LMIC Snapshot

What job postings can tell us about skills in Canada

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Why did we undertake this research?

We studied 3.1 million online job postings (OJP) to better understand what skills employers are asking for in today's job market. By exploring this topic, we aim to provide valuable insights that can support informed decision-making for researchers, policy analysts, and academics focused on labour and training.

What did we find?

We found that skill demand in Canada's labour market is evolving, with employers consistently seeking a mix of technical and soft skills. Communication, teamwork, and customer service were among the most frequently requested skills across job postings, highlighting their importance in today's workforce.

The research also revealed a growing demand for digital and data-related skills, particularly in the information technology, finance, and healthcare sectors. Meanwhile, industries like manufacturing and skilled trades continue to prioritize specialized technical skills but are also placing increased emphasis on adaptability and critical thinking.

By analyzing OJP over time, the study identified shifts in employer needs, with certain skills gaining prominence while others declined in demand. The findings suggest potential gaps between workforce supply and employer expectations, providing key insights for researchers, policy analysts, and academics focused on labour market dynamics, skills development, and training alignment.

How was this research conducted?

We analyzed data from approximately 3.1 million unique OJP in 2023, collected from Vicinity Jobs to examine skill demand across different industries, occupations, and regions in Canada. This dataset provides real-time insights into employer needs by capturing the skills listed in job postings over time. They extracted 4,552 unique skills from these postings.

A key approach in this study was categorizing and mapping the skills found in job postings to standardized frameworks, such as the Skills and Competencies Taxonomy, to ensure consistency in analysis. This method allowed us to track changes in skill demand and identify patterns across sectors.

We also employed the Frequency Analysis approach, which calculated how often each skill was mentioned across all job postings, and Directional Relationship Analysis, which examined whether the presence of one skill in a job posting could predict the inclusion of another.

To complement the quantitative analysis, the study also includes case studies focusing on the most in-demand skills: Teamwork, Communication Skills, and Customer Service. These case studies provide a deeper look at how skill demand is evolving in key sectors, highlighting emerging trends, sector-specific challenges, and workforce development considerations.

The study also considered broader labour market factors, including sectoral shifts, technological advancements, and evolving workplace needs, to provide a comprehensive view of how skill demand is changing and what it means for workforce development and policy planning.

What does this mean for you?

For most Canadians

This report explores how job postings reveal skill relationships. Some skills, like teamwork and communication, appear frequently, but that doesn't always mean they are strongly connected.

What's next?

Understanding these patterns helps job seekers identify transferable skills and career opportunities. It also shows how different industries value skills, providing insights for workers looking to switch jobs or gain new qualifications. These findings could help to better understand the skills employers are looking for and how they relate to one another.

For policy analysts

This research improves skill analysis in job postings by adjusting for demand imbalances. Frequency counts alone can misrepresent relationships, so we used skill associations and predictors to identify meaningful connections.

What's next?

These insights inform reskilling efforts and workforce planning by identifying transferable skills. More granular analysis by occupation and sector could help refine policy decisions for training and labour market interventions.

For researchers and academics focused on labour and training

This study introduces new methods for analyzing skill relationships in job postings. While frequency counts highlight demand, they can misrepresent connections between common skills. Using association analysis and predictors, we identified meaningful links between co-occurring skills.

What's next?

Further research into occupational differences could support decision-making on workforce strategies and skill-matching efforts.

What are some limitations of the study?

OJP are not designed to be used as official data sources, so they don't always have the same level of accuracy as survey data. However, Vicinity Jobs works to improve the quality of the data by cleaning it before publishing. Even with these efforts, there are some limitations to keep in mind:

▸ **Not all job openings are captured:** OJP miss some vacancies, especially those filled through networking or word of mouth. Also, a single job posting might represent multiple positions, which can skew the data. As a result, some job types, like professional and service positions, are more likely to be overrepresented, while others, like trades or manual labor, may be underrepresented.

▸ **Missing requirements:** Some jobs have skills or qualifications that are assumed but not mentioned in the posting, such as a chef's knowledge of cooking techniques. These missing details can affect the way skills are matched in the data.

▸ **Data cleaning challenges:** After collecting job postings, Vicinity Jobs cleans the data and aligns it with National Occupation Classification (NOC) codes. However, about 15% of postings can't be matched to a NOC code due to unclear job titles or descriptions.

Related research

Adkins-Hackett, L. (2025).
Connecting Skills: Using online job postings to unravel the demand for skills in the labour market. Ottawa: Labour Market Information Council (LMIC).