

***Public Opinion Tracking Survey:
Technical Report***

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Table of Contents

METHODOLOGY	1
Sample Distribution and Margins of Error.....	1
Weighting.....	2
Call Dispositions.....	2
Refusal, Cooperation and Response Rates	3
Formulas for Refusal, Cooperation and Response Rates.....	3
Callback Procedures	4
Ipsos Trend Report Canada.....	4
Demographic Questions.....	4
QUESTIONNAIRES.....	5
Phase 1a (August).....	5
Phase 1b (September 2005).....	11

METHODOLOGY

Ipsos-Reid conducted quantitative research among Canadian adults by telephone on two occasions, August 17-25 and September 13-15, 2005.

Phase 1a, conducted in August, was approximately 15 minutes in length and covered a range of issues of interest to HRSDC, including post secondary education, workforce inclusion and skilled workforce development.

Phase 1b, conducted in September, was approximately 10 minutes in length and focused more specifically on post-secondary education issues. This phase was conducted using the Canadian Ipsos-Reid Express, a weekly omnibus poll.

Phase 1b included several questions asked during Phase 1a. Data corresponding to questions asked in both Phase 1a and 1b were collapsed in order to provide a more robust sample size for regional analysis. In most cases, differences between the results of Phase 1a and Phase 1b were slight, despite the different time of fielding. The few significant differences that occurred have been noted in the report.

Sample Distribution and Margins of Error

The sample distribution and associated margins of error across the major regions of Canada is as follows:

	Phase 1a (Aug.)		Phase 1b (Sept.)		Phase 1 a/b	
	Sample	M.O.E. ¹	Sample	M.O.E.	Sample	M.O.E.
Atlantic Provinces	100	±9.8	77	±11.2	177	±7.4
Quebec	230	±6.5	248	±6.2	478	±4.5
Ontario	335	±5.4	380	±5.0	715	±3.7
Sask./Man.	100	±9.8	68	±11.9	168	±7.6
Alberta	100	±9.8	156	±7.8	256	±6.1
B.C	135	±8.4	134	±8.5	269	±6.0
Total	1,000	±3.1	1063	±3.0	2063	±2.2

¹ M.O.E. stands for margin of error. Margins of error are accurate 19 times out of 20.

Weighting

Slight weights were applied based on region, age and gender to ensure that the results within these key demographic subgroups are reflective of Canada's adult population. In particular, weighting is undertaken to ensure that unweighted data conforms to the 2001 Census proportions indicated below:

	18 - 34		35 - 54		55 +		TOTAL			
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	TOTAL	%
BC	429,635	439,450	617,410	638,455	425,600	487,245	1,472,645	1,565,150	3,037,795	13.2%
Alberta	371,065	362,635	472,770	466,630	257,375	292,135	1,101,210	1,121,600	2,222,810	9.7%
Man/Sask	229,330	229,225	305,120	307,935	221,370	267,320	755,820	804,480	1,560,300	6.8%
Ontario	1,273,995	1,303,245	1,765,390	1,829,415	1,151,745	1,384,460	4,191,130	4,517,120	8,708,250	37.9%
Quebec	802,050	796,065	1,165,590	1,188,320	766,215	954,500	2,733,855	2,938,885	5,672,740	24.7%
Atlantic	245,730	256,945	360,605	375,060	245,860	292,995	852,195	925,000	1,777,195	7.7%
CANADA	3,351,805	3,387,765	4,686,885	4,805,815	3,068,165	3,678,655	11,106,855	11,872,235	22,979,090	100.0%

Call Dispositions

The call dispositions for Phase 1a (August) and Phase 1b (September) of this research are as follows:

	Phase 1a (Aug.)		Phase 1b (Sept.)	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Total Completes	1,000	6.0%	1,063	3.7%
Total Disqualified	130	0.8%	178	0.6%
Total Over Quota	54	0.3%	111	0.4%
Total Terminations	440	2.6%	571	2.0%
Total Refusals	3,485	20.8%	5,318	18.4%
Total Language Barrier	283	1.7%	438	1.5%
Total Callbacks	696	4.2%	1,723	6.0%
Total No Answer	4,598	27.2%	10,381	36.0%
Total Not in Service	6,077	36.5%	9,075	31.4%
Total	16,763	100%	28,858	100%

Refusal, Cooperation and Response Rates

The refusal, cooperation and response rates for phases 1a and 1b are as follows:

	Phase 1a (Aug.)	Phase 1b (Sept.)
Refusal rate	76.8%	81.3%
Cooperation rate	23.2%	18.7%
Response rate*	11.1%	6.7%
* Please note that several factors contribute to response rate, including: time of year survey conducted, length of field window, length of survey and subject matter, among other factors.		

It is worth observing factors impacting the response rates in this research. In our experience, the months of August and September along with the holiday season (December 11 through January 4) suffer from the highest rates of unanswered calls. In addition, abbreviated field windows can play a significant role in driving up the number of unanswered calls.

In addition to a higher proportion of unanswered calls resulting from the time of year and field window, longer surveys and less familiar subject matter may also result in lower response rates.

Despite these factors we have observed a high degree of similarity between the results obtained during Phase 1a and Phase 1b, suggesting the reliability of data gathered during both periods.

Formulas for Refusal, Cooperation and Response Rates

All formulas are based on the call dispositions above.

Refusal rate:

$$\frac{(\text{Total terminations} + \text{Total refusals})}{(\text{Total Completes} + \text{Total Disqualified} + \text{Total Over Quota} + \text{Total Terminations} + \text{Total Refusals})}$$

Cooperation rate:

$$\frac{(\text{Total Completes} + \text{Total Disqualified} + \text{Total Over Quota})}{(\text{Total Completes} + \text{Total Disqualified} + \text{Total Over Quota} + \text{Total Terminations} + \text{Total Refusals})}$$

Response rate:

$$\frac{(\text{Total completes} + \text{Total disqualified} + \text{Total Over Quota})}{(\text{Total Completes} + \text{Total Disqualified} + \text{Total Over Quota} + \text{Total Terminations} + \text{Total Refusals} + \text{Total Language Barrier} + \text{Total No Answer})}$$

Callback Procedures

As per our 2004 National Standing Offer Service Offer, during custom research conducted on behalf of the Government of Canada Ipsos-Reid interviewers are required to make up to eight attempts before disqualifying/replacing an otherwise eligible respondent. That is, seven call attempts will be made if there is no response at a number, or if the specified individual is not available. For each busy signal or no answer, the number is re-dialled after not less than one hour and (if necessary) again on the next interviewing day. In cases where the phone is answered and the eligible respondent is not available to be interviewed at that time, arrangements are made for a more convenient interviewing time. At least six call-backs are made to households with a known eligible respondent until either a refusal or a completed interview is obtained.

Ipsos Trend Report Canada

In addition to the research described, the report for this study also references data from Ipsos Trend Report Canada, a syndicated study of perceptions among the Canadian public published six times annually. These references, from September/October 2005 and January/February 2005, are based on nationwide samples of n=1,000.

Demographic Questions

Common demographic questions were asked in the same way across both Phase 1a and Phase 1b in order to allow equal data comparisons. In Phase 1a, respondents were asked:

- Age;
- Education;
- Employment status;
- Number of children under 18 in household;
- Income; and,
- Gender.

Employment status and the number of children under 18 in household were not asked during Phase 1b.

QUESTIONNAIRES

Phase 1a (August)

[ROTATE Q1 AND 2]

1. In your opinion, how would you rate the opportunity that Canada's labour market provides people in terms of their ability to get good work? Please rate your view on a scale of zero to 10 where zero means there is very little opportunity and 10 means there is a great deal of opportunity.
2. Thinking about Canada's competitiveness in terms of the ability of employers to find or develop the skilled workforce they need, how would you rate the situation in Canada? Please rate your view on a scale of zero to 10 where zero means not at all competitive and 10 means highly competitive.

[ROTATE Q3 AND 4]

3. With respect to Canada's labour market, and people's ability to get good work, what would you describe as Canada's biggest challenge? (DO NOT READ LIST OR PROMPT. PROBE AND RECORD FIRST MENTION.)

Education/skill level / cost of education
Availability of good work / employers don't offer good work
Free trade
Discrimination
Work/life balance
Basic skills: literacy, etc.
Other (Specify: _____)
No others
None

4. Thinking about the ability of employers to find or develop the skilled workforce they need to be competitive, what would you describe as Canada's biggest challenge? (DO NOT READ LIST OR PROMPT. PROBE AND RECORD FIRST MENTION.)

Not enough education of Canadian workers/education too expensive
Mismatch between upcoming skills needs and the education system
Not enough workplace training
Growing need for knowledge workers
Inability to hire people from other provinces or countries
Global competition/ Asia
Brain drain
Insufficient or ineffective planning by employers for future needs
Government regulations, taxes, etc. for employers
Employer recognition of workers' credentials
Other (Specify: _____)

No others
None

5. Who do you feel faces the greatest difficulties in getting good work in Canada? (DO NOT READ LIST OR PROMPT. PROBE AND RECORD FIRST MENTION.)

People with little education
People with no post-secondary education/ college/ university/ trades and technical education
The poor
Immigrants
People in rural areas
Aboriginals
People with disabilities
People who have been laid off
People who work in failing industries (e.g. forestry, manufacturing, agriculture)
People with skills for which there is no demand (e.g. computer programmers)
People moving from one province to another
People with demands on time from family and children
Other (Specify: _____)
No others
None

6. Thinking specifically about education, including elementary, high school and post-secondary education, what do you think is the most important issue in the education system in this country today? (DO NOT READ LIST OR PROMPT. PROBE AND RECORD FIRST MENTION.) Are there any other issues in the education system including elementary, high school and post-secondary education? Are there any others? (DO NOT READ LIST OR PROMPT. ACCEPT ALL MENTIONS)

Poor quality of education (general) (**PROBE FOR SPECIFIC AREA**)
Lack of govt funding/cutbacks/ need more
No jobs/no good jobs for grads
Poor quality of elementary education
Poor quality of high school education
Large class sizes/lack of individual attention
Need more/better fundamentals/reading/ math/science, etc.
Poor quality teaching
High teachers' salaries
Teachers' unions
Poor quality of post secondary/ university/ college education
High tuition fees
High cost of university/ college education
Large class sizes/too crowded
Hard to get accepted/marks have to be too high/ not enough spaces

Hard for rural students
Hard for poor/low-income students
Lack of world-class education in Canada
Need more/better fundamentals/reading/ math/science, etc.
No problems/no other problems
Other (**SPECIFY**) _____
Don't know/ Refuse
None

7. Thinking about the post-secondary education system in Canada, that is university, college, trade, technical and vocational school, and apprenticeship training, how would you rate the system in Canada on a scale of zero to 10, where zero means poor and 10 means excellent?
8. Do people in this country face any difficulties in getting a post-secondary education or attending a post-secondary institution?

Yes
No
DK/NS

[IF Q8=YES, CONTINUE; ELSE SKIP TO Q11]

9. What are the main difficulties that people face in getting a post-secondary education or attending a post-secondary institution? (DO NOT READ LIST OR PROMPT. ACCEPT ALL MENTIONS)

High tuition fees
High cost of living for students attending
Few/not enough loans/grants/scholarships available
High debt from student loans
High entrance requirements
Few spaces available
Lack of family support/assistance
Not enough time
Lack of motivation
Marks not high enough/poorly qualified
Distance from post-secondary education institutions/colleges
Poor quality of teaching at post-secondary institutions
Poor job prospects after post-secondary education
Too much emphasis on university/not enough emphasis on trade, technical, apprenticeships
Too much streaming into university and college rather than trades
Immigrants/foreign students receiving gov't funding to attend post-secondary education
Other (Specify: _____)
None

10. Who do you feel faces the greatest difficulties in getting a post-secondary education in Canada? (DO NOT READ LIST OR PROMPT. PROBE AND RECORD FIRST MENTION.)

- People with poor grades/ can't get accepted
- The poor
- Immigrants
- Those in rural communities
- Aboriginals
- People with disabilities
- People who need to work/ can't take time for education
- People with demands on time from family and children
- Other (Specify: _____)
- No others
- None

11. On a scale of zero to 10 where zero means you are not at all concerned and 10 means you are extremely concerned, how concerned would you say that you are about...? [RANDOMIZE] How about...? [REPEAT AS NEEDED: "Keeping in mind that zero means you are not at all concerned and 10 means you are extremely concerned."]

- People's ability to find good work in Canada
- The ability of employers to find or develop the skilled workforce they need
- The number of people getting post-secondary education
- The ability of people who received vocational or professional training outside Canada to have that training accepted by employers in Canada.
- The ability of people who received vocational or professional training in Canada to have that training accepted by employers nationwide in every province and territory.
- The integration of aboriginal people into the economy
- The integration of disabled people into the economy
- The literacy level of Canadians
- The impact of the aging population on the labour market

12. Do you think that the federal government is paying too much attention, the right amount of attention or not enough attention towards improving...? How about...? [REPEAT AS NEEDED: "Is the federal government paying too much attention, the right amount of attention or not enough attention in this area?"] [RANDOMIZE]

- People's ability to find good work in Canada
- The ability of employers to find or develop the skilled workforce they need
- The number of people getting post-secondary education
- The ability of people with training from outside Canada to have their training accepted by employers in Canada.
- The ability of people to have their training accepted by employers no matter what province it is from.
- The integration of aboriginal people into the economy
- The integration of disabled people into the economy

The literacy level of Canadians
The impact of the aging population on the labour market

13. Do you feel that... will get better, worse or remain about the same over the next 10 years? [RANDOMIZE] How about...? [REPEAT AS NEEDED: "Do you think things will get better, worse or remain about the same in this area over the next 10 years?"] [RANDOMIZE]

People's ability to find good work in Canada
The ability of employers to find or develop the skilled workforce they need
The number of people getting post-secondary education
The ability of people with training from outside Canada to have their training accepted by employers in Canada.
The ability of people to have their training accepted by employers no matter what province it is from.
The integration of aboriginal people into the economy
The integration of disabled people into the economy
The literacy level of Canadians
The impact of the aging population on the labour market

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

I have just a few more questions for statistical purposes.

14. In what year were you born [Record year]

15. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed? [READ LIST]

Grade 8 or less
Some high school
Complete high school
Technical, vocational post-secondary
Some university
Complete university degree
Post graduate degree

16. What is your current employment status? Are you [READ ALL ITEMS + ACCEPT ONE ANSWER ONLY]?

Employed Full-Time for pay on a year-round basis
Employed Full-Time for pay on a part-time basis
Employed Part-Time for pay
Self-Employed
Currently Seeking Work
Homemaker

Student
Disabled
Retired
Other
Don't know/Refused

17. How many children under the age of 18 are in your household?

None
One
Two
Three or More

18. Which of the following categories best describes your total household income? That is, the total income of all persons in your household combined, before taxes, just stop me when I reach your category [READ LIST]?

Under \$10,000
\$10,000 to just under \$20,000
\$20,000 to just under \$30,000
\$30,000 to just under \$40,000
\$40,000 to just under \$50,000
\$50,000 to just under \$60,000
\$60,000 to just under \$70,000
\$70,000 to just under \$80,000
\$80,000 to just under \$100,000
\$100,000 and over
Refused

19. Gender [DO NOT ASK, RECORD MALE/FEMALE]

20. Thank you for your time. If you would like to obtain information related to this survey, you may submit a request under the Access to Information Act. Would you like information on how to do this?

Yes [READ STATEMENT BELOW]
No [THANK AND TERMINATE]

“Instructions for making formal requests are provided in the publication Info Source, which can be found in local Human Resources Centres of Canada (HRCCs) or at the following Internet address, Infosource.gc.ca. When requesting information, please send your request to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, and refer to the title of the survey, “A Departmental Quantitative Tracking Survey on Horizontal Issues.”

Phase 1b (September 2005)

21. Thinking specifically about education, including elementary, high school and post-secondary education, what do you think is the most important issue in the education system in this country today? (DO NOT READ LIST OR PROMPT. PROBE AND RECORD FIRST MENTION.) Are there any other issues in the education system including elementary, high school and post-secondary education? Are there any others? (DO NOT READ LIST OR PROMPT. ACCEPT ALL MENTIONS)

Poor quality of education (general) (PROBE FOR SPECIFIC AREA)
Lack of govt funding/cutbacks/ need more
No jobs/no good jobs for grads
Poor quality of elementary education
Poor quality of high school education
Large class sizes/lack of individual attention
Need more/better fundamentals/reading/ math/science, etc.
Poor quality teaching
High teachers' salaries
Teachers' unions
Poor quality of post secondary/ university/ college education
High tuition fees
High cost of university/ college education
Large class sizes/too crowded
Hard to get accepted/marks have to be too high/ not enough spaces
Hard for rural students
Hard for poor/low-income students
Lack of world-class education in Canada
Need more/better fundamentals/reading/ math/science, etc.
No problems/no other problems
Other (SPECIFY) _____
Don't know/ Refuse
None

22. Thinking about the post-secondary education system in Canada, that is university, college, trade, technical and vocational school, and apprenticeship training, how would you rate the system in Canada on a scale of zero to 10, where zero means poor and 10 means excellent?

23. Do people in this country face any difficulties in getting a post-secondary education or attending a post-secondary institution?

Yes
No
DK/NS

[IF Q3=YES, CONTINUE; ELSE SKIP TO Q6]

24. What are the main difficulties that people face in getting a post-secondary education or attending a post-secondary institution? (DO NOT READ LIST OR PROMPT. ACCEPT ALL MENTIONS)

- High tuition fees
- High cost of living for students attending
- Few/not enough loans/grants/scholarships available
- High debt from student loans
- High entrance requirements
- Few spaces available
- Lack of family support/assistance
- Not enough time
- Lack of motivation
- Marks not high enough/poorly qualified
- Distance from post-secondary education institutions/colleges
- Poor quality of teaching at post-secondary institutions
- Poor job prospects after post-secondary education
- Too much emphasis on university/not enough emphasis on trade, technical, apprenticeships
- Too much streaming into university and college rather than trades
- Immigrants/foreign students receiving gov't funding to attend post-secondary education
- Other (Specify: _____)
- None

25. Who do you feel faces the greatest difficulties in getting a post-secondary education in Canada? (DO NOT READ LIST OR PROMPT. PROBE AND RECORD FIRST MENTION.) Who else faces difficulties in getting a post-secondary education in Canada? (DO NOT READ LIST OR PROMPT. RECORD UP TO TWO OTHER MENTIONS)

- People with poor grades/ can't get accepted
- The poor
- Immigrants
- Those in rural communities
- Aboriginals
- People with disabilities
- People who need to work/ can't take time for education
- People with demands on time from family and children
- Other (Specify: _____)
- No others
- None

26. On a scale of zero to 10 where zero means it is not at all a problem and 10 means it is a big problem, how much of a problem, if any at all, would you consider ...? [RANDOMIZE] How about...? [REPEAT AS NEEDED: "Keeping in mind that zero means it is not at all a problem and 10 means it is a big problem."]

People's ability to find good work in Canada
The ability of employers to find or develop the skilled workforce they need
The number of people getting post-secondary education
The ability of people who received vocational or professional training outside Canada to have that training accepted by employers in Canada.
The ability of people who received vocational or professional training in Canada to have that training accepted by employers nationwide in every province and territory.
The integration of aboriginal people into the economy
The integration of disabled people into the economy
The literacy level of Canadians
The impact of the aging population on the labour market
The number of people getting post-secondary education
The cost of post-secondary education in Canada
Homelessness in Canada
The quality of post-secondary education in Canada
The amount of federal government support for research in universities and colleges to improve the quality of Canada's social, health and business activities.
The quality of teaching in Canada's universities and colleges

27. On a scale of zero to 10 where zero means you are not at all concerned and 10 means you are extremely concerned, how concerned would you say that you are about...? [RANDOMIZE] How about...? [REPEAT AS NEEDED: "Keeping in mind that zero means you are not at all concerned and 10 means you are extremely concerned."]

The number of people getting post-secondary education
The cost of post-secondary education in Canada
Homelessness in Canada
The quality of post-secondary education in Canada
The amount of federal government support for research in universities and colleges to improve the quality of Canada's social, health and business activities.
The quality of teaching in Canada's universities and colleges

28. Do you think that the federal government is paying too much attention, the right amount of attention or not enough attention towards improving...? How about...? [REPEAT AS NEEDED: "Is the federal government paying too much attention, the right amount of attention or not enough attention in this area?"] [RANDOMIZE]

The number of people getting post-secondary education
The cost of post-secondary education in Canada
Homelessness in Canada
The quality of post-secondary education in Canada
The amount of federal government support for research in universities and colleges to improve the quality of Canada's social, health and business activities.
The quality of teaching in Canada's universities and colleges

29. Do you feel that... will get better, worse or remain about the same over the next 10 years? [RANDOMIZE] How about...? [REPEAT AS NEEDED: "Do you think things will get better, worse or remain about the same in this area over the next 10 years?"] [RANDOMIZE]

The number of people getting post-secondary education

The cost of post-secondary education in Canada

Homelessness in Canada

The quality of post-secondary education in Canada

The amount of federal government support for research in universities and colleges to improve the quality of Canada's social, health and business activities.

The quality of teaching in Canada's universities and colleges

30. Which of the following statements comes closer to your view: [ROTATE STATEMENTS]

The provinces should be provided extra public funding by the federal government to improve the post-secondary education system, but should be left to figure out how this money should be spent on their own.

It doesn't matter which level of government is responsible for education; governments should simply improve the post-secondary education system.

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

I have just a few more questions for statistical purposes.

31. In what year were you born [Record year]

32. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed? [READ LIST]

Grade 8 or less

Some high school

Complete high school

Technical, vocational post-secondary

Some university

Complete university degree

Post graduate degree

33. Which of the following categories best describes your total household income? That is, the total income of all persons in your household combined, before taxes, just stop me when I reach your category [READ LIST]?

Under \$10,000

\$10,000 to just under \$20,000

\$20,000 to just under \$30,000

\$30,000 to just under \$40,000

\$40,000 to just under \$50,000
\$50,000 to just under \$60,000
\$60,000 to just under \$70,000
\$70,000 to just under \$80,000
\$80,000 to just under \$100,000
\$100,000 and over
Refused

34. Gender [DO NOT ASK, RECORD MALE/FEMALE]