

Your Voice Matters

Our University-wide Results



**EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCES
PULSE SURVEY REPORT 2026**

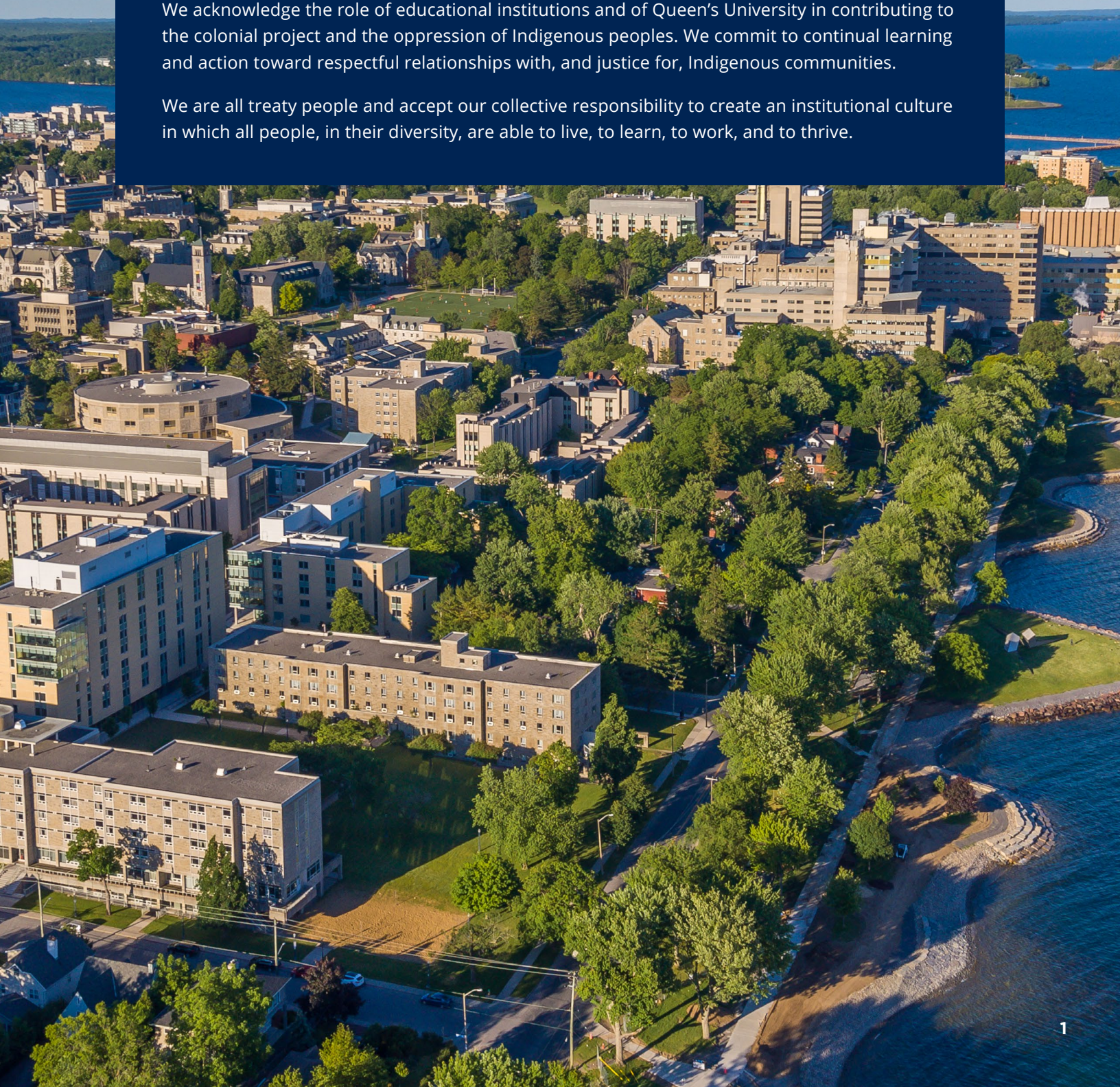


Honouring the Land

Queen's University is situated on the territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek. We are grateful to the land and the waters that sustain us and our work, and to the Indigenous communities who have stewarded them since time immemorial and whose continued presence and leadership here is central, vibrant, and vital.

We acknowledge the role of educational institutions and of Queen's University in contributing to the colonial project and the oppression of Indigenous peoples. We commit to continual learning and action toward respectful relationships with, and justice for, Indigenous communities.

We are all treaty people and accept our collective responsibility to create an institutional culture in which all people, in their diversity, are able to live, to learn, to work, and to thrive.



Introduction

Strengthening our organizational culture is an institutional priority that begins with understanding the experiences of our people and taking action on what we learn together. Employee feedback is vital to improving workplace experiences, strengthening our community, supporting Queen's academic mission, and guiding future decisions in alignment with Queen's Bicentennial Vision.

In 2022, Queen's conducted its inaugural Employee Experiences Survey, which provided a comprehensive assessment of employee experience across the university and helped identify key priority areas for action. Building on that foundation, the 2026 Employee Experiences Pulse Survey serves as a follow-up and check-in to understand how employees are currently experiencing Queen's and whether progress is being made. While more focused in scope, the pulse survey offers valuable insight and helps guide Queen's forward by grounding our priorities in what we heard directly from our people.



Summary

The Employee Experiences Pulse Survey was open for a three-week period from January 14 to February 4, 2026. The survey gathered employee perspectives on key aspects of our organizational culture to ensure that future initiatives are evidence-based and responsive to employee needs.

A total of 2,448 employees participated in the survey, representing an overall response rate of 45.2%. Of these respondents, 28.3% were faculty members and 54.9% were staff members. For a pulse survey, this level of participation offers a meaningful and representative snapshot of how employees are currently experiencing Queen's and provides helpful insight for areas of institutional focus.

Survey Design

Similar to the inaugural 2022 Employee Experiences Survey, the pulse survey was designed and administered by workplace consultant Metrics@Work¹. As a shorter, more focused survey, the pulse survey provides directional insights into employee experiences and workplace culture, helping to assess progress since 2022 while capturing the current context of the institution. The pulse survey included the same questions asked in 2022 measuring employee engagement: with their **job**, their **team**, their **faculty/university shared service department**, and **Queen's** as an employer. Measuring four distinct tiers of employee engagement is helpful at decentralized and complex institutions like Queen's, where the personal experiences and connections within a department or faculty can vary widely across the university.

The pulse survey also examined 11 themes, or “drivers of engagement”, related to employees’ views and experiences in their workplace, including issues of respect, physical safety, work recognition, job clarity, and opportunities for professional development.

The survey consisted primarily of questions on a seven-point scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*. Some open-ended questions were included to allow employees to elaborate on their experiences and offer suggestions for improving workplace culture. The survey also included questions to assess progress made since the 2022 Employee Experiences Survey and observable efforts and actions to advance the priority areas identified at that time.



¹The Metrics@Work Post-Secondary Benchmarking data is provided by Metrics@Work and includes Western University, King's University College, York University, McMaster University, Lakehead University, Algonquin College, Red River College, and New Brunswick Community College.

Interpreting Results

Engagement driver scores are calculated by taking the arithmetic mean of employee responses on a seven-point scale and converting that average to a 0–100 scale, similar to a test score. As a result, these scores represent the average level of agreement with a statement, rather than the percentage of employees who are engaged. Higher scores indicate stronger overall agreement among respondents.

Scores of 75 or higher indicate strong positive results and represent areas for Queen's to celebrate, maintain, and potentially build upon. Scores of 50 or lower suggest potential areas for improvement and may signal where additional attention or action is needed. Scores that fall between 50 and 75 reflect moderately positive results that warrant further exploration to determine whether focused efforts would meaningfully strengthen employee engagement in these areas.

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The Employee Experiences Pulse Survey is an important opportunity for us to check in on how our people are experiencing work at Queen's and to better understand the culture we are building together. While no single measure can fully capture the employee experience, surveys like this provide valuable insight into what is working well and where we have opportunities to do better. By listening to employees and understanding what matters most to them, we can focus our efforts on making meaningful improvements that strengthen our workplace and support our community's success.”

Lisa Walsh

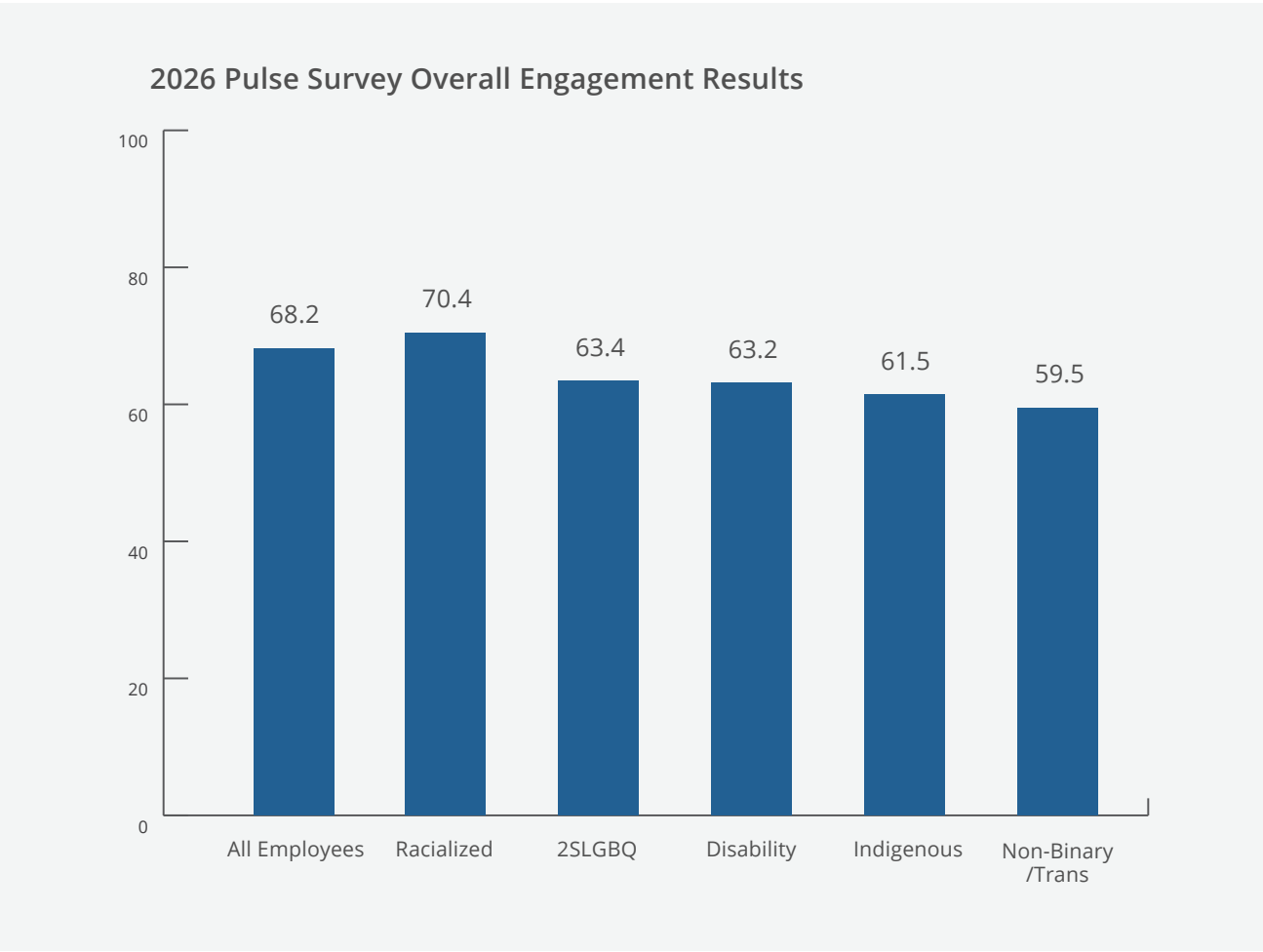
Associate Vice-Principal, Human Resources

Employee Engagement at Queen’s

The survey found that overall employee engagement at Queen’s University, measured through a composite score based on responses to 11 engagement driver statements, was 68.2%. This compares with an overall engagement score of 70.3% in the 2022 Employee Experiences Survey. While the result reflects a modest decline over the past four years, it continues to demonstrate a strong overall level of employee engagement.

In addition to reviewing overall engagement results, it is important to examine employee engagement across equity-deserving groups. The chart below presents aggregate engagement scores for equity-deserving groups who responded to the survey, offering insight into areas of shared strength as well as where experiences may differ. The Vice Principal (Culture, Equity and Inclusion) portfolio will continue to analyze these findings and work collaboratively to promote an inclusive and equitable workplace for all employees.

University-wide Engagement Scores	68.2 All Employees	70.9 Staff	64.2 Faculty
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Job, Team, and Faculty/Shared Service Engagement Scores

Employees were asked several questions to measure their level of engagement with their job, their immediate team, their faculty/shared service and lastly, Queen's University as an employer.

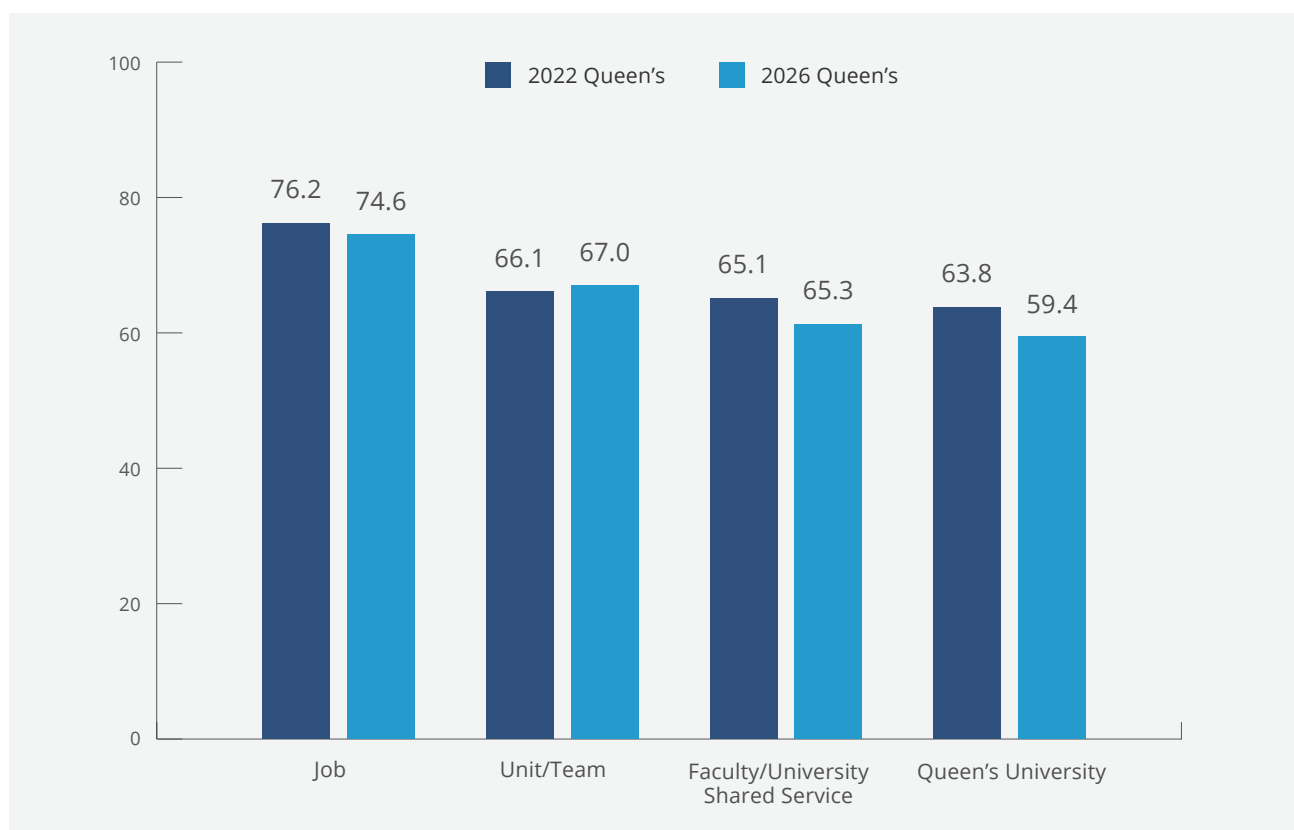
Job: These questions focused on an employee's individual role and the day-to-day work they perform.

Unit/Team: These questions focused on the employee's immediate unit or team within a faculty or university shared service, the area most directly connected to their daily work.

Faculty/University Shared Service: These questions focused on the broader faculty or university shared service in which the employee's team operates, including experiences related to strategic direction.

Queen's University: These questions focused on the employee's experience of Queen's University as a whole.

Results indicate that employees report their highest levels of engagement with their job, followed by slightly lower levels of engagement with their team, faculty or shared service, and Queen's University overall. This pattern is consistent with findings from other post-secondary institutions as well as Queen's 2022 Employee Experiences Survey. Team engagement has seen a meaningful increase since 2022, an achievement that reflects the strong and ongoing efforts of managers and their teams to foster a sense of belonging and maintain positive morale. Managers play a vital role in shaping employees' experience of the workplace, and their commitment to understanding and supporting the professional development, recognition, and mental wellness needs of their teams continues to make a meaningful impact.



Engagement Drivers

The following table offers a breakdown for each driver of engagement from highest to lowest. As a reminder, scores of 75 or higher indicate strong positive results and represent areas for Queen's to celebrate, maintain, and potentially build upon. Scores of 50 or lower suggest potential areas for improvement and may signal where additional attention or action is needed. Scores that fall between 50 and 75 reflect moderately positive results and warrant further exploration to determine whether focused efforts would meaningfully strengthen employee engagement in these areas. Drivers are grouped according to the level of the organization best positioned to influence and improve that aspect of the employee experience.

Note that Queen's scores were above the 50 threshold across all 11 engagement drivers. Notably, five of the 11 drivers scored above 75, highlighting several areas of established strength within the institution. These results demonstrate that, while there remain opportunities for growth and continued improvement, Queen's has a strong foundation upon which to build. Importantly, the areas identified as strengths in 2022 continue to be strengths in 2026.

Why 11 Drivers of Engagement?

In 2022, the Employee Experiences Survey measured 42 drivers to establish a comprehensive baseline of engagement. This pulse survey takes a more targeted approach, focusing on 11 key drivers identified as the highest and lowest scoring areas from 2022. This helps to better track progress in the most critical areas while providing timely, actionable insights through a shorter, more focused check-in.

Rank	Driver Category	Engagement Driver	Score
1	Team	Physical Safety	89.2
2	Team	Inappropriate Behaviours not Tolerated	82.6
3	Organization	Feel Physically Safe on Campus	82.6
4	Team	Respect	80.1
5	Job	Role Clarity	78.9
6	Organization	Opportunities for Professional Development	59.9
7	Organization	Adequacy of Services for Mental Health	59.2
8	Faculty/Shared Services	Satisfaction with Communication	59.1
9	Academic	Consider Academic Leadership Role	54.3
10	Job	Work Recognition	52.7
11	Organization	Awareness of Strategic Plans	51.6

Engagement Drivers: Change Over Time

In addition to asking employees whether they have observed progress in engagement drivers, changes in scores from 2022 to the present can also be assessed. The table below presents all 11 engagement drivers, comparing results from the 2022 survey with those from 2026. Consistent with the findings noted above, the university has opportunities to achieve greater improvement in areas such as recognition and professional development.

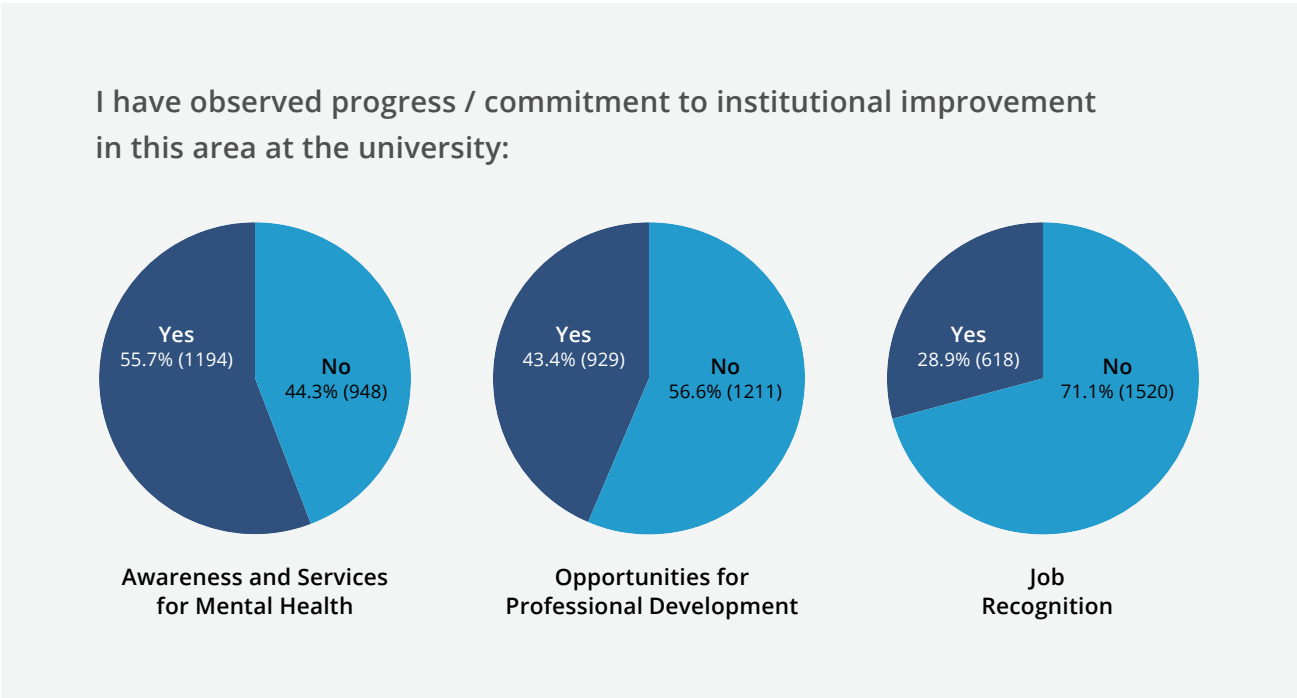
Compared with 2022, most drivers remain relatively stable, with differences of less than three points reported over the past four years. However, greater improvement would be expected in previously identified institutional priority areas*. Therefore, the university has an opportunity to continue strengthening its efforts in professional development, mental health supports, and employee recognition. A newly emerging priority for the university is awareness of strategic plans, which is notably lower than in 2022.

Driver Category	Engagement Driver	2022 Score	2026 Score
Team	Physical Safety	88.7	89.2
Team	Inappropriate Behaviours not Tolerated	80.8	82.6
Organization	Feel Physically Safe on Campus	82.2	82.6
Team	Respect	80.1	80.1
Job	Role Clarity	80.2	78.9
Organization	Opportunities for Professional Development*	62.4	59.9
Organization	Adequacy of Services for Mental Health*	61.0	59.2
Faculty/Shared Services	Satisfaction with Communication	62.3	59.1
Academic	Consider Academic Leadership Role	55.9	54.3
Job	Work Recognition*	55.4	52.7
Organization	Awareness of Strategic Plans	63.1	51.6

* These drivers of engagement were identified as institutional priorities for improvement resulting from the inaugural Employee Experiences Survey conducted in 2022.

Survey Follow-up and Progress on Priorities

Employees were surveyed to assess progress on the priority areas identified following the 2022 Employee Experiences Survey, including both awareness of those priorities and the perceived impact of related actions. Overall, employee awareness of initiatives was higher than perceived impact. Employees were also asked whether they had observed progress or demonstrated commitment to institutional improvement in three specific areas: awareness and services for mental health, opportunities for professional development, and job recognition. Among the three priority areas, awareness and services for mental health emerged as the area where employees most frequently reported observing progress and institutional commitment since 2022.



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These results provide valuable insight into where we are succeeding and where we must continue to improve. A workplace where people feel respected, supported, and able to thrive is central to our Bicentennial Vision and to the future we are creating together.”

Patrick Deane
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Opportunities for Continued Growth

Based on these results from the pulse survey, the university will continue to focus on the three priority areas previously identified: adequacy of services for mental health, opportunities for professional development, and job recognition. Two emerging areas for improvement will also be prioritized: consideration of an academic leadership role and awareness of strategic plans.

Employees can expect to see stronger alignment between existing initiatives and strategies and the engagement drivers they are intended to support. In addition, new ideas and programs will be explored to further enhance professional development, recognition, mental health supports, and support for those considering or transitioning into academic leadership roles. The university continues to navigate considerable change and sector complexity. University leaders will continue to build on community conversations around key documents such as the Bicentennial Vision to increase awareness of strategic plans.

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I am grateful for the faculty and staff who approached the Employee Experiences Survey with a sense of candor and faith that the university will take this feedback and improve upon our collective experiences. We understand there is much work to be done at Queen's, and while that work is ongoing, there are signals pointing toward an improved sense of safety and belonging for some. Satisfaction within teams is trending upward and as we build those small communities at the unit level, we hope those lessons filter outward, permeating the entire campus. The Employee Experiences Survey provides a roadmap to where we are and where we need to go. Together, we can move the university along this journey.”

Stephanie Simpson

Vice-Principal, Culture, Equity, and Inclusion

Looking Ahead

Organizational culture work is ongoing and evolving. Efforts to shift systems, structures, programs, and services can take time, and progress may not always be immediately visible. Each iteration of the Employee Experiences Survey provides an important opportunity to measure progress toward Queen's strategic priority of strengthening organizational culture.

While the university continues to advance this work at an institutional level, faculties and shared service portfolios have also been provided with results specific to their areas, some of which may differ from the institutional results shared in this report. Employees are encouraged to engage with and contribute to efforts that address the areas most relevant to their experience at Queen's.

The university thanks all employees who took the time to share their experiences and insights, helping to guide these ongoing efforts.

The Employee Experiences Pulse survey website will continue to be updated with progress, both institutionally and within the faculties/shared service portfolios. Employee feedback will be gathered on an annual basis going forward and you can stay engaged with our work here:

queensu.ca/employee-experiences-survey

Initiatives or programs already launched to further enhance the employee experience:

The following initiatives highlight some of the work already underway to enhance the employee experience and strengthen workplace culture at Queen's. These examples represent only a small portion of the many efforts that have either recently launched or are currently in progress.

Queen's Bicentennial Vision – shaped through community engagement and reflection, the Bicentennial Vision sets a clear direction for Queen's as we approach 2041. The vision answers four fundamental questions that will guide our decisions and actions over the coming decades.

Expansion of the Employee Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) - expanded in September 2025 to provide eligible employees with enhanced support for their personal and professional development through the Educational Development Fund and the Professional Development Fund. Changes included expanded learning opportunities and increased financial support for professional development activities.

Expansion of Special Recognition for Staff Awards - expanded in 2024 to recognize our outstanding staff and ensure we continue to provide opportunities for recognition. The expansion increased the total number of awards granted to 10, previously eight, including up to two teams. The awards serve as an important act of appreciation for the significant contributions staff make to supporting the university's academic mission and culture.

Employee Resource Group (ERG) Leaders Time Release Policy – introduced in 2025, the policy is designed to support employees who serve as leaders of ERGs by providing designated time release from their regular duties to perform ERG responsibilities. ERG leaders play a key role in promoting belonging, equity, diversity, and inclusion across the university.

Employment Equity Plan 2026 - Queen's continues to demonstrate measurable progress toward equitable representation, supported by data-informed planning, targeted initiatives, and sustained institutional action through its Employment Equity Plan. The plan is updated annually and represents a collaborative effort to build a more equitable and inclusive workforce.

Expansion of Thrive 365 Programming – ongoing expansion and updates to Thrive 365 offerings based on employee feedback to ensure programming remains responsive, impactful, and aligned with the university's needs. Sessions are available at no cost to employees.

Online Employee Orientation Module – developed to complement existing onboarding activities, this online self-paced module helps to further equip new employees with essential information and resources from day one, supporting a more consistent onboarding experience across the university.

Positive Space Program - enhancements to the existing Positive Space Program which aims to identify and encourage the development of positive spaces within the Queen's Community, and to empower members of the Queen's Community to be agents of positive change.

Brand Strategy Initiative – an ongoing research-led institutional project designed to clarify who Queen's is today, the impact it makes, and how it should be positioned, distinctively and ambitiously, for the future. Through community consultation, the strategy aims to be grounded in lived experience and informed by those who know Queen's best.

Enhanced Department Head Orientation and Onboarding – review, curate, and promote existing leadership training and resources for the 2026–27 program to provide faculty leaders with a more accessible and practical professional development experience. Through this review year, training gaps in administrative and academic leadership competencies will be identified to inform the creation of new training and resources for the 2027–28 program.

HR Learning Catalogue Expanded Offerings - recent expansions include the AI Certificate Pilot, Data Proficiency Certificate, and Project Management 301. Additional planned offerings include a full Project Management Certificate, Project Management Community of Practice, and Management Learning Series.

Harassment and Discrimination learning modules - a series of self-guided online learning modules developed to support students, employees, and other members of the Queen's community. The modules help build awareness and understanding of the Harassment and Discrimination Policy and its application within the university community.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan - sets out Queen's commitments and priorities for the next five years. It builds on the work of the previous plan and reflects an evolving understanding of disability, access, and inclusion, namely, one that is grounded in disability justice, lived experience, and collective responsibility.

Scarborough Charter - created following the 2020 National Dialogues and Action for Inclusive Higher Education and Communities. Queen's became a signatory in 2021 and continues to move to more meaningful, concrete actions to address anti-Black racism and to promote Black inclusion on campus.

Elder Talks – a continuing learning and (un)learning opportunity to hear from the Office of Indigenous Initiatives' Cultural Advisor and explore Indigenous worldviews, with a safe space to ask questions after each session. The topics for each session come from current discussions and projects, both on and off campus.

Community Fires – an initiative started in 2024 as an opportunity to bring the Queen's community together during a heavy period around the world. This has since expanded to a monthly initiative as a place to connect, learn, chat or just sit among likeminded community members and disconnect for an hour or so. These sessions have helped to support belonging and connection for many Queen's community members.