



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeurs et professeurs d'université

Memorandum 25:23

Date: April 9, 2025

To: Presidents and Administrative Officers
Local, Federated and Provincial Associations

From: David Robinson, Executive Director

Re: **Changes to Statistics Canada's UCASS data collected about academic workers**

CAUT has lobbied the Liberal government for several years to expand Statistics Canada's [University and College Academic Staff System \(UCASS\) survey](#) to collect more data about Canada's academic workforce.

UCASS collects data on full-time academic staff working at universities. The data is collected from university administrations and is of a 'census' quality.

In the autumn of 2024, CAUT was told that Statistics Canada's [recent pilot on UCASS expansion](#) had found a path forward that would allow the collection of more substantive equity data about the university workforce. Statistics Canada has informed us that funding has been secured to expand the survey to collect this data.

This is an important win for CAUT and its member associations, and will provide us with better data to identify and address equity gaps and salary anomalies.

Statistics Canada has asked CAUT to notify the academic community of these changes and how your members' personal data is implicated by circulating the attached letter.

If you have any questions regarding CAUT's work to achieve these changes to Statistics Canada's UCASS or questions about the changes, please contact Andrea Stuart, policy officer, at stuart@caut.ca.



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April 7, 2025

Mr. David Robinson
Executive director
Canadian Association of University Teachers
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robinson@caut.ca

RE: Statistics Canada's request for additional information on full-time teaching staff at Canadian universities

Dear Mr. Robinson,

Over the past two years, Statistics Canada has collaborated with stakeholders from several Canadian universities on a feasibility study to support the modernization of the University and College Academic Staff System (UCASS) program. The study concluded that it is feasible to retrieve diversity characteristics of academics by linking newly collected nominal information — such as first name, last name, and date of birth—to the Census of Population. This new approach will enable Statistics Canada and universities to develop a comprehensive portrait of diversity and representation in academia. The resulting insights will help inform the equitable distribution of research funds and meet the data needs of key postsecondary education stakeholders.

Starting in October 2025, Statistics Canada will begin collecting this information for full-time teaching staff from all universities as part of FT-UCASS. In accordance with subsections 8(2) and 8(3) of the *Statistics Act*, Statistics Canada has notified the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry of this new request, and published the following request for information ([Link](#)).

All administrative data collected by Statistics Canada are subject to rigorous privacy and confidentiality standards as mandated by the *Statistics Act*. This means the information is strictly protected and completely anonymized, ensuring that published data cannot be linked to any individual or household. That is not just our promise — it is the law.

Attached to this letter is an appendix that provides answers to frequently asked questions.

Canada

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We kindly seek your support in this initiative and would appreciate your collaboration in facilitating this data collection effort from your members' institutions. If you have any questions or concerns, we would be happy to discuss them further at your convenience.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Matarazzo', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Anthony Matarazzo
Acting Director
Canadian Centre for Education Statistics

Attachment

Appendix – Frequently asked questions

What additional information is being requested as part of FT-UCASS?

Statistics Canada is requesting first name, last name, and date of birth.

Why is this information being requested?

Statistics Canada requires this information to create and publish statistics on diverse populations within Canadian academia. The information will help universities track representation, inform equitable distribution of research funds, and meet data needs of key postsecondary education stakeholders.

Why is collecting personal information such as full names and date of birth important?

Collecting personal information will allow Statistics Canada to link this information with the Census of Population to retrieve diversity information internally at Statistics Canada. This reduces the burden placed on universities to provide new information via the current UCASS collection on full-time academics.

How will this new data be used?

This information is required to perform data linkages and is used for statistical purposes only. Once the data are linked, an anonymized person-level key replaces personal identifiers which are then deleted.

How will the data be collected?

The data will be collected in the same manner as with the yearly submissions to the FT-UCASS. Specifically, three fields will be added at the end of the submission form to minimize the impact on individual submission procedures. Universities will submit the required information electronically in Excel via the secure Electronic File Transfer (EFT) system as per usual.

When will collection take place?

The collection of this new information will start with the 2025/2026 cycle.

Who does this request for additional information apply to?

This information is being requested from all public degree-granting institutions (public universities) in Canada. Each university will receive an official request from the Assistant Chief Statistician, Social, Health and Labour Statistics field. This letter is used to communicate Statistics Canada's official data request and its terms. Once a university has received and acknowledged this letter, then it may begin to share the additional information with Statistics Canada as part of their usual FT-UCASS submission.

Note that it may take over a year before all universities receive their letter and are able to provide this additional information.

Is it mandatory to provide this new data?

While it is mandatory under the [Statistics Act](#) to provide the new data elements outlined in this request we will not be enforcing this requirement.

Our approach is to foster collaboration and trust with our respondents. Statistics Canada recognizes that each institution has their own data governance policies, and we are committed to working with you to achieve this goal while respecting those policies.

How will Statistics Canada safeguard the confidentiality of the information collected?

This administrative data collection is conducted under the authority of the [Statistics Act](#), which ensures that the information provided will be kept confidential. Statistics Canada does not release any information that could identify individuals. For more information on how Statistics Canada is keeping information private, secure and confidential, please visit our [Trust Centre](#).

Additionally, Statistics Canada has submitted in 2022 a [Request for Information](#) (RFI) and conducted a [Supplement to Statistics Canada's Privacy Impact Assessment](#) (SPIA) which are available on the Statistics Canada website.

Who will have access to the additional data?

Only a very limited number of Statistics Canada employees will have access to the additional data. Access is granted on a need-to-know basis to employees working on the FT-UCASS data production.

Will the results of the expanded data collection be shared? If so, with who?

Once the data is processed and validated, Statistics Canada will share an individual aggregated report with each university for their review and approval. Each report is vetted for confidentiality to prevent disclosure. Microdata (information pertaining to one individual) resulting from the data linkage are never shared.

Will this data be made public?

Yes, this aggregate data will be made public. However, the official dissemination strategy will be determined once the results have been validated and analyzed. Additional consultations with universities and stakeholders may be conducted to further clarify data needs. The release of new data tables and insights in the first year of implementation will depend on the number of participating institutions.

Why is FT-UCASS expanding to include this additional information?

The expansion of FT-UCASS was driven by the need to address data gaps in both content and coverage related to academic staff in Canadian universities. Over the past few years, Statistics Canada conducted a feasibility study in collaboration with eight universities across the country.

The study found that collecting nominal information on full-time academic staff is the most viable approach to producing and publishing diversity statistics on academic staff. While universities collect diversity characteristics independently, accessing this information remains challenging due to legal and technical constraints.

The study also confirmed the feasibility of collecting administrative data on contract teachers; however, further work is required to standardize definitions and measurement methods. The advancement of this project depends on securing sponsor interest, which has not yet been confirmed.

Why are statistics related to diverse populations important?

Publishing statistics on diverse populations (racialized population groups, Indigenous identity, and self-reported disability) within Canadian academia can:

- help inform governments, non-government organizations and society's efforts to address systemic racism, ableism, and gender gaps—including the power gaps between men and women—and bring fairness and inclusion considerations into decision making.
- contribute to a better understanding of the employment environment in Canadian universities including the distribution of research funds among employment equity and equity-seeking groups.
- enable postsecondary institutions to measure progress against the representation of employment equity and equity-seeking groups in the general population. This would also fulfill a growing demand for information on sociocultural characteristics of the Canadian academic community.

Who are the stakeholders in the UCASS program?

The stakeholders are:

- Dimensions: EDI Canada's team (based in NSERC)
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED)
- the three granting agencies:
 - Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC)
 - Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)
 - Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)
- the Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI)