

**Universities Canada's written submission to the
Science and Research Committee:
Impacts of Pay Gaps Among Faculty at Canadian Universities**

Universities Canada is the voice of Canada's universities, representing public and private not-for-profit universities at home and abroad. Canada's universities – through teaching, research, and community engagement – transform lives, strengthen communities and find solutions to some of the most pressing challenges facing our country and the world. We welcome the opportunity to provide insights into pay gaps among faculty at Canadian universities.

In Canada, the gender pay gap is widespread across sectors. Statistics Canada's intersectional perspective on the Canadian gender wage gap confirmed that the gender wage gap in Canada remains significant. For Canadian-born men and women, the gap sits at 9.2%. That gap is wider for Indigenous women and women who are immigrants.¹

The gender gap narrowed between 2007 and 2022 but remained sizeable. Women from all groups have strengthened their labour market qualifications which contributed to the narrowing of the pay gap. Women's relative improvements in human capital such as education, longer job tenure, and full-time employment played a smaller role in the narrowing of the wage gap than job characteristics. Changes in industry and occupation explained a substantial fraction of the decrease in the gender wage gap between 2007 and 2022.²

The Pay Gap at Canadian Universities

There are substantial, long-term impacts from the gender pay gap for faculty at Canadian universities. This gender pay gap can result from bias in determining starting salaries and subsequent merit pay, differing rates of promotion and the punitive effects of parental and caregiving leave. Focusing solely on pay differences, however, leads people to underestimate the long-term financial consequences of gender inequities as the pay gap also has implications for career progression and pensions.

The gender pay gap for faculty in Canadian universities is significant and persistent. Women professors earn on average 10 per cent (or \$10,500 per

¹ Drolet, M., Mardare Amini, M. (September 21, 2023). Studies on Gender and Intersecting Identities: Intersectional perspective on the Canadian gender wage gap. *Statistics Canada*. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-20-0002/452000022023002-eng.htm>

² Ibid.

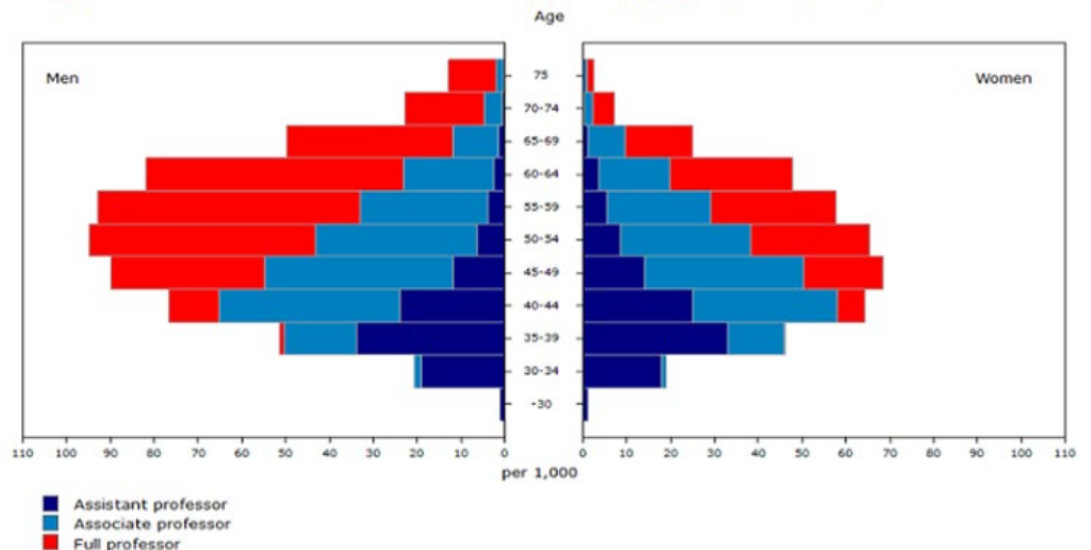
year) less than men for the same work.³ A key component of the gender pay gap in academia is the rate at which female academics are promoted in comparison to their male counterparts.

Statistics Canada’s University and College Academic Staff System (UCASS) survey has helped standardize the collection and national reporting of data by institution on binary gender and salaries of full-time professors, by rank, age, and discipline. This is critical information for undertaking gender pay gap studies.

The latest UCASS survey for the year 2021-2022 found that gender parity at higher ranks has not been achieved. Over the previous 50 years, women have increased their representation among full-time academic teaching staff in Canadian universities. However, men are still overrepresented in higher ranks, especially at the full professor rank. The gap remains the largest among full professors, as 3 in 10 (31.4%) full professors were women in 2021/2022.⁴

The graph in Infographic 1 from the UCASS survey showcases the number of full-time academics, by rank, age group and gender for the year 2021-22.⁵

Infographic 1 – Number of full-time academics, by rank, age group and gender, 2021/2022



³ Penner, M. & Smith-Carrier, T. (July 5th, 2022). Gender pay gap: it’s roughly half-a-million dollars for women professors across a lifetime. *University Affairs*.

⁴ UCASS survey: Number and salaries of full-time teaching staff at Canadian universities, 2021/2022. Statistics Canada. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/230123/dq230123a-eng.pdf?st=vImuVLmV>

⁵ Ibid.



The UCASS survey does not represent academic staff working on contract; however, we know that it's a crucial component to understanding the gender pay gap in the Canadian academy. Estimates of university teachers employed on a short-term contract vary between about 1/3 to 1/2 of all university teachers.⁶ However, most demographic studies on part-time faculty are dated. It is difficult to paint a clear picture of the proportion of part-time faculty at Canadian universities. The long form census data allows for some insight into the demographics of part-time faculty and indicates that women are over-represented in part-time or part-year academic work thus revealing that the gender pay gap is greater than what is revealed through the UCASS⁷. Nonetheless, an expanded UCASS survey could provide us with a fuller picture.

In sum, it appears that men are overrepresented in higher ranks such as full-time professors and tenured positions whereas women are overrepresented in lower ranks or in part-time academic work. This implies that women's pay in academia is, on average, lower than their male counterparts as women face more barriers in accessing higher-paid positions.

As other witnesses have previously highlighted to the committee, while gender pay inequity between men and women is well-documented, data on other dimensions of marginalization, such as race, is lacking. Nonetheless, we know that racialized university educators in Canada experience significant pay disparities, have much lower odds of being tenured and promoted and are under-represented in faculty⁸. Moreover, there is more work to do to understand how variables like gender, racial identity, indigenous identity and disabilities intersect and interact when it comes to pay equity, representation and career advancement in Canadian universities.

Thus, there is a need for broader data collection that includes all other dimensions of diversity to better understand salary inequities so that Canadian universities can better address the issue at hand.

⁶ Pasma, C. Shaker, E. (2018). [Contract U Contract faculty appointments at Canadian universities](#). *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*. P.5
[University Teachers, College Instructors and All Occupations by Designated Group and Work Activity, 2015 and 2016](#).

⁷ CAUT. (2023). [Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Science and Research: Study on pay gaps for faculty at Canadian universities](#). Appendix A: Table 1.

⁸ Wijesingha, R., Ramos, H. (2017). [Human Capital or Cultural Taxation: What Accounts for Differences in Tenure and Promotion of Racialized and Female Faculty?](#) *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education*. Volume 47, No. 3, p.67.



In 2017, university presidents from across Canada made a personal commitment to being active champions of equity, diversity and inclusion *Universities Canada's 2022 Survey on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)* on their campuses, in their communities and across the country. That commitment was made public through Universities Canada's [*Inclusive Excellence Principles*](#). In a series of seven principles, institutions made clear the vital importance of a diversity of identity and thought at our institutions; in providing equity of access and opportunity; identifying and addressing structural barriers to, and providing supports for, the recruitment and retention of senior university leaders, faculty, staff and students, particularly from underrepresented groups; and demonstrating progress over time.

In 2019, Universities Canada initiated a series of ongoing surveys to identify the work being carried out to advance EDI across campuses and to mark progress or identify areas in need of ongoing efforts. A benchmark was established, and a second survey conducted in 2022.

The results of the 2022 EDI survey demonstrate that progress is being made. This is observed in three key areas: structural changes, policies and practices and campus culture. This progress is not only welcome, but also critical. Nevertheless, Universities Canada and its members recognize that gaps remain, and ongoing efforts across all campuses to meet the commitments made through the *Inclusive Excellence Principles* continues to be a priority.

Canada's universities are committed to embedding diversity and inclusion principles into the core of operations and decision-making processes. Some key statistics point towards the changes made since the last survey:

- 89% of institutions have explicit reference to EDI in their strategic plan, up from 77% in 2019.
- 88% have a campus wide definition of EDI, up from 55% in 2019.
- 83% of institutions have an EDI action plan in development or already implemented, up from 70% in 2019.

The survey also highlights the following structural changes:

- 91% of universities surveyed have an EDI task force or are currently developing one, up from 78.5% in 2019.
- Self-identification data shows that university leadership is becoming more diverse.



Identities	2019	2022
Women	49%	53%
Indigenous	2.9%	3.3%
Person with a disability	4.5%	7%
Racialized	8%	15%
2SLGBTQIA+	8%	9.5%

The Importance of Early Investment

While we see improvements in diversifying administrative structures, some groups remain vastly underrepresented in senior leadership, namely people who self-identify as Indigenous or with a disability. To remedy the situation, recruitment and retention of diverse talent from these groups should be prioritized.

As some committee witnesses alluded to, in many institutions there is not enough diversity in the talent pipeline. Faculty renewal is a pressing demand and presents an opportunity to achieve employment and pay equity among academic staff. There needs to be concerted efforts to hire equity-deserving academic staff into full-time, tenure-track positions.

Part of the lack of diversity in the talent pipeline can be explained by the fact that the values of Canada’s flagship graduate scholarship programs have remained stagnant since their creation in 2003. This particularly impacts women with families and other underrepresented groups, who often face additional barriers to education and employment.

Significant increases to basic research grants and research talent programming through Canada’s granting agencies is a critical step in developing a diverse generation of academics and scientists.

Recommendations

We believe that the first step to addressing the gender wage gap across Canada’s universities necessitates closing critical data gaps. The federal government has an important role to play in supporting the collection, analysis and dissemination of data and in supporting a diverse research ecosystem.

Universities Canada recommends that:

1. Statistics Canada publish gender and diversity pay gap data at appropriate aggregate levels.



2. Statistics Canada's UCASS survey is expanded to include data on race, Indigeneity, diverse gender identities, sexual orientation, and disabilities to assess diversity pay gaps and how intersecting identities impact pay.
3. Statistics Canada's UCASS survey include data on part-time faculty.
4. The federal government increase the value of the Canada Graduate Scholarships program by 50% across all categories, double the number of awards and adjust award values regularly for inflation.

