



FEDERATION FOR THE
HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Think forward: Our future, shaped by the humanities and social sciences

How the HSS promote secure employment and talent development

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How the humanities and social sciences promote secure employment and talent development

The humanities and social sciences shape Canada's talent pipeline. More than half of all postsecondary students study in HSS programs, forming the country's largest and most diverse source of skilled workers. These graduates drive innovation, community wellbeing, and economic growth across every sector.

Bursting the HSS employment myth

Prospective students are often confronted with the myth that HSS graduates struggle to find a job. Evidence shows that this narrative is far from the truth.

According to Statistics Canada data, HSS and other non-STEM students graduate at higher rates in their original fields than the overall student population (44 percent compared to 37.4 percent in 2019). With postsecondary-educated workers accounting for nearly one-third of the working-age population in Canada and HSS students showing strong graduation rates, HSS graduates represent a significant portion of Canada's postsecondary-educated workforce.

HSS graduates also enter diverse and stable career pathways, including roles in government, education, community services, business, and creative sectors. This demonstrates clear alignment between HSS training and workforce needs.

Valuing HSS work

Income levels often reflect sector funding models and historical undervaluation rather than skill complexity or social contribution. Fields like education, public service, and nonprofits (where many HSS graduates build careers) follow standardized salary scales shaped by public budgets and nonprofit constraints. While these structures can limit starting salaries compared to private-sector roles, they provide stable progression, comprehensive benefits, pension security, and meaningful work.

Income growth also compares favourably. While each field has its own respective income, HSS graduates experience income growth rates that are equivalent to, and occasionally higher than, those of other disciplines.

The question isn't whether HSS graduates find employment or advance in their careers, but whether we adequately value the essential work they perform.

Preparing for the future of work

In an era defined by rapid technological advancements, particularly in artificial intelligence (AI), the nature of work is undergoing a significant transformation. Manual and repetitive tasks are increasingly automated, prompting a shift in employer expectations and demands.



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According to a [2025 Statistics Canada study](#), employers are placing more emphasis on roles that involve non-routine, cognitive tasks. These tasks require creativity, adaptability, and soft skills most often taught in HSS disciplines.

These shifts suggest a turning point: as automation handles routine work, the distinctive strengths of HSS training are becoming increasingly central to organizational success. As such, there is a growing demand for individuals who possess these soft skills, including conflict management, administrative and oversight skills, and adaptability.

The humanities and social sciences power Canada's workforce and economy!