

Statistics Canada, Collecting Data on University and College Academic Staff - Consultation Document

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INTRODUCTION

With the reinstatement of the FT-UCASS (*Full-time: University and College Academic Staff System*) survey by Statistics Canada in September 2016, the importance of having information on university academic teaching staff was highlighted. The primary focus of FT-UCASS has always been on university academic teaching staff and selected characteristics that describe this group. However, the academic environment has undergone significant changes since the last major redesign of UCASS. The increased use of part-time and short-term contract instructors as well as an aging academic workforce has significantly altered the academic teaching environment and the career trajectories of academics entering the university teaching profession. Colleges have also become key elements of the Canadian postsecondary landscape and are offering degree programs. These represent new information needs that cannot be answered solely with the FT-UCASS.

Although efforts by Statistics Canada, were made in the 1990's to collect information on university part-time and college faculty, they were not successful. In 2012, when the FT-UCASS survey was cancelled, the absence of information on part-time and college was seen as an important data gap.

Therefore, along with the re-instatement of the FT-UCASS survey, the scope of the UCASS project has been expanded to include part-time university academic teaching staff, the teaching staff in the college sector, and as well revisiting the content of the FT-UCASS.

“INFORMAL ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN”

Following the reinstatement of the survey in September 2016, the UCASS project team met with various stakeholder organizations, including government, institutional, and non-governmental organizations involved in postsecondary education at both the college and the university level. These meetings were largely informal, with the objectives being to listen, share ideas and respond to questions and concerns. Also, a literature review was prepared to further understand sector issues and to identify policy and research questions. This work has formed the basis of this document.

MEASURING THE TEACHING UNIVERSE

Since its inception, FT-UCASS has had university academic teaching staff as its main population of interest. Therefore, data collection has excluded administrators who are responsible solely for university administration, administrative assistants within faculties, non-academic support staff in faculties and other university departments, graduate teaching assistants, markers, demonstrators, lab assistants, postdoctoral fellows and researchers without academic rank or whose salary scales are different from teaching staff.

An important question is whether by its very nature this approach places limits on collection that are missing important changes in the postsecondary environment and the nature of postsecondary teaching. Your thoughts on this are welcome and are sure to be part of the discussion as work on the survey moves forward. However, as a starting point for discussion, this consultation document will assume that academic teaching staff will remain the main focus of collection of UCASS.

From a teaching perspective, the survey population is defined as:

All persons who have been employed and/or contracted to teach a credit program(s) or course (s). Excluded are those teaching staff who spend the majority of their time teaching non-credit courses, such as general interest courses or continuing education courses that do not directly lead to or contribute to a formal degree, diploma or certificate. Also excluded are administrators solely responsible for administration (e.g. president, vice-president, registrar, comptroller, etc.), administrative assistants within faculties/departments, librarians, graduate teaching assistants, markers, demonstrators, lab assistants and postdoctoral fellows or visiting students.

Do you feel this definition of the survey population is adequate to meet your information needs with respect to a survey on academic teaching staff (Yes or No)? Are there other types of exclusions that are more applicable to colleges? What about trades and apprenticeship instructors in colleges? How would you define the survey population differently? Why?

Yes

No

Additional Comments:

This definition is not entirely adequate with respect to roles and responsibilities at Mount Royal University. Notes: (1) for clarity, the list of excluded administrators should explicitly include deans and associate vice-presidents; (2) academic librarians and archivists are designated as members of the academic staff, as they are at many universities, and they are covered under our Collective agreement – they teach, conduct research and should be within the scope of the UCASS survey; (3) the same is true of student counsellors, who may teach and conduct research, and who should be included explicitly; (4) the same is true of “laboratory instructors” who prepare, teach and mark, without assistance, officially-scheduled lab components of courses

that include this type of instruction – these are members of the academic staff and are not the same as graduate teaching assistants.

TERMINOLOGY USED IN THIS CONSULTATION

UCASS: University and College Academic Staff System. UCASS refers to the program of data collection on university academic teaching staff. The term *college* in the title is a reference to degree-granting colleges that were more common when the survey began in 1937 and does not refer to modern day colleges. Through the life of the survey, data collection has been largely limited to full time academic staff and the survey is frequently referred to as **FT-UCASS**. The concept of part-time collection is generally referred to as **PT-UCASS**.

Part-time academic teaching staff: In the context of this document, the underlying assumption is that these are persons who are employed/contracted to teach students but are excluded from the FT-UCASS coverage. The nature of these positions can vary and depending upon the institution can have a variety of names: e.g., casual contracts, term contracts, temporary contracts, short-term employment contracts, adjunct professors, lecturer, sessional, permanent part-time positions, etc. Sometimes the same names can apply to completely different hiring arrangements depending upon the institutions and can change over time.

College vs. University: UCASS collects data on university staff at the *institution* level. While universities included in the UCASS collection are already defined, the inclusion of colleges is new and thus needs to be defined. In this document, *college* is meant to include colleges, institutes, cégeps and polytechnics.

In Canada, colleges and universities are institutions that are established pursuant to provincial/territorial statute. At the program level, some colleges are granted authority to offer degree programs and universities can also offer short postsecondary programs below the degree level. For the purpose of UCASS data collection and this consultation document “university” and “college” refer to the *type of institution* which is reporting, and not the *type of programs* their staff are teaching. As well, the scope of UCASS and of a proposed survey on college teaching staff is limited to universities and colleges that are funded by a provincial ministry of Education (public universities and colleges). In Canada, this covers most university institutions and colleges. Excluded are those institutions that are funded by a provincial or federal ministry other than an education ministry. Privately operated career institutes, vocational colleges, etc. are not included in the scope of this survey; although, it is recognized that at a staffing level there could be arrangements that result in some crossing over between public institutions and private organizations

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THIS CONSULTATION

FT-UCASS data help governments, universities, researchers, policy analysts and the public understand how the university teaching environment is changing. The data contribute to the understanding of salary trends in the university academic sector and provide important information to institutions and unions for collective bargaining. The data are used as an input for producing Statistics Canada’s research and development expenditure estimates, an input into Canada’s System of National Accounts. The data are also used in system-wide studies of employment patterns, gender-based analyses and studies on the aging of academic teaching staff. They also have implications for workforce renewal, projections of demand, and international comparative statistics on postsecondary academic staff. At

Statistics Canada, the UCASS data complement and combine with information from other surveys and programs to provide broader insights into the education sector, the labour market and Canada's economy and society.

The purpose of this consultation document is to obtain your general feedback on what you consider the scope, content, and collection model for academic teaching staff data in colleges and universities should be. This document is intended to be thought provoking and to get people thinking creatively and realistically about UCASS. While certain assumptions have been made about UCASS within this consultation document to maintain consistency and clarity, you are encouraged to not limit your thinking to the constraints imposed by these assumptions and to consider alternative perspectives if you feel they would enhance the UCASS program. Your responses to this document will be consolidated and synthesized and will form the basis of country-wide face-to-face discussions with postsecondary stakeholders. These in-depth discussions will, in turn, form the basis of a redesign of FT-UCASS as well as the development of collection strategies on part-time staff and for colleges.

With this consultation document, Statistics Canada is seeking input from you on the following topics. Please note that these are not mutually exclusive and will overlap:

- Mode(s) of data collection
- Collecting academic staffing data from Colleges.
- Collecting data on part-time academic teaching staff in both universities and colleges
- Collecting equity data relating to academic teaching staff
- Collecting data on workload
- Other information needs
- Completing this consultation document

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability but do not feel obliged to answer any that you feel you cannot comment on. Please note that while some questions might more appropriately pertain to specific stakeholders, or might more accurately reflect institutional contexts that are different from what you are familiar with, we are seeking everyone's point of view and welcome any constructive opinion and perspective on any of the questions.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

College, University, and Part-time: Different needs, different collection modes?

While some similarities exist between colleges and universities in Canada, in large part, the college academic milieu and structure of the college employment system are still different from the traditional university one. The full-time university academic system is oriented around academic credentialing, rank, and tenure. College academic staffing on the other hand, combines a mix of education and occupational credentials and applied employment experience.

Given these different employment environments and the differing information needs associated with them, it might not be possible to integrate them into a single data collection model.

One approach that could be taken would be to create four distinct sets of data requirements that are institution based:

- **FT-UCASS** – Collection of data on full-time university academic staff (the existing survey)
- **PT-UCASS** – Collection of data on teaching staff who are out of scope of the FT- UCASS collection and who primarily comprise part-time staff (new).
- **FT-COLLEGE** – Collection of data on full-time college academic staff (new)
- **PT-COLLEGE**– Collection of data on teaching staff who are out of scope of the FT-College collection and who primarily comprise part-time staff (new)

A. Do you have comments or observations regarding these four modes of data collection? For example, are there any other considerations? Or would you recommend a different approach to collection?

We prefer the term “contract academic staff” instead of “part-time”. This change has been made in our Collective Agreement, and it is in common usage throughout much of Canada including by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT). Note that many “part-time” faculty effectively teach the equivalent of full-time teaching workloads. At Mount Royal University, our Collective Agreement distinguishes between three general categories of academic staff appointment. They are (1) “full-time”, i.e. tenure-track and tenured, meaning that employment is full-time and permanent, but with a pre-tenure probationary period; (2) “limited-term”, i.e. like “full-time” in terms of roles, responsibilities and workload that include teaching, research and academic service, but where appointment has a fixed end date instead of being permanent – this type of appointment is typically used to back-fill leaves of significant length, such as sabbaticals or maternity leaves, or where conditional funding for the position is through a conditional source such as a targeted grant; (3) “contract”, which is often a one-semester, per-course “sessional” contract, or in some cases a “continuing” contract in which a guaranteed minimum teaching workload is specified over a fixed number of semesters, when teaching workload projections suggest that this is feasible. We suggest that either the “part-time” survey modes be designed accordingly to encompass both “contract” and “limited-term” appointment categories, or that the number of modes be expanded to six and that these be addressed separately. Because some contract faculty move onto and off of limited-term appointments as they become available and then end, the former might be preferable. However, note the differences in workload (i.e. limited-term responsibilities are not limited only to teaching, but also include academic service and may also include research expectations.) Note also that a well-designed “part-time” instrument will recognize the distinction between “sessional” and “continuing” contracts, as described above.

B. There are universities that offer college level programs, as well as colleges that offer degree programs. Do you have any suggestions on how the classification and collection of information on academic staff in these “mixed instructional” institutions could be organized?

In Alberta, public post-secondary institution roles and mandates are classified and differentiated according to a six-sector model. The UCASS (“university”) modes are clearly appropriate for the four institutions classified as “Comprehensive Academic and Research Institutions” (CARIs). These four are governed under Part 1 (“Universities”) of Alberta’s Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA). Of the twenty-two remaining public post-secondary institutions, two (Mount Royal University in Calgary and Grant MacEwan University in Edmonton) are classified as “Baccalaureate and Applied Studies Institutions”

(BASIs). Although the BASIs have remained governed under Part 2 (“Colleges and Technical Institutes”) of the PSLA since they underwent significant institutional transformation and were renamed in the previous decade, they are nevertheless better understood as undergraduate universities and not as colleges. Faculty roles and responsibilities at the BASIs are much more clearly aligned with those of the CARI universities, and much less with the colleges, polytechnics and other specialized institutions that comprise the remaining four sectors, and Mount Royal does have a traditional rank and tenure system. We note that Mount Royal University better matches the description of a university in this consultation document, and is not focused primarily on “occupational credentials and applied employment experience”. In summary, we recommend strongly that Alberta’s BASI universities be grouped under the FT-UCASS and PT-UCASS modes.

Defining “part-time”

When the UCASS survey first began in 1937, the primary focus was on full-time university professors. Since then, part-time academic teaching staff have become an important part of the college and university teaching environments, in Canada and elsewhere. Their omission from the UCASS collection had been noted as an important data gap when the survey was cancelled in 2012.

In the “informal environmental scan”, it was suggested that focusing the part-time collection only on teaching was of greatest interest. This approach is also consistent with the historical focus of FT- UCASS which has been on academic teaching staff only. Furthermore, as with FT-UCASS, graduate teaching assistants and postdoctoral fellows, should be excluded from scope.

A. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed scope of part-time collection as described above? Please explain.

Agree

Disagree

Additional Comments:

B. Are you able to clearly differentiate part time employment arrangements for teaching credit courses from other types of activities (e.g., non-credit offerings, research, lab assistants, etc.)?

Yes

No

If yes, please specify:

The variety of appointment categories, as laid out in our Collective Agreement, differentiate these arrangements formally. The University tracks this information (as does the Faculty Association), and so we expect the University should be able to answer “yes” to this question.

C. Do you foresee any challenges with the collection and reporting of data on part-time academic teaching contracts to Statistics Canada?

Yes

No

If yes, please specify:

D. A single contract teacher may have multiple contracts and/or teach multiple course/credit offerings within the same year. In your view, what is the most appropriate measure(s) to use to capture the teaching activity done by part-time academic staff?

Please specify:

We recommend that all of the following be used: (1) number of officially-scheduled contact hours regardless of instructional mode (i.e. whether lecture, tutorial, lab, or any other instructional mode in which the instructor is teaching a group of students unassisted), across all contracts within the year – special consideration may need to be given to clinical courses, such as in nursing where a section taught in a hospital and is typically longer than usual, but has a correspondingly lower number of registrants; (2) total number of course registrants taught; (3) degree of assignment of multiple sections of the same course offering; (4) the “level” of assigned courses (e.g. “first year”, “second year”, etc.) For (3), this measurement is important because assignment of multiple sections of the same course offering may entail less overall preparation time. For (2), a decision must be made about how “registrant” is defined for consistent measurement. Considerations include (A) is it post “add/drop” date, or post “withdrawal” date?; (B) is a registrant counted by primary course section only (e.g. just the lecture but not secondary, associated sections such as tutorials), or multiple times when the course has secondary section types such as linked tutorials?; (C) proration of registrant counts when courses are team-taught. We stress that only measuring contact hours (or even less meaningfully, number of contracts) without also measuring number of registrants will lead to difficulty in assessing differences in effective teaching workloads (that include per-registrant factors – for example marking) between contract and full-time academic staff.

Equity

In announcing the reinstatement of FT-UCASS, the Minister of Science identified information on equity (specifically, sex, aboriginal status, visible minority, and disability/disabilities) as a key priority for the survey. Presently, FT-UCASS only collects data on sex.

A. Would this new information on equity be important to your organization?

Yes

No

Please explain why?

Tracking this data is critically important in identifying and assessing any equity-related divergence between contract and full-time academic staff. For example, surveys of our Mount Royal Faculty Association membership suggest over-representation of women in contract appointments, despite that the same survey clearly indicating that a strong majority of contract faculty consider themselves qualified to accept a tenure-track appointment and say that would accept one.

B. Can your institution provide equity data at any of the following levels? Please mark all that apply.

Individual-level data (Full-time staff)

Individual-level data (Part-time staff)

Aggregate-level data (Full-time staff)

Aggregate-level data (Part-time staff)

C. Do you foresee any challenges with the collection and reporting of equity data to Statistics Canada? Please explain.

Based on consultations between our Association and the University, we are aware that the University is considering tracking a range of equity-related employee information (e.g. through voluntary self-identification). However, at present, we are aware that the University only tracks age and binary gender data.

Workload

Contacts with stakeholders have revealed an interest in information on full-time academic staff workload. In a university context, this usually includes teaching, research and other duties.

A. Is measuring workload an important information priority for you and/or your organization?

Yes

No

B. What issues do you foresee with reporting workload data on these functions to Statistics Canada?

See answer (D) in the “defining part-time” section, above.

C. Is the concept of workload an issue for/applicable for colleges? How could it be applied?

Mount Royal University is more appropriately included in the “university” modes – see the explanation for this above.

Collecting personal-level data

FT-UCASS collects data on academic teaching staff at the individual level. This means that each data record in the survey pertains to an individual staff member. While records within an institution’s data submission are unique for the integrity of data processing, these identifiers are not unique across the full UCASS data set and not necessarily consistent over time. As a result, they cannot be used to do any longitudinal analysis or to link to other data sets such as tax data. FT-UCASS data can only be used for either cross sectional analysis within a survey cycle or analysis of aggregate trends.

A number of important research questions have been identified during the “informal environmental scan” that can only be addressed by analyzing individuals over space and time. For example, the evaluation of career pathways in postsecondary education and how certain decisions (e.g. absences due to family planning) can affect outcomes and the movement of academic teaching staff between universities and colleges and from non-institutional environments to the postsecondary sector. The ability to conduct such analysis would greatly enhance the analytic power and policy relevance of the UCASS. Within the current FT-UCASS data collection, the addition of additional identifying data, such as the academic staff member’s full name combined with the existing data elements would permit record linkage.

A. Do you support collection of unique personal identifying data?

Yes

No

Why? Do you foresee any challenges in the collection/provision of these data?

Collection of unique personal identifying data permits a more full and meaningful study of contract faculty employment, workload and equity issues over time. For example, without it, it would not be possible to study conversion rates between contract appointments and eventual tenure-track and tenured appointments. This is an area badly in need of comprehensive study. Further, we know from surveying our members that many contract faculty members rely on this work as their primary source of income, and regularly “cobble together” work each semester at more than one post-secondary institution. Aggregate institutional data does not allow for an analysis of this issue.

Collecting college data

In the 1990s, Statistics Canada attempted a survey of college academic staff. This survey was unsuccessful due to both its complexity and the limited capacity of colleges to respond with their human resources administrative data at the time. That was over 25 years ago. Since then, colleges, have become more sophisticated and their administrative information systems more automated, making a survey on academic staff more feasible.

Information demands for data on college academic staff have also evolved. For example, international reporting of Canadian education through the OECD's Education Indicators program (Education at a Glance http://download.ei-ie.org/Docs/WebDepot/EaG2016_EN.pdf) have developed considerably, and they are currently investigating the possibility of including academic staffing data for the full postsecondary sector for the member countries. Furthermore, college data are also required to provide UCASS with complete coverage of the public postsecondary sector, thus allowing it to be viewed as a complete system.

Initial discussions with stakeholders in the college sector during the "informal environmental scan" have reinforced the observation that replicating the university version of the FT-UCASS - with its emphasis on academic rank would be inappropriate for the college sector.

Over the coming months more detailed conversations with colleges will take place on the information needs related to a college academic staff survey. However, at a general level we would like your opinions on what kinds of information could be collected at the college level and what types of uses there would be for these data.

- A. What is your general opinion on the collection of college academic staff data?
Do you see the value in collecting college academic staff data? How would you use these data?**

Mount Royal University is more appropriately included in the "university" modes – see the explanation of this above. Note that Mount Royal has a rank, tenure and promotion system that is comparable to other universities.

- B. What kind of information would be important to your organization to include in a survey of college academic staff (i.e. previous employment, academic/work credentials etc) ?**
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- C. What policy questions would be answered with college-level data?**

Aggregate versus individual collection modes

FT-UCASS is collected in a micro-data format where a separate record is submitted for each individual professor. Microdata records provide for improved quality of the data and richer analysis when compared to aggregated summary data.

In developing collection tools for data on part-time university and college staff data, it would be ideal if it could be at the micro-data level. However, initially this may not always be possible. For example, it is recognized that the human resource systems of institutions will vary in their ability to report micro level data. As a result, while some institutions might be able to provide microdata, others might only be able to provide aggregate counts.

For example, while an institution maintains information or statistics on equity, it may not be accessible at an individual person level. Rather than lose the information entirely or encourage significant gaps in the data, a mixed approach to collection can be developed where both aggregate and microdata collection methods are accepted depending upon an institution's capability. While such a two tier approach to collection increases the complexity of both the development and the production operations of the survey, it permits a graduated approach to collection that better accommodates institutional capacity to report and provides a clear goal for collection that institutions can move toward.

- A. Do you agree with this approach to collection of data on part-time academic teaching staff and college staff? Please add any comments**

Yes.

B. If you are a reporting institution, please check the appropriate box to indicate how you could submit the following data:

	<u>University</u>	<u>College</u>
Part-time academic teaching staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggregate data available <input type="checkbox"/> Person-level data available	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggregate data available <input type="checkbox"/> Person-level data available
Full-time academic staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggregate data available <input type="checkbox"/> Person-level data available	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggregate data available <input type="checkbox"/> Person-level data available
Equity information on full-time academic staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggregate data available <input type="checkbox"/> Person-level data available	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggregate data available <input type="checkbox"/> Person-level data available
Equity information on part-time academic staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggregate data available <input type="checkbox"/> Person-level data available	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggregate data available <input type="checkbox"/> Person-level data available
Workload information on full-time	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggregate data available <input type="checkbox"/> Person-level data available	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggregate data available <input type="checkbox"/> Person-level data available
Workload information on part-time	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggregate data available <input type="checkbox"/> Person-level data available	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggregate data available <input type="checkbox"/> Person-level data available

Medical/Dental

The FT-UCASS survey currently collects data on Medical-Dental teaching staff (data element 25). This element was intended to differentiate these types of staff within the survey due to large salary differences from other academic staff. Data quality, however is not consistent across medical dental institutions. Maintaining collection of this variable would necessitate its re-development.

A. Do you support continuing collection of academic staff data in these particular fields?

Continue (and redevelop)

Discontinue

B. If you wish to see this information collection continued, what are your policy or information needs related to medical/dental/ academic staff?

- C. Do you have any recommendations regarding the future collection of this type of information? For example, how might the concept be measured? How should clinicians be treated? Are there any categories of academic staff that should be added?
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Measuring other staff

Until this point, the focus of this document has been on measuring and defining academic teaching staff.

- A. During the “informal environmental scan”, several stakeholders expressed interest in expanding this scope to include researchers, librarians etc. As noted previously, FT-UCASS has been focused on capturing the teaching portion of the professoriate. However, within the spirit of an academic teaching staff survey, are there any other categories of university staff that should be included (now or as part of a future development)? Why? Why not?

Comments:

Yes: the following are all designated as academic staff at Mount Royal University, are in our Faculty Association, and are in-scope of our Collective Agreement: (1) librarians; (2) student counsellors; (3) educational developers – colleagues who “teaching” component of their workload relates to the development of pedagogical supports and teaching-related professional development activities for other faculty members; (4) laboratory instructors. All but category (4) have directly-comparable workloads, roles and responsibilities that include teaching, research and academic service, and fall under the same system of rank, tenure and promotion.

Other information needs /additional comments

- A. Please identify any information needs that you feel should be added to the scope of academic staff data collection or any other comments that you might have regarding UCASS collection.

UCASS should, if at all possible, include data on benefits, pensions, etc. for contract academic staff, and also ideally access to professional development funding provided to this staff by their institutions. Beyond all of the comments provided in this submission, we suggest potentially-valuable areas of research, while recognizing that some might not be easily-captured by the proposed “part-time” modes: (1) the degree to which contract academic staff rely on this income as the primary source of income; (2) primary reason(s) for seeking and accepting contract appointments; (3) interest in conversion to a full-time appointment, and reason(s) why none if applicable; (4) level of effort in attempting to maintain an active program of research while on contract appointments. Our Association has surveyed our members on these and related topics, and is happy to consult further about. Please feel free to contact us.