

Of the 10% of EC employees who indicated they have experienced discrimination, the following are the most common actions (other than filing a grievance or formal complaint) taken to address the discrimination (Q78):

- I discussed the matter with my supervisor or a senior manager: 41%, which is much higher compared with ISED (32%).
- I discussed the matter with the person(s) from whom I experienced the discrimination: 22%, which is much higher compared with ISED (14%).
- I contacted my union representative: 20%, which is higher than in ISED (17%).

Reasons for not filing a grievance or formal complaint

Of EC employees who did not file a grievance or formal complaint, the following are the most frequently chosen reasons for not filing a grievance or formal complaint (Q79):

- I did not believe it would make a difference: 59%, which is similar to ISED (58%).
- I was afraid of reprisal (e.g., having limited career advancement, being labelled a troublemaker): 49%, which is similar to ISED (48%).
- I had concerns about the formal complaint process (e.g., confidentiality, how long it would take): 36%, which is much higher compared with ISED (27%).
- I changed jobs: 18%, which is much higher compared with ISED (10%).
- I did not think the incident was serious enough: 15%, which is higher than in ISED (12%).

Discrimination in current organization

In 2017, a question was added to the PSES to assess the extent to which the incident(s) of discrimination occurred in one's current organization.

Among the 10% of EC employees who indicated they have been a victim of discrimination on the job in the past two years, 88% indicated that the discrimination they have experienced occurred while they were an employee of their current department or agency (Q80).

Discrimination - satisfaction with organization	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
81. I am satisfied with how matters related to discrimination are resolved in my department or agency.	49	57
82. My department or agency works hard to create a workplace that prevents discrimination.	69	73

For EC, 49% of employees agreed that they are satisfied with how matters related to discrimination are resolved in their organization (Q81), which is much lower compared with ISED (57%). It is also worth noting that 47% of EC employees responded “Don’t know” to Q81, compared with 38% for ISED.

For EC, 69% of employees felt that their organization works hard to create a workplace that prevents discrimination (Q82), which is lower than in ISED (73%). It is also worth noting that 22% of EC employees responded “Don’t know” to Q82, compared with 17% for ISED.

Duty to accommodate

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
88. Having carefully read the definition above, have you requested measures to accommodate your needs in the workplace in the last two years?	17	16
89. Were any measures taken to accommodate your needs?	78	79
90. I am satisfied with the measures that were taken to accommodate my needs.	93	87

For EC, 17% of employees reported that they had requested measures to accommodate their needs in the workplace in the last two years (Q88), which is similar to ISED (16%). Among the 17% of EC employees who indicated that they had requested measures of accommodation, 78% noted that measures were taken to accommodate their needs (Q89), which is similar to ISED (79%). Of those EC employees who reported that measures had been taken, 93% felt that they were satisfied with those measures (Q90), which is much higher compared with ISED (87%).

Collective agreements and labour relations

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
71. I am familiar with the provisions of my collective agreement.	77	79
72. The union-management consultation process has been effective in addressing issues in my workplace.	38	48
73. My immediate supervisor understands and respects the provisions of my collective agreement.	74	82
74. Senior managers respect the provisions of my collective agreement.	70	73

Questions pertaining to labour relations have been a part of the PSES since 2002.

For EC, 77% of employees reported that they are familiar with the provisions of their collective agreement (Q71), which is slightly lower compared with ISED (79%). When asked whether the union-management consultation process has been effective in addressing issues in their workplace (Q72), 38% of EC employees agreed, which is much lower compared with ISED (48%). In 2017, 74% of EC employees believed that their immediate supervisor understands and respects the provisions of their collective agreement (Q73), which is much lower compared with ISED (82%). Lastly, 70% of employees felt that senior managers respect the provisions of their collective agreement (Q74), which is lower than in ISED (73%).

Historically, the PSES labour relations questions yield sizeable proportions of “Don’t know” responses in various organizations. For EC, the proportions of employees who responded “Don’t know” to the labour relations questions were as follows:

- I am familiar with the provisions of my collective agreement (Q71): 1% of EC employees responded "Don't know", compared with 2% for ISED.
- The union-management consultation process has been effective in addressing issues in my workplace (Q72): 40% of EC employees responded "Don't know", compared with 28% for ISED.
- My immediate supervisor understands and respects the provisions of my collective agreement (Q73): 13% of EC employees responded "Don't know", compared with 9% for ISED.
- Senior managers respect the provisions of my collective agreement (Q74): 17% of EC employees responded "Don't know", compared with 12% for ISED.

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.”

A psychologically healthy workplace

2017 Public Service Employee Survey - Results for EC

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	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.	80	84
36. My immediate supervisor seems to care about me as a person.	83	84
86. My department or agency does a good job of raising awareness of mental health in the workplace.	79	73
87. I would describe my workplace as being psychologically healthy.	64	63

The survey shows that 64% of EC employees agreed that they would describe their workplace as being psychologically healthy (Q87), which is similar to ISED (63%). When asked if their organization does a good job of raising awareness of mental health in the workplace (Q86), 79% of EC employees agreed, which is much higher compared with ISED (73%).

According to the 2017 PSES results, 80% of EC employees felt that their immediate supervisor creates an environment where they feel free to discuss matters that affect their well-being at work (Q35), which is lower than in ISED (84%). Additionally, 83% of EC's employees indicated that their immediate supervisor seems to care about them as a person (Q36), which is similar to ISED (84%).

For the following questions related to factors causing stress at work and indicators of overall work-related stress, higher percentages represent more negative results.

Work-related stress

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
83. Overall, to what extent do the following factors cause you stress at work?		
a. Pay or other compensation-related issues	31	31
b. Heavy workload	25	25
c. Unreasonable deadlines	25	21
d. Not enough employees to do the work	25	28
e. Overtime or long work hours	16	11
f. Balancing work and personal life	25	18
g. Lack of control or input in decision-making	21	16
h. Competing or constantly changing priorities	22	20
i. Lack of clear expectations	25	18
j. Information overload	12	15
k. Physical work environment	11	8
l. Harassment or discrimination	8	7

2017 Public Service Employee Survey - Results for EC

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
m. Issue(s) with my co-worker(s)	6	6
n. Issue(s) with individual(s) with authority over me	14	11
o. Issue(s) with individual(s) working for me	4	4
p. Issue(s) with other individual(s) (e.g., members of the public, individuals from other departments or agencies)	2	3
q. Lack of job security	5	6
r. Personal issues	6	6
84. Overall, my level of work-related stress is... "High" or "Very high"	18	20
85. After my workday, I feel emotionally drained.	29	26

Work-related stress

For EC, 18% of employees indicated that, overall, their level of work-related stress is “High” or “Very high” (Q84), which is slightly lower compared with ISED (20%).

Further, 29% of EC employees indicated that they “Always/Almost always” or “Often” feel emotionally drained after their workday (Q85), which is higher than in ISED (26%).

Causes of stress at work

For EC, the following causes of stress at work were the most prevalent (Q83):

- Pay or other compensation-related issues: 31%, which is the same as in ISED (31%).
- Balancing work and personal life: 25%, which is much higher compared with ISED (18%).
- Lack of clear expectations: 25%, which is much higher compared with ISED (18%).
- Unreasonable deadlines: 25%, which is higher than in ISED (21%).
- Heavy workload: 25%, which is the same as in ISED (25%).

The 2017 PSES included questions that ask about pay and other compensation issues related to the Phoenix pay system.

Pay or other compensation issues

For EC, 75% of employees indicated that their pay or other compensation has been affected by issues with the Phoenix pay system “To a small extent”, “To a moderate extent”, “To a large extent” or “To a very large extent” (Q91), which is much higher compared with ISED (68%).

Among the 75% of EC employees who indicated that their pay or other compensation has been affected, the following pay or other compensation issues were reported (Q92):

2017 Public Service Employee Survey - Results for EC

- Missing regular pay: 21%, which is slightly higher compared with ISED (19%).
- Underpayment of regular pay: 43%, which is much higher compared with ISED (37%).
- Overpayment of regular pay: 19%, which is higher than in ISED (15%).
- Incorrect or missing pay, overtime pay or other related extra duty pay: 32%, which is much lower compared with ISED (39%).
- Incorrect or missing pay relating to a disability maternity or parental leave: 11%, which is higher than in ISED (7%).
- Other: 40%, which is lower than in ISED (43%).

Of the 75% of EC employees who indicated pay or other compensation issues, the following provides a breakdown of the estimated number of hours that they spent, at work or outside of work, attempting to resolve their pay or other compensation issues (Q93) :

- 0 hours: 2%, which is lower than in ISED (6%).
- 1 - 9 hours: 47%, which is slightly lower compared with ISED (49%).
- 10 – 19 hours: 26%, which is much higher compared with ISED (20%).
- 20 – 29 hours: 11%, which is slightly higher compared with ISED (9%).
- 30 – 39 hours: 3%, which is similar to ISED (4%).
- 40 hours or more: 10%, which is slightly lower compared with ISED (12%).

Of the 75% of EC employees who indicated pay or other compensation issues, the estimated average number of hours spent attempting to resolve these issues was 16.3 hours, which is lower than the average number of hours for ISED (18.3 hours).

Support to resolve pay or other compensation issues

	EC	ISED
	2017 %	2017 %
94. Of those who indicated that their pay or other compensation had been affected from "a small extent" to "a very large extent"...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.	37	39
95. Of those who indicated that their pay or other compensation had been affected from "a small extent" to "a very large extent"...I am satisfied with the support I received from the Pay Centre to help resolve my pay or other compensation issues.	11	14

Among the 75% of EC employees who indicated that their pay or other compensation has been affected by issues with the Phoenix pay system, the following was also reported:

- 37% felt that they were satisfied with the support they received from their organization to help resolve these issues (Q94), which is slightly lower compared with ISED (39%).
- 11% indicated that they were satisfied with the support they received from the Pay Centre to help resolve these issues (Q95), which is lower than in ISED (14%).

Next steps

Acting on PSES results is an opportunity for departments and agencies to take concrete steps to strengthen people management and employee engagement. Organizations should communicate the findings from the 2017 PSES to their employees and work with them and with other stakeholders to identify and implement solutions to address issues raised in the survey.

By being transparent and following through, you demonstrate to your employees that your organization is committed to continuously improving people management and the work environment, which in turn builds employees' trust. When employees can see evidence that their views are being heard and acted upon, they feel encouraged to participate in future surveys because they see that their input makes a difference.

It is up to organizations to determine how best to communicate results and follow-up activities within their organization. Some good practices are as follows:

- **Discuss your organization's results with senior management and share them with employees.** To prepare, your organization can appoint a champion, supported by a survey committee, to help drive activities following the release of the 2017 PSES results. Also, consider establishing a governance structure to help senior management determine how best to engage employees in discussing your organization's results and developing its action plan. Create a communications plan to ensure consistent messaging about the results. Tell employees where they can access the results and how they can participate in dialogue about the results, helping to identify what your organization's follow-up actions should be. Engaging employees in this manner demonstrates that management takes what employees have to say seriously and that everyone needs to be involved to find and implement the best solutions.
- **Foster an open dialogue with employees on your organization's results.** Organizations that are committed to using the survey results in effective and meaningful ways are conveying to employees that their views matter. To help achieve a high level of involvement, using multiple avenues for discussion is recommended, online and in-person. As dialogue proceeds, you can use employee input to validate the issues the results raise, and to prioritize and refine concrete actions to address those issues. You can continue to use workshops and discussion groups with employees to promote a sense of ownership for its implementation.
- **Implement and communicate progress to employees.** Consider highlighting progress made on responding to findings from previous surveys. Let employees know how their participation in engagement activities has contributed to what your organization has achieved since the previous survey, and let them know what your organization plans to do in the future.

Appendix: Methodology and technical notes

The appendix contains the details of the survey methodology and technical notes related to the presentation of the results in this report.

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.

Questionnaire design

The 2017 PSES questionnaire contains 119 questions. To test new 2017 PSES content, 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.

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

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 telephone interview.

Data collection

The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO) contracted Statistics Canada to administer the survey. The 2017 PSES was conducted over six 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. As respondents submitted their completed questionnaires, the data were transferred through Statistics Canada's internal network and then decrypted for processing. Respondents could save their partially completed questionnaire and finish it later.

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

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

Respondents

A total of 86 departments and agencies participated in the 2017 PSES survey. Of the 284,845 employees eligible to participate in the 2017 PSES, 174,544 responded to the survey, for an overall response rate of 61.3%. Of all respondents, 99.3% participated online and 0.7% submitted paper questionnaires.

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

Results

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

- the sum of “Strongly agree” and “Somewhat agree” responses for questions using an agreement scale
- the sum of “Always / Almost always” and “Often” responses for questions using a frequency scale
- the sum of “Very high” and “High” responses for questions using a level scale
- the sum of “To a large extent” and “To a very large extent” using an extent scale
- “Yes” response for yes/no questions
- the selected response for “Mark all that apply” lists

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

Data confidentiality

Under the Statistics Act, Statistics Canada is bound to protect the confidentiality of responses to this survey. 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 groups with fewer than 10 respondents. For questions and sub-questions related to being a victim of harassment or discrimination and for certain questions related to duty to accommodate^[4] an additional suppression rule was applied for groups with fewer than 5 responses for any response category. For these questions, results were suppressed when a count for any response category was 1 to 4.

Suppressed data are not provided in the report text and as are shown as blanks in the report tables.