



FEDERATION FOR THE
**HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES**

FÉDÉRATION
**DES SCIENCES
HUMAINES**

200-141 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON K1P 5J3
www.federationhss.ca
contact@federationhss.ca
(613) 238-6112

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

How the HSS promote secure employment and talent development

January, 2026



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.

A clearer picture of HSS employment

Prospective students are often confronted with the myth that HSS graduates struggle to find a job. Evidence suggests this oversimplifies a more complex reality.

According to Statistics Canada data, nearly 90 percent of graduates from the 2020 cohort across fields of study that make up the HSS community were employed three years after graduation, a rate comparable to that observed in many other fields.

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 validity.

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.



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!