

Canada's overqualified workforce is growing

By [Jack Choros](#) / [Insight](#), Jan 13, 2016

More and more Canadian university graduates are taking jobs they are overqualified for. In fact, [a study released](#) by the federal parliamentary budget office maintains that as many as 40 per cent of new graduates face the likelihood of taking jobs that are considerably below their skill set.

That reality is one of the reasons [the Liberal government](#) proposed waiving employment insurance premiums for employers willing to hire workers between the ages of 18 and 24 over the next three years. However, it remains to be seen whether that will be enough of an incentive to help over 582,000 people who were identified as overqualified for their current positions in a 2014 research study.

The [Office of the Parliamentary Budget](#) Officer has concluded that the trend of overqualified young adults entering the workforce has been on the rise since the early 1990s, so the problem is nothing new. The real challenge is that having individuals take jobs they don't really desire leads to more job dissatisfaction and an invisible barrier between frontline, task-oriented positions and the knowledge-based jobs that most graduates hope to fill.

One aspect of the growing and worrisome trend that seldom gets evaluated is the fact that post-secondary students are committing both their finances and their time to studying in lieu of gaining valuable work experience. Many are focused on meeting deadlines and handing in assignments in exchange for grades with little understanding of the trends in the job market or the demands of the employers who will play a role in shaping their early career experiences.

Associate Director Of Employer Relations at the University of Western Ontario Jeff Watson points out that being ready for a job after school is a two-way street. On one hand, for students it's all about being prepared and knowing what they want once they get into the job market so that they can focus their energy. On the other hand, employers who want to limit job dissatisfaction and the high turnover rate that comes with it need to be more specific about what they require from future employees and why an advanced degree is necessary.

It's clear according to this most recent research study that students, educational institutions and employers need to find a way to bridge the gap. Until that happens, let the current state of the job market serve as a reminder to students. Work hard, know what your goals are and know how to position the value of your education and skills before you enter the job market. Experts concur that's the best way to ensure you end up with opportunities that match your commitment to learning and the hard work you've put in to earn your qualifications.