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# BETTERWORK



WELL-BEING  
AND HEALTH  
AT WORK

N° 32 NEWS FROM THE  
QUALITY OF WORK INDEX



Quality  
of work  
INDEX  
LUXEMBOURG



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## THE DEVELOPMENT OF WORK AND EMPLOYMENT QUALITY IN LUXEMBOURG: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EMPLOYEE GROUPS AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF THE LOWEST QOW INDEX TO DATE

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YOU'LL  
NEVER  
WORK  
ALONE.

This newsletter presents how the quality of work and employment, and the well-being of employees in Luxembourg have evolved between 2014 and 2025. The dimensions of participation, feedback, autonomy and cooperation showed a clear downward trend between 2014 and 2020 (and especially 2021) and have since stabilised at a lower level. The risk of accidents and physical strain decreased until 2020 and then remained largely constant, although the risk of accidents has recently risen slightly again. Mental demands and time pressure changed only slightly over the years, while emotional demands increased significantly between 2017 and 2020 and have remained at an elevated level since then. Satisfaction with income declined particularly between 2019 and 2020 and has shown little change since then. Training opportunities declined until 2020 and have remained at a lower level since then, while job security

has largely stagnated since 2020 and declined slightly again in 2025. Work-life conflicts increased almost continuously between 2014 and 2022 and, after a brief slowdown in 2023, have recently risen again. The aggregate QoW index remained largely stable until the end of the 2010s, fell sharply in 2020 and has since recovered only partially. Since 2023, a renewed decline has been observed, with the QoW index reaching its lowest value in the observation period in 2025. While the QoW index differs only slightly between women and men overall, there are more pronounced differences in individual dimensions, such as emotional demands and work-life conflicts. Managers and employees in academic professions consistently have higher QoW index values, while employees in service and skilled trades professions, as well as plant operators and unskilled workers, consistently report below-average values.

## 1. Dimensions of quality of work and employment

Quality of work encompasses all psychosocial working conditions that can influence the well-being of employees, such as job content or the working environment. Psychosocial working conditions such as autonomy, social support or participation are closely related to various dimensions of well-being and subjective performance (e.g. Nielsen et al., 2017; Sonnentag et al., 2023). Quality of employment, on the other hand, describes those aspects of a job that relate to the working conditions (Steffgen et al., 2020). These include income satisfaction, training and promotion opportunities, job security, the difficulty in changing jobs, and work-life conflicts. Both job quality and employment quality are associated with a variety of well-being and health dimensions (Steffgen et al., 2020).

This newsletter analyses how the various dimensions of job and employment quality and the aggregate QoW index of employees in Luxembourg have evolved between 2014 and 2025. In addition, changes to the QoW index are examined in detail using selected demographic characteristics such as gender, age, whether or not children are present, as well as occupational characteristics such as professional groups and economic sectors.

The analyses are based on data from the Quality of Work Survey (QoW; waves 2014 to 2025; Sischka, 2025), an annual representative survey of employees in Luxembourg. The results of the QoW surveys conducted since 2020 must be interpreted with the COVID-19 pandemic as a backdrop, which has brought about lasting changes in the world of work (Beine et al., 2020; Béland et al., 2020; Eurofound, 2020; Sischka and Steffgen, 2021; Sischka et al., 2024).

## 2. Development of work quality dimensions

**Figure 1** shows the development of work quality from 2014 to 2025. The dimensions of participation, feedback, autonomy and cooperation show a predominantly continuous downward trend between 2014 (or 2016) and around 2020/2021. In subsequent years, the figures largely stabilise, with only minor fluctuations that fail to indicate a clear trend observed until 2025. Bullying remained relatively constant over the entire period from 2014 to 2025, apart from more pronounced fluctuations between 2016 and 2018. The risk of accidents and physical strain dimensions also decreased significantly between 2014 and 2020/2021 and have remained at a comparatively stable level since then. While the risk of

accidents rose again between 2023 and 2024, no further significant increase is apparent for 2025. Mental demands show an overall stable, slightly increasing level over the entire observation period, with stronger fluctuations, especially in the early years until around 2018, and a moderately higher level since 2019, which continues up to 2025. Time pressure increased significantly, especially at the beginning of the observation period, and remained largely constant from 2015 onwards, despite minor annual fluctuations, up to and including 2025. Emotional demands increased noticeably between 2017 and 2020 and have remained at an elevated level since then, a trend also confirmed in 2025.

*In this newsletter, only the masculine generic is used for the purpose of clarifying the text. It refers to any gender identity and thus includes both female and male persons, transgender persons as well as persons who do not feel they belong to either gender or persons who feel they belong to both genders.*

Figure 1: Development of work quality dimensions



Note: Data from QoW 2014-2025; mean value of scales ranging from 0 to 100 with a 95% confidence interval.

### 3. Development of the quality of work dimensions

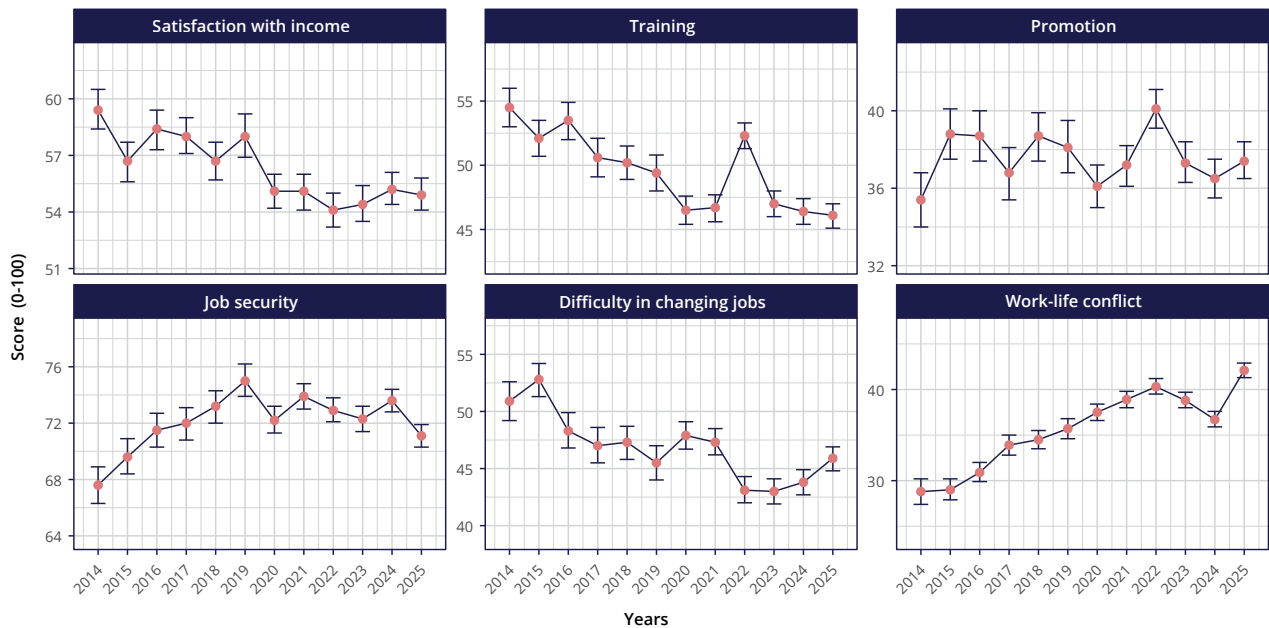
Figure 2 documents how the perceived quality of work amongst employees has changed from 2014 to 2025. Income satisfaction declined significantly, particularly between 2019 and 2020, and has remained largely stable at a lower level since then, with only minor fluctuations and no clear trend up to 2025. Perceived training opportunities show a continuous downward trend between 2014 and 2020. After a short-term recovery in 2022, the values settled again at a lower level from 2023 onwards, remaining largely stable until 2025.

With regard to promotion opportunities, there are moderate fluctuations throughout the entire observation period, with a temporary peak in 2022. Between the first (2014) and last observation year (2025), there are only minor differences in overall levels. Job security increased significantly between 2014 and 2019, peaked around 2019/2020 and has revealed no clear upward or downward trend between then and 2025, despite minor annual fluctuations. In 2025, the value fell below the 2016 level, reaching its third-lowest

point in the twelve-year survey period. Difficulty of changing jobs decreased overall between 2014 and 2022, but rose slightly again in subsequent years and is above the low point of 2022 in 2025. Work-life conflicts increased almost contin-

uously between 2014 and 2022. After a slight decline in 2023, another increase was observed for 2025, marking the highest value in the observation period to date.

**Figure 2: Development of the quality of work dimensions**



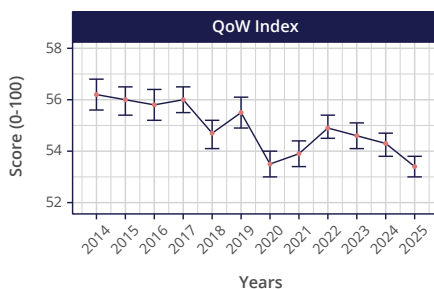
Note: Data from QoW 2014-2025; mean value of scales ranging from 0 to 100 with a 95% confidence interval.

## 4. Development of the QoW index

**Figure 3** shows the development of the aggregate QoW index for employees in Luxembourg from 2014 to 2025. Between 2014 and 2017, the index remained largely stable, showing only minor fluctuations. After an initial moderate decline in 2018, the index rose slightly again in 2019 before falling sharply between 2019 and 2020. In the following years, the

QoW index initially recovered moderately, reaching a local interim high in 2022. Since 2023, however, a downward trend has been observed again, which continues through 2025, resulting in the index reaching its lowest value in the entire period in the last year of observation.

**Figure3: Development of the QoW index**



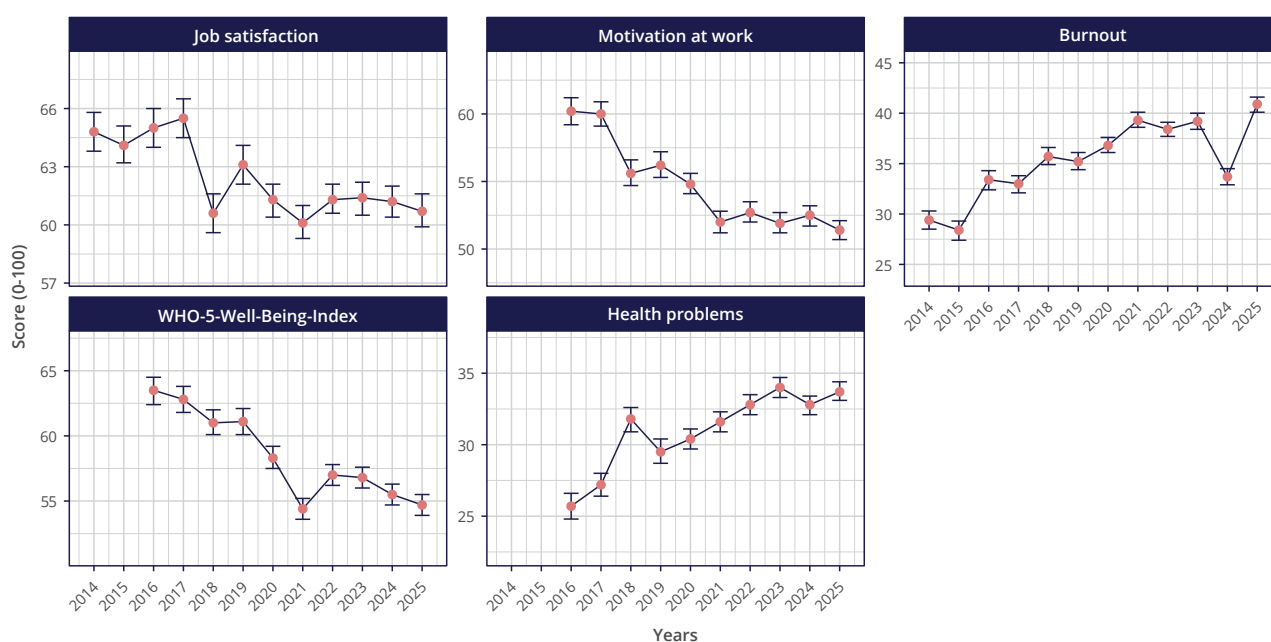
Note: Data from QoW 2014-2025; mean value on a scale ranging from 0 to 100 with a 95% confidence interval

## 5. Development of well-being dimensions

**Figure 4** shows the development of various well-being dimensions for employees in Luxembourg from 2014 to 2025. Job satisfaction remained largely stable between 2014 and 2017, but declined significantly between 2017 and 2018. After a brief recovery in 2019, it fell again in 2020 and has since remained at a significantly lower level than in 2014 through to 2025, despite minor annual fluctuations. Motivation at work declined noticeably between 2017 and 2018 and continued to decline until 2021. In the following years, it showed only minor changes and remained at a comparatively low level through 2025. The level of burnout rose significantly overall between 2014 and 2021, then remained relatively constant between 2021 and 2023. After a temporary decline in 2024 and 2025, burnout levels were on the rise again in 2025, returning to quite a high level. General well-being (WHO-5 Well-Being Index) declined almost continuously between 2016 and 2021. A slight recovery is evident from 2022 onwards, but it has not proved to be sustainable: After another decline in 2023 and 2024, this downward trend continued<sup>1</sup> in 2025. Overall, health problems increased significantly between 2016 and 2025. In addition to a marked increase in 2018, a sustained upward trend has been observed since 2020 in particular.

relatively constant between 2021 and 2023. After a temporary decline in 2024 and 2025, burnout levels were on the rise again in 2025, returning to quite a high level. General well-being (WHO-5 Well-Being Index) declined almost continuously between 2016 and 2021. A slight recovery is evident from 2022 onwards, but it has not proved to be sustainable: After another decline in 2023 and 2024, this downward trend continued<sup>1</sup> in 2025. Overall, health problems increased significantly between 2016 and 2025. In addition to a marked increase in 2018, a sustained upward trend has been observed since 2020 in particular.

**Figure 4: Development of well-being dimensions**



Note: Data from QoW 2014-2025; mean value of scales ranging from 0 to 100 with a 95% confidence interval.

<sup>1</sup> This sharp decline is particularly noteworthy given that the other well-being dimensions hardly changed between 2023 and 2024. This finding should therefore be interpreted with caution. One possible explanation for this could be the so-called item order effect (e.g. Bandalos, 2021): In the 2024 survey, burnout scale items were queried based on a newly added scale – the Occupational Depression Inventory (ODI; Bianchi & Schonfeld, 2020). The prior processing of the ODI items may have influenced the perception or evaluation of burnout-related items. The similarity in content between the two scales may have led respondents to give less distinct answers on the burnout scale given the context of the work-related depression items they had previously addressed.

## 6. Development of the QoW index by demographic characteristics

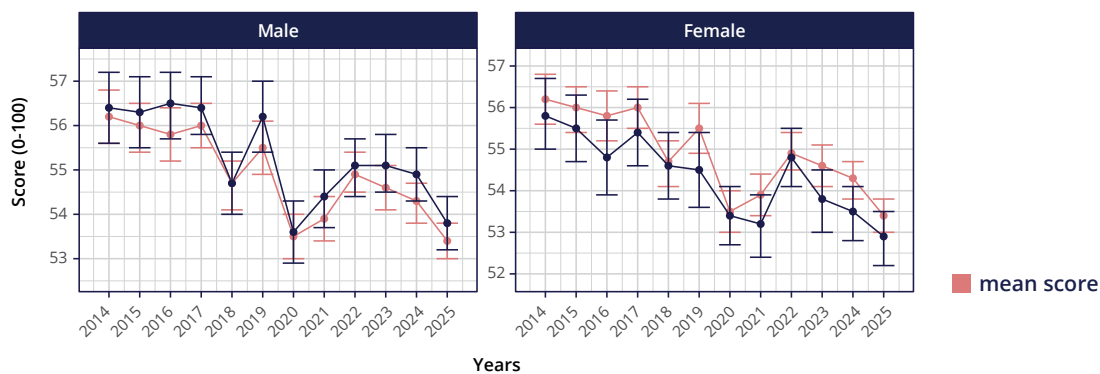
**Figure 5** shows the development of the QoW index differentiated by gender. Over the entire observation period, male employees consistently have a slightly higher QoW index than female employees. The gender-specific differences in the aggregate index remain small overall, but are stable over

the years. After a significant decline in the QoW index in both groups in 2020, a moderate recovery can be observed until 2022, after which the index declines slightly again from 2023 onwards and reaches its lowest level to date in both groups in 2025.

While only slight differences appear in the aggregate QoW index, more pronounced gender-specific differences can be seen at the level of individual dimensions. Male employees report higher values across the entire period in the dimensions of participation, autonomy and risk of accidents. Female employees, on the other hand, consistently report

higher emotional demands. In addition, male employees perceive their promotion opportunities more favourably over the years. Female employees, on the other hand, consistently report a higher level of work-life conflict compared to their male colleagues, a pattern that continues through 2025.

**Figure 5: Development of the QoW index by gender**

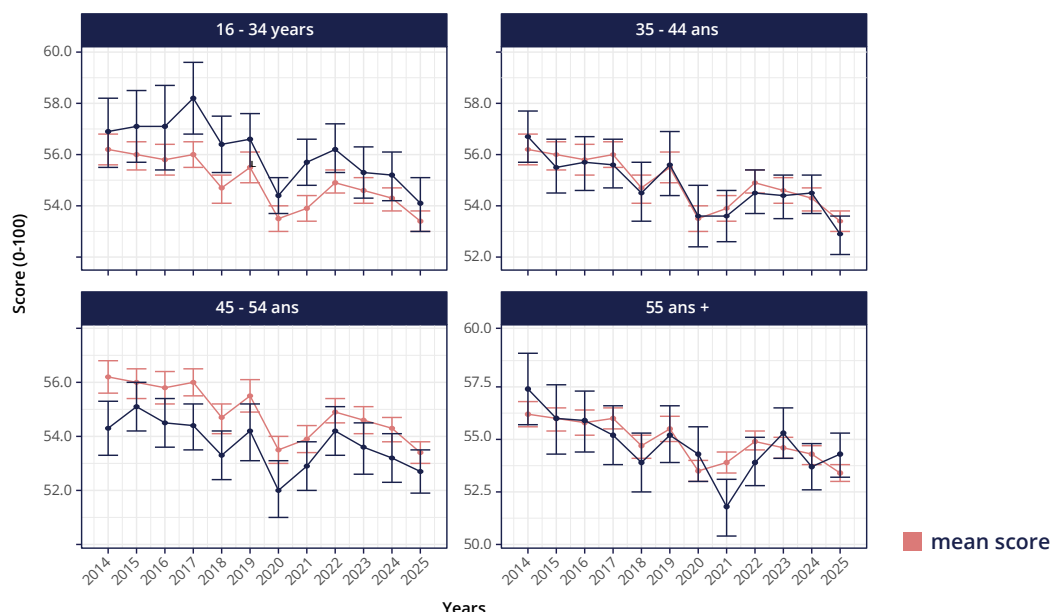


Note: : QoW data 2014-2025; mean value on a scale of 0 to 100 with a 95% confidence interval. The grey values represent the mean values of the entire sample.

**Figure 6** shows the development of the QoW index differentiated by age group. Over the entire observation period, employees aged 16 to 34 have above-average QoW index values, while those aged 45 to 54 have consistently below-average QoW index values. In all age groups, in line with the overall trend, a significant decline in the QoW index can be observed in 2020/2021, followed by a moderate recovery until around 2022. Since 2023, slight declines have been observed again, which were set to continue until 2025.

Looking at the individual dimensions, it is clear that employees aged between 16 and 34 consistently report the highest scores for feedback and cooperation, but also for accident risk. At the same time, the youngest age group consistently scores lowest for autonomy. Employees aged 45 and over consistently score below average, particularly in terms of training and promotion opportunities.

**Figure 6: Development of the QoW index by age**



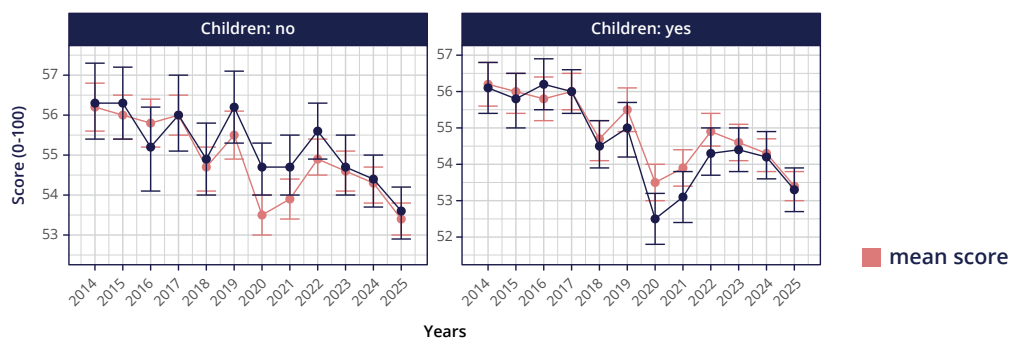
Note: Data from QoW 2014-2025; mean value on a scale from 0 to 100 with a 95% confidence interval. The grey values represent the mean values of the entire sample.

**Figure 7** shows the development of the QoW index differentiated by whether or not children live in the household. Almost throughout the entire observation period, employees without children have slightly higher QoW index values on average than employees with children, although the differences remain small overall. In both groups, a significant decline in the QoW index can be observed between 2019 and 2020, which is slightly more pronounced among employees with children. In subsequent years, a moderate recovery is initially apparent until around 2022. Since 2023, however,

both groups have again shown a slight downward trend, which continued into 2025.

Looking at the individual dimensions in detail, it can be seen that employees with children tend to be more satisfied with their income than employees without children. They also consistently report a higher level of work-life conflict over time. On the other hand, employees without children consistently report higher training and promotion opportunities and tend to claim a higher level of job security.

**Figure 7: Development of the QoW index depending on whether children live in households**

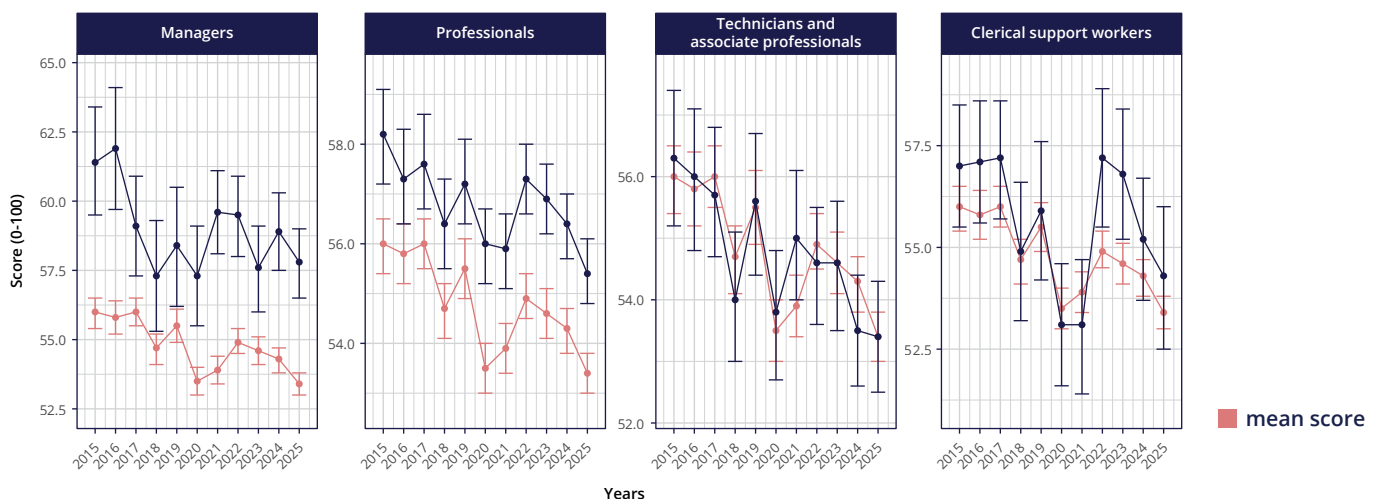


Note: Data from QoW 2014-2024; mean value on a scale from 0 to 100 with a 95% confidence interval. The grey values represent the mean values of the entire sample.

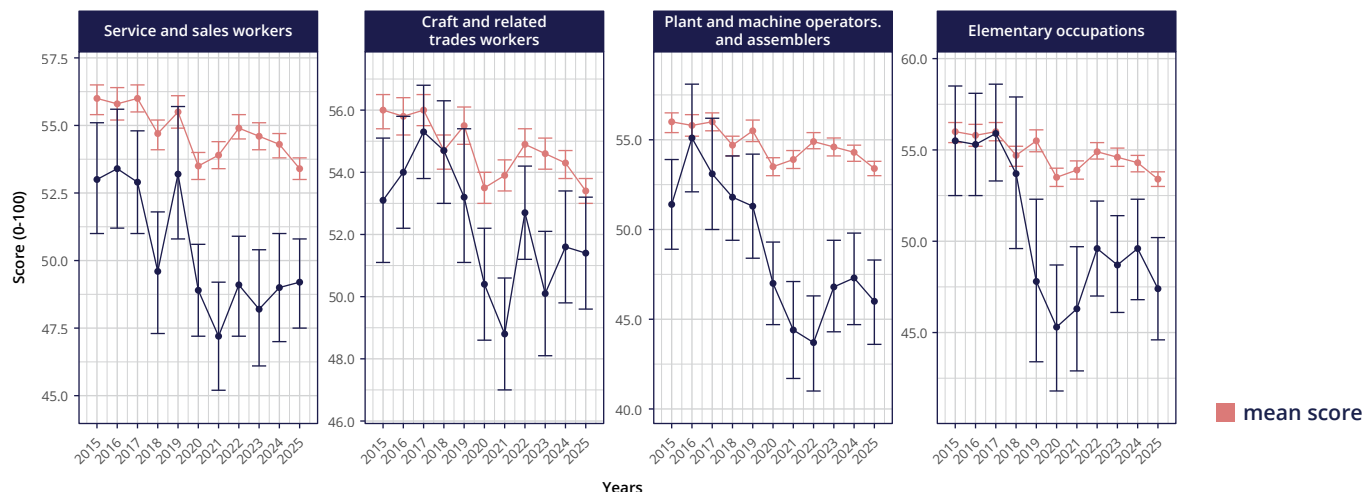
## 7. Development of the QoW index according to occupational characteristics

**Figure 8** shows the development of the QoW index, differentiated according to the occupational groups of employees. Managers and employees in academic professions consistently record an above-average QoW index throughout the entire observation period. Technicians and office workers show a QoW index trend that largely corresponds to the overall trend, recording a significant slump in 2020, a moderate recovery until around 2022 and renewed declines in subsequent years. In contrast, employees in service occupations, skilled trades and plant operators show predominantly below-average QoW index values throughout the entire period. The QoW index has fallen significantly over time, particularly for plant operators and unskilled workers. It is also noticeable in all four groups that the gap between them and the average QoW index has widened since 2020. Overall, it is evident that the gap between occupational groups with high and low QoW index values has widened since 2020, a pattern that continued to intensify through 2025.

**Figure 8: Development of the QoW index by occupational group**



**Figure 8: Development of the QoW index by occupational group (continued)**

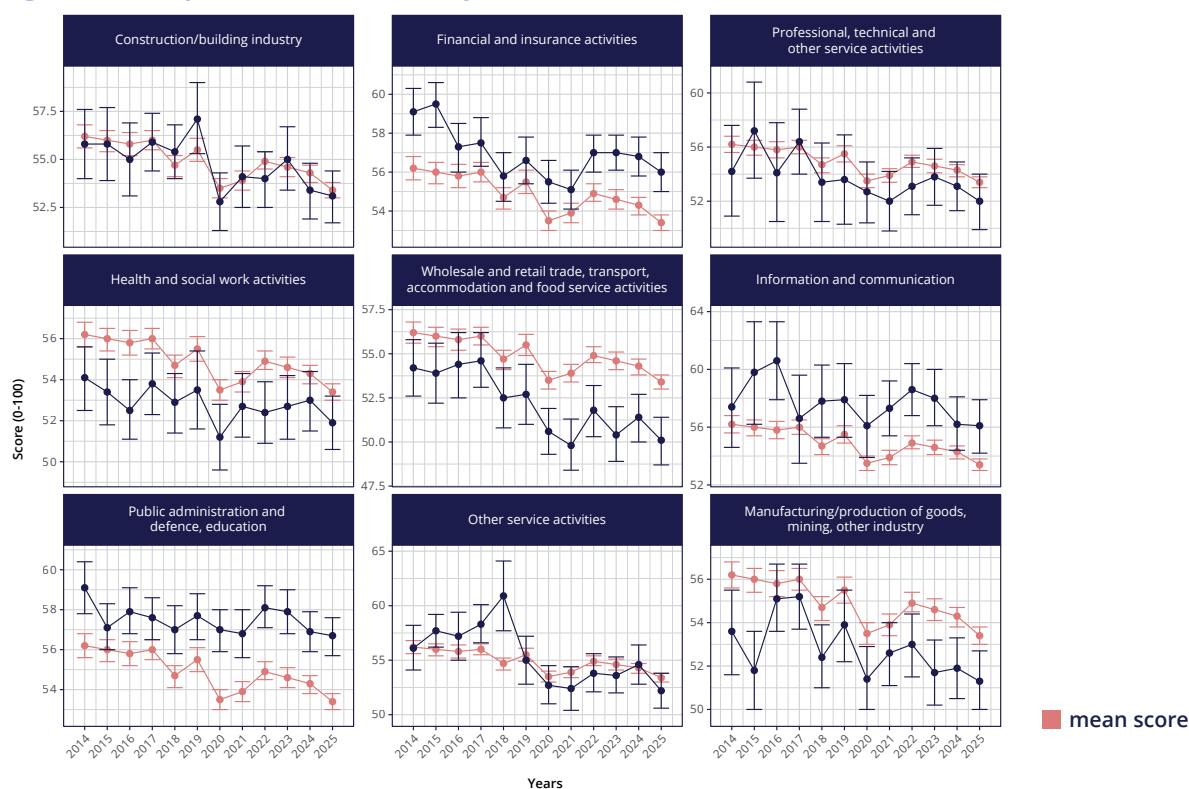


Note: QoW data for 2014–2025; mean value on a scale of 0 to 100 with a 95% confidence interval. The grey values represent the mean values of the entire sample.

**Figure 9** shows the development of the QoW index broken down by economic sector. Employees in the construction industry and in the fields of freelance, scientific and technical services show QoW index trends that largely correspond to the overall trend of the sample. Employees in the financial and insurance, information and communication, public administration, defence and social security sectors show

consistently above-average QoW index values throughout the entire observation period. Although a decline is also evident in these economic sectors from 2020 onwards, the level remains well above average until 2025. In contrast, employees in health and social services, trade, transport, hospitality and catering, manufacturing and goods production consistently show below-average QoW index values.

**Figure 9: Development of the QoW index by economic sector**



Note: Data from QoW 2014–2024; mean value of the scale ranging from 0 to 100 with 95% confidence interval. The grey values represent the mean values of the entire sample.



## 8. Summary and conclusions

The development of the aggregate Quality of Work Index provides important insights into the general working situation of Luxembourgish employees. Overall, the results show that the QoW Index remained largely stable until the end of the 2010s, followed by a significant slump in 2020. Although a partial recovery is evident in subsequent years, this proved ephemeral. By 2025, a downward trend once again became evident, with the aggregate QoW Index reaching its lowest level for the entire period in the last year of observation.

A nuanced examination of individual dimensions of work quality, such as autonomy, participation, feedback, time and emotional demands, and health-related strains, makes it clear that these developments are not evenly distributed across all aspects of work. While autonomy, participation and feedback in particular have been declining over longer periods and have recently stabilised at a lower level, emotional demands, health problems and work-life conflicts are increasing in the long term. These opposing developments illustrate that the quality of work is not changing in a one-dimensional way, but is characterised by a shift in resources and burdens.

The differences become particularly clear when looking at specific subgroups. Analyses by occupational group show that managers and employees in academic professions have consistently above-average QoW index values throughout the entire observation period, even though there has been a moderate decline since 2020. In contrast, QoW values for employees in service and craft occupations, as well as for plant operators and unskilled workers, remain consistently below average. For these groups, the decline in job quality since 2020 is particularly pronounced and continued through 2025. At the same time, the individual occupational groups have very different work and quality of work profiles.

Employees in service and craft occupations, as well as plant operators and unskilled workers, are particularly affected by physical strain. Employees in service occupations also report a high level of emotional demands and show a particularly sharp decline in autonomy over time.

Differences by economic sector, gender, age and family situation also highlight the marked heterogeneity of job quality. Employees in the financial and insurance, information and communication, public administration, defence and social security sectors consistently score above average on the QoW index. In contrast, consistently lower values are found in health and social services, trade, transport and hospitality, as well as manufacturing. Although gender-specific differences in the aggregate QoW index are small, they are more pronounced at the level of individual dimensions, such as emotional demands and work-life conflicts. Differences specific to age and stage of life indicate that employees of middle working age and those with family care responsibilities are particularly exposed to specific stress factors.

Against the backdrop of these findings, it is clear that measures to improve work quality should not be based solely on the aggregate QoW index. Rather, it is necessary to systematically take into account the marked heterogeneity between occupational groups, economic sectors and social groups. Industry- and target group-specific strategies appear to be particularly necessary where persistently low scores for key resources such as autonomy, participation and development opportunities coincide with high levels of physical or emotional stress. A sustainable improvement in the quality of work therefore requires differentiated labour and social policy approaches that take into account both structural working conditions and group-specific stress profiles.

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## Method

For the "Quality of Work Index" study on the working situation and quality of work of employees in Luxembourg, approximately 1,500-3,200 interviews (CATI; CAWI) have been conducted annually since 2013 by infas (since 2014) on behalf of the Luxembourg Chamber of Employees and the University of Luxembourg (Table 1). The findings presented in this report refer to the surveys conducted since 2014 (Sischka, 2025).

**Table 1: Methodological background of the QoW survey**

<b>Aim of the survey</b>	To study the working situation and quality of work of employees in Luxembourg					
<b>Design, implementation, analysis</b>	University of Luxembourg: Department of Behavioural and Cognitive Sciences, Luxembourg Chamber of Employees, 2014 - 2025: infas Institute, 2013: TNS-ILRES					
<b>Type of survey</b>	Telephone survey (CATI) or online survey (CAWI; since 2018) in Luxembourgish, German, French, Portuguese or English					
<b>Sample size</b>	2014: 1,532; 2015: 1,526; 2016: 1,506; 2017: 1,522; 2018: 1,689; 2019: 1,495; 2020: 2,364; 2021: 2,594; 2022: 2,696; 2023: 2,732; 2024: 2,939; 2025: 3,171					
<b>Scales for work quality</b>	Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
	Participation	2	0.69-0.81	Mental demands	4	0.73-0.78
	Feedback	2	0.71-0.82	Time pressure	2	0.68-0.80
	Autonomy	4	0.71-0.70	Emotional demands	2	0.79-0.87
	Cooperation	4	0.80-0.85	Physical strain	2	0.67-0.78
	Bullying	5	0.69-0.78	Risk of accidents	2	0.78-0.86
<b>Scales for quality of employment</b>	Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
	Income satisfaction	2	0.84-0.90	Job security	2	0.67-0.76
	Training	2	0.72-0.89	Difficulty changing jobs	2	0.69-0.83
	Promotion	2	0.82-0.91	Work-life conflict	3	0.70-0.82

**QoW Index**

The QoW index is formed by the unweighted mean of all scales of work and employment quality. The scales are also calculated using the unweighted mean of the corresponding individual indicators, which take values between 1 (e.g. "never") and 5 (e.g. "almost always"). The scale values are then normalised to values between 0 and 100  $[(\text{original scale value} - 1) / 4] * 100$ .

**Scales for well-being**

Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Job satisfaction	3	0.74-0.86	General Well-Being (WHO-5)	5	0.82-0.91
Work motivation	3	0.65-0.75	Health problems	7	0.65-0.80
Burnout	6	0.80-0.89			

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